

The Bipolar Express: Manic Depression and the Movies

David Coleman

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In the past few decades, awareness of bipolar disorder has significantly increased, but understanding of the condition remains vague for most of the general public. Though the term itself is relatively recent, the condition has affected individuals for centuries—and no more profoundly than in the arts. The historical connections among manic depression and such fields as literature, music, and painting have been previously documented. However, the impact of bipolar disorder on movie makers and its depiction on the screen has yet to be thoroughly examined.

In *The Bipolar Express: Manic Depression and the Movies*, David Coleman provides an in-depth examination of the entwined natures of mood disorders and moviemaking. In this volume, Coleman looks at the writers, directors, and actors who have faced the mood swings and behavior that are hallmarks of this condition—from Greta Garbo and Orson Welles to Marilyn Monroe and Jonathan Winters. In addition to recognizing the cinematic contributions of manic depressive filmmakers, the author also looks at movies that have portrayed bipolar disorder—with varying degrees of accuracy—including *Citizen Kane*, *Rebel without a Cause*, *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, *Hannah and Her Sisters*, *The Aviator*, and *Silver Linings Playbook*.

From early silents of the twentieth century through critically acclaimed films of today, this book compares depictions of mood swings on screen with clinical examples of actual manic depression, carefully distinguishing real from stereotypical portrayals. This fascinating study is augmented by a concise filmography of more than 400 feature-length films from around the world with themes or characters relating to manic depressive illness. Though aimed at film fans and anyone interested in manic depression, mental illness, or related medical studies, this book will also prove valuable to medical and mental health professionals.



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