

ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS FROM THE WOOD LIBRARY-MUSEUM

Melancholic Temperamental Education for 1893 Classes by “Masters of Anaesthesia”



Flemish artist Maerten de Vos' **earthbound Melancholicus** (1583) reminds us that a patient of melancholic temperament is congealed with the cold, dry "black bile" humor linked by ancient Greeks with elemental **earth**. By 1893 at Chicago's Post-Graduate School of Anaesthesia (PGSA), professors were tutoring future "Master of the Science of Anaesthesia" candidates to anticipate that a melancholic patient's anesthesia might comprise—what today's anesthesiologists would characterize as—(1) a stormy induction, (2) a risk for reflex heart-slowness due to anesthetic underdosage (termed "syncope" by the PGSA), and (3) a smooth emergence. PGSA Professor Charles Gilbert Davis, M.D., M.S.A., taught that melancholic patients might benefit from preanesthetic calming (termed "hypnosis" by the PGSA). Surgeon-anesthetist Davis delivered his lecture "Hypnotism with Special Reference to Hypnotic Suggestion" at the World's Psychical [Psychological] Science Congress at the 1893 Columbian Exposition. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc.)

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