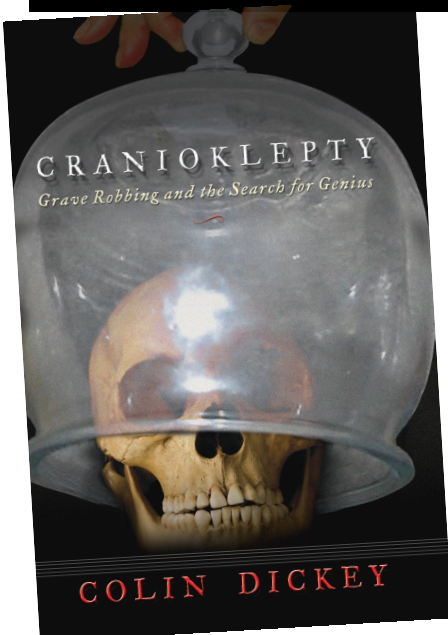


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CRANIOKLEPTY

Grave Robbing and the Search for Genius

by Colin Dickey

The Cranio Quiz

- What do Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven have in common?
- How many bones fuse together in the first few months of life to make up the brain?
- What did the process of "bump reading" commonly come to be called?
- Which U.S. president's grandfather has been accused of skull stealing?

Answers at bottom

BOOKSELLER SYNOPSIS

Beginning with the dramatic opening of Haydn's grave in October 1820, **CRANIOKLEPTY** by Colin Dickey takes us through the extraordinary history of a peculiar kind of obsession: the at times overpowering desire to possess the skulls of the famous – for study, for sale, for public and very private display.

The skull has always been a central symbol for the human psyche, representing the enigma of life and the unavoidability of death. But by the dawn of the nineteenth century, due in large part to the popular work of Dr. Franz Joseph Gall, the skull had begun to assume a new meaning and significance. Gall's discovery, called "cranioscopy" and later rechristened "phrenology" was predicated on the theory that, all things being equal, size determines propensity. The bigger the brain, the higher capacity for intelligence.

CRANIOKLEPTY delves into the scientific, religious, philosophical, mystical and historical ramifications of a desire that seems, for some, to be instinctual and irresistible. Fully researched, indexed, and illustrated with some surprising images, **CRANIOKLEPTY** is a fascinating and macabre history of those fanatics who will violate the graves of the men and women they most revere, just to hold the trace of genius in their hands.

About the Author



Colin Dickey is the co-editor of *Failure! Experiments in Aesthetic and Social Practices* (2008). His fiction and nonfiction have appeared in *Cabinet*, *TriQuarterly*, and *The Santa Monica Review*. A native of the San Francisco Bay Area, he now lives in Los

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KEY SELLING POINTS

"Dickey's well-vetted account...illuminates the mystery and controversy of a bizarre tradition throughout the ages."
— *Publishers Weekly*

"Those...who may have read Brian Burrell's *Postcards from the Brain Museum*...and Russell Shorto's *Descartes' Bones*...will enjoy Dickey's eccentric tales."
— *Booklist*

"Colin Dickey... has served up a fascinating book. Well-researched, clear and concise, this book is full of interesting historical anecdotes."
— *ForeWord Magazine*

Illustrated with photos of skulls, drawings devices and images of the scientists and grave robbers involved.

Will appeal to anyone interested in science, history, mysticism, religion, phrenology, and pop culture.

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