

Statistics". On page 24 'mental responsibility' is applied only to the exercise of will-power, but the judgement in the case of *R. v Byrne* [1960] 3 All ER 1 states: "The expression 'mental responsibility for his acts' points to a consideration of the extent to which the accused's mind is answerable for his physical acts which must include a consideration of the extent of his ability to exercise will-power to control his physical acts".

There are two major errors on page 25: that homicide committed during the course of acute psychotic illness would come within the McNaughton rules; and that psychopathy coming within the Mental Health Act 1983 definition would amount to diminished responsibility.

The publishers' blurb states that the book is the first serious attempt to counteract misunderstandings by endeavouring to bridge the gap between the criminal law and psychiatry. For those who use this text, misunderstandings will be multiplied and, following the allegory, the bridge is used at the peril of those attempting to cross.

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Issues in Diagnostic Research. Edited by CYNTHIA LAST and MICHEL HERSEN. New York: Plenum. 1987. 349 pp. \$45.00.

This book would not have been published if DSM-III had not been invented. One of the main results of the introduction of DSM-III has been much greater interest in the diagnostic process. This volume is therefore a timely look at the methodology of diagnostic assessment and broader issues about its aims, achievements, and pitfalls.

The first chapter, by Theodore Millon, is 84 pages long but represents a distillate of the principles of classification that could easily have been expanded to a book in itself. It is a masterly review of different approaches to classification and emphasises the modesty of the true taxonomist. However successful our diagnoses appear to be, we must "bear in mind that these labels and transformations are not 'realities' ". The rest of this section is concerned with general issues in classification, and include a particularly useful discussion by Grove of methods of recording reliability of psychiatric diagnosis. The second section is concerned with methodological issues, the particular problems of making psychiatric diagnoses during development and over a lifetime, and biological and genetic approaches. The latter are particularly valuable because they point to other ways of achieving diagnosis, now or in the future; their advantage is that they do not depend on the vagaries of clinical symptomatology. The third part of the book is less well integrated, and discusses diagnostic problems with special subjects. These include child psychiatry, where diagnosis still appears to be much less

important to its practitioners than in other parts of psychiatry, and an interesting chapter on computer-generated diagnosis by Headlund & Biewig.

Although this book is primarily for the taxonomist and research worker, it would be of value for others to read to see the directions in which psychiatry is going. The time has not yet come whereby a clinician's diagnosis is likely to be independently validated by other measures, but there are glimmerings of this on the horizon. We are all diagnosticians now.

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Self and Identity: Psychosocial Perspectives. Edited by KRYSIA YARDLEY and TERRY HONESS. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons. 1987. 332 pp. £28.00.

This book is a curious mixture of psychology, psychiatry, and sociology with sociology as the dominant perspective. It takes the problem of the self, one of the key issues in modern philosophy, and explores the theoretical and practical implications of the concept for sociology and psychiatry.

Like any collection of essays, some of them, such as the analysis of Eastern concepts of the self, are excellent, while others are at best pedestrian. Psychoanalytic concepts of identity and object relations are well reviewed, but the contribution of the existentialists and existential analysts such as Victor Frankl and Rollo May are, for unexplained reasons, ignored.

This is primarily an Academic work with a capital A, rich in references but rather short on insights and practical strategies for clinical practice. The academic, the research worker, and the armchair theoretician will find the depth and width of scholarship in this book a rich source. The practicing clinician, however, will probably find it rather arcane and alien to the world of patient care.

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The Psychological Experience of Surgery. (Wiley Series in General and Clinical Psychiatry). Edited by Richard S. Blacher. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons. 1987. 236 pp. £30.45.

This is a valuable collection of essays, which I would recommend highly to liaison psychiatrists and, more particularly, surgeons and other professionals concerned with the impact of surgery on patients. Written by twelve authors, it has the advantage of avoiding monotony of style; it varies from the beautifully written chapter on denial, with nine general references, to the comprehensive chapter on superobesity with 98. There is a tendency, however, for the theme of surgical