



Rapture and Despair: Creativity and the Bipolar Affect

Karen Kaderavek

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Bipolar disorder and creativity, a controversial topic long relegated to academia and research clinics, is now finding its proper place in our popular discourse. Many of us now recognize the brilliance of artists suffering from bipolar disorder; few understand its link with creativity. This book goes beyond the stereotypical portrayal of the mad genius and explores the creative lives of four remarkable composers with this disorder: Robert Schumann, Charles Mingus, P. I. Tchaikovsky and Edward Elgar. Karen Kaderavek has focused her interdisciplinary research on three integrated factors: formative experiences, primary relationships and cultural influences. Her goal is not to prove a cause and effect connection between emotional extremes and genius. Rather her thesis of "creative tension" examines how mixed emotional states of depression and mania can coexist with genius at times of heightened artistic creativity. By highlighting the points of commonality in the lives of these extraordinary composers, the author sheds light on a complex relationship that has relevance not only for academics and health specialists but for millions of creators and lovers of the arts the world over.

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