without detrimental effects. For example, the Endocrine chapter contains an excellent introductory portion regarding hormones and target organs. However, this information may be of little value for those whose purpose for reading the chapter is the direct application of information to patient care. Therefore, this portion of the chapter may easily be passed over, and the reader may immediately proceed to obstetric and anesthetic management for the particular endocrine problem.

I also appreciated the editors' and authors' willingness to make specific recommendations regarding anesthetic management. No longer does a reader have to ferret through potential obstetric managements, the pros and cons of anesthetic managements, and then select an appropriate management plan. For those practitioners seeking a quick source, a plan is readily available. Finally, the text is the most comprehensively illustrated text I have read. Further, the illustrations and tables contain more than information. Rather, they frequently address decision-making. The chapter addressing fetal distress was complete with valuable and practical advice in tabular form. The tables presented in the Antepartum Hemorrhage and Hepatic Disorders section were also informative and practical. Other chapters I particularly appreciated dealt with The Febrile Patient and Intrauterine Fetal Death, and the chapter addressing diabetes was a superb problem-based chapter.

In summary, I believe this textbook is a valuable resource for those who practice obstetric anesthesia, whether they are the occasional providers of care seeking anesthetic plans or those practicing in a specialized obstetric unit who requires quick access to additional information for unusual problems. Dr. Datta—well done!

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Respiratory Physiology: People and Ideas. Edited by John B. West. New York, American Physiological Society, Oxford University Press, 1996. Pages: 431. Price: $85.00.

Did you know that oxygen was discovered in 1777 by the French scientist Antoine Laurent Lavoisier, who later died by guillotine during the French Revolution? Were you aware that many physiologists thought that combustion and tissue oxygenation were the same chemical process until Eduard Pflüger (1829–1910) showed that metabolism takes place in the peripheral tissues and the role of blood is to transport the oxygen and carbon dioxide? If you are a history buff or if you are interested in tracing the roots of modern pulmonary physiology, then *Respiratory Physiology: People and Ideas,* edited by John B. West, is the book for you.

This book is the fifth book of the American Physiological Society's *People and Ideas* series, which explores the historical development of discoveries in cardiovascular, renal, endocrine, membrane transport, and respiratory physiology. The 12 chapters of the *Respiratory Physiology* volume are organized into five sections that span the field of respiration physiology: Morphology, Gas Exchange and Blood Flow, Mechanics, Control of Ventilation, and Comparative Physiology. The book offers a unique historical perspective into advances in each of these areas from the vantage of the living "greats" in respiratory physiology. Chapters are written by prominent physiologists, including several known to anesthesiologists, such as Ewald R. Weibel (generations of the tracheobronchial tree), John B. West (gravitational model of pulmonary blood flow), John W. Severinghaus (blood gas analysis), Jere Mead and Peter T. Macklem (lung mechanics and respiratory muscle function), Norman C. Staub, Sr. (pulmonary edema formation), and John Widdicombe (respiratory reflexes). Some chapters review the historical background beginning in the days of Galen in 100–200 A.D. and extending until modern times. Others provide a more personal account of the author's discoveries and contributions to respiratory physiology in the 1940s–1970s.

Respiratory Physiology: People and Ideas vividly illustrates how old concepts and theories in physiology slowly change through history as advances in technology permit more in-depth study and gains in knowledge. The book shows the reader how much of the present research in respiratory physiology is a refinement of the "great era" of advances in respiration surrounding World War II, as more sophisticated techniques are used to address the same questions. The book also demonstrates the importance of whole-organ physiology in the past, present, and future. I only regret that each chapter did not contain a current picture of the author for posterity.

In summary, *Respiratory Physiology: People and Ideas* is a highly specialized book that is not for the average anesthesiology resident or practitioner. It is, however, a book of historical importance for general anesthesiologists who are history enthusiasts and academic anesthesiologists interested in respiratory physiology.

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