

Successive chapters explore the stereotypes about female roles in relation to theories of biological inheritance, socialization of children at home and in the school, the institutions of marriage and the family, work, mental illness and the tax and social security systems. By drawing on published research and theoretical work, the chapters build up the picture of deep-rooted assumptions about women's roles that society has adopted.

On the credit side, the book does not take an excessively evangelist line, but suggests more modestly that by understanding the existing system, a more tolerant and equitable arrangement can be introduced to replace it. However, there are some criticisms to be made. The use of jargon is excessive and unnecessary, and there is too much repetition of material between chapters. The editors could have avoided this without difficulty. Furthermore, not every chapter suggests exactly what the reader may deduce from the quoted research findings. As a result, unless the reader has already read the original sources, s/he may be left uncertain of the weight of arguments being offered. The chapter on tax and social security stands out from the rest, since it does introduce much more 'objective' references than the others do.

Despite these points the book is worth referring to; I hope it may point the way to future publications written more simply and developing the arguments on a less rarified plane.

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Signs of Stress: The Social Problems of Psychiatric Illness. By J. WALLACE McCULLOCH and HERSCHEL A. PRINS. Plymouth: MacDonald and Evans. 1977. Pp 195. £3.00.

This is a worthy book. It is worthy in intention: 'It is the authors' hope that this book will help to diminish the fears and anxieties so often associated with mental illness by providing realistic information, in lay terms, about the various manifestations of mental illness, its causes and its management' (p 14). And it is worthy in execution: there are chapters on the neuroses, the functional psychoses, psycho-geriatrics, personality disorders, alcoholism and drug dependence, suicide and mental subnormality. All are presented in a straightforward and readable fashion which should make them readily digestible to the 'concerned layman', at whom the book is aimed. It is, however, ultimately an unsatisfactory book. The numerous case-studies fail to liven what is an otherwise dull text. More seriously, the authors' wholly

uncritical stance leaves unanswered, and unasked, central questions concerning the meaning of mental illness and the role of psychiatric intervention. A book on psychiatric illness rather along the lines of a 'do-it-yourself' car manual may have its uses, but the nagging doubt remains that perhaps being a psychiatrist is not quite the same as being a motor mechanic.

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Psychosurgery and the Medical Control of Violence: Autonomy and Deviance. By SAMUEL I. SHUMAN. Detroit: Wayne State University Press. 1977. Pp 351. \$18.50.

Professor Shuman holds Chairs of Law and Forensic Psychiatry. His legal and philosophical training explain why doctors seeking clinical information on psychosurgery will be disappointed in his book. His wordy arguments are based on the Detroit psychosurgery case (1972). The appendix contains the detailed briefs. Surprisingly the judgement—'That involuntarily detained adults cannot give legally adequate consent to experimental or innovative procedures on the brain to ameliorate behaviour'—is not stated until p 138. Shuman wrote the book to expand his arguments against that decision and it emerges that he was advocate for the defendants who lost the case. He personally attacks the chief opposition witness, Dr Breggin, criticizing his lack of scientific achievement and academic position.

A reader engaged in psychosurgery who could overcome the book's biased standpoint may learn about informed consent and the concepts of causation and justification in medicine.

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Ageing and Dementia. Edited by W. LYNN SMITH and MARCEL KINSBOURNE. New York: Spectrum Publications. 1977. Pp 244. £11.25.

This book was originally planned as a publication of papers from the Fourth Cerebral Function Symposium in 1972, but in fact only two of those papers have been included and these have been updated, and much of the work is more recent. There are many distinguished contributors, but the degree of overlap is not sufficient to be irritating as is often a problem with such a compilation. The early