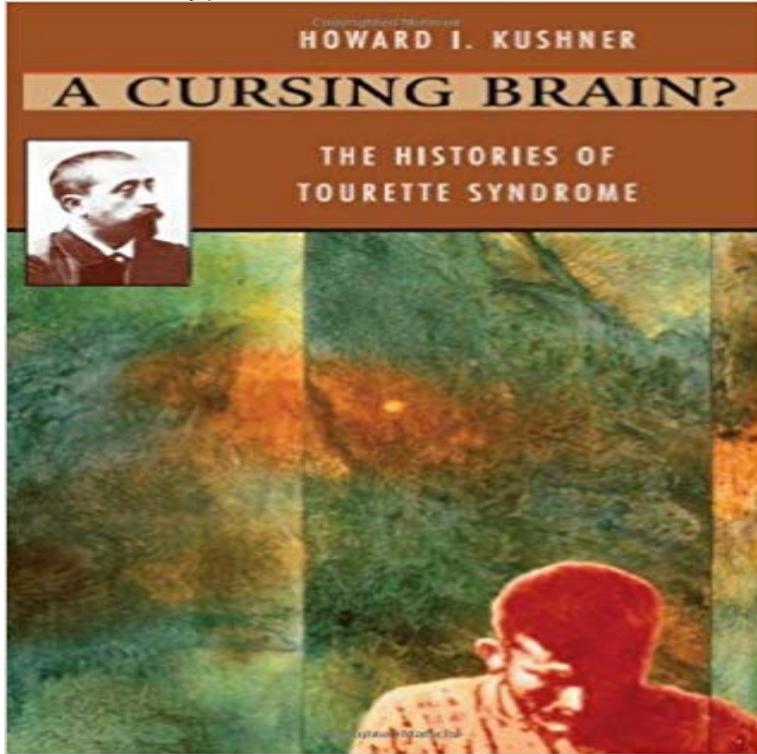


A Cursing Brain? The Histories of Tourette Syndrome



Over a century and a half ago, a French physician reported the bizarre behavior of a young aristocratic woman who would suddenly, without warning, erupt in a startling fit of obscene shouts and curses. The image of the afflicted Marquise de Dampierre echoes through the decades as the emblematic example of an illness that today represents one of the fastest-growing diagnoses in North America. Tourette syndrome is a set of behaviors, including recurrent ticcing and involuntary shouting (sometimes cursing) as well as obsessive-compulsive actions. The fascinating history of this syndrome reveals how cultural and medical assumptions have determined and radically altered its characterization and treatment from the early nineteenth century to the present. *A Cursing Brain?* traces the problematic classification of Tourette syndrome through three distinct but overlapping stories: that of the claims of medical knowledge, that of patients experiences, and that of cultural expectations and assumptions. Earlier researchers asserted that the bizarre ticcing and impromptu vocalizations were psychological--resulting from sustained bad habits or lack of self-control. Today, patients exhibiting these behaviors are seen as suffering from a neurological disease and generally are treated with drug therapy. Although current clinical research indicates that Tourettes is an organic disorder, this pioneering history of the syndrome reminds us to be skeptical of medical orthodoxies so that we may stay open to fresh understandings and more effective interventions.

Later in the 19th century, Jean-Martin Charcot a French neurologist asked his resident Georges Gilles de la Tourette, to define an illness. In the mid-19th century, a French physician reported the bizarre behaviour of a young aristocratic woman who would suddenly, without warning, erupt in a fit of obscene shouts and curses. This is the inherent history of Gilles de la Tourette's syndrome. *A Cursing Brain?* makes an excellent reading for anyone interested in the history of neuropsychiatric thought. Howard Kushner has written a fascinating account of the evolution of the modern view of Gilles de la Tourette syndrome (now known as

Tourette syndromeKindle????? A Cursing Brain?: The Histories of Tourette Syndrome??Kindle??????Kindle????????????????????????????????Neurobiology of the Premonitory Urge in Tourettes Syndrome: Pathophysiology and Treatment Implications. Andrea E. Cavanna et al., J Neuropsychiatry ClinWill be shipped from US. Used books may not include companion materials, may have some shelf wear, may contain highlighting/notes, may not include CDs orThe history of Tourettes Disease is replete with off-key thinking that mistakes effects for causes, A Cursing Brain? presents this history with authority. Kushners It is a bit odd to read a book about a topic that I have studied for the better part of 20 years. A Cursing Brain? is well written and meticulouslyA Cursing Brain? The Histories of Tourette Syndrome. By Howard I. Kushner. Harvard University Press, Harvard MA, 1999. pp. 303. ?18.50 (hb). - - Volume 41Full text. Full text is available as a scanned copy of the original print version. Get a printable copy (PDF file) of the complete article (269K), or click on a pageA Cursing Brain?: The Histories of Tourette Syndrome. (review). Miles F. Shore. Journal of Interdisciplinary History, Volume 30, Number 4, Spring 2000, pp.