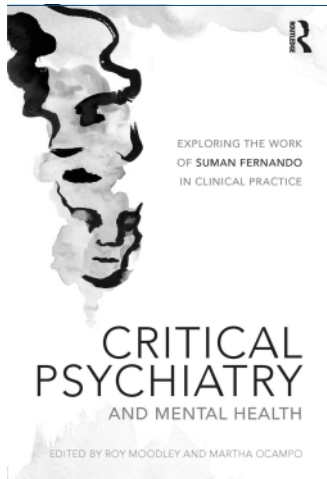


Book reviews

Edited by Allan Beveridge, Femi Oyeboode
and Rosalind Ramsay



**Critical Psychiatry
and Mental Health.
Exploring the Work
of Suman Fernando
in Clinical Practice**

Edited by Roy Moodley
& Martha Ocampo.
Routledge, 2014.
£29.99 (pb). 278 pp.
ISBN: 9781138016583

This book deserves a longer review. It sets out to explore the theory and practice of psychiatry (which means Western psychiatry) in relation to race and culture, and the burden of ‘otherness’ in mental health. It grounds itself in the pioneering critiques of the academic and former National Health Service consultant psychiatrist Suman Fernando, who is of Sri Lankan background. In 2007, Fernando refused an OBE as a protest that the mental health bill then going through parliament would not address the disproportionate rate of compulsory admissions of Black people.

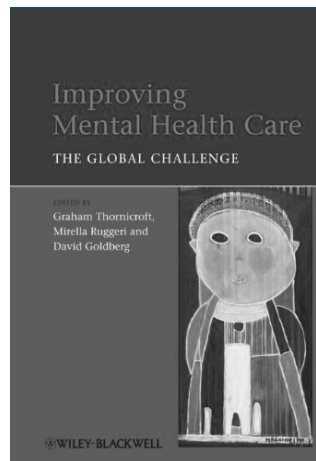
Among the weighty academic figures who have contributed chapters, David Ingleby notes that Fernando’s first major book, *Race and Culture in Psychiatry* (1988), started not with a discussion of Black and minority ethnic patients but of ‘the culture of psychiatry’ – an examination of psychiatry’s historical involvement in colonialism and racist practices. ‘Drapetomania’ was a diagnosis applied to slaves in USA, the primary symptom being a persistent urge to run away. Phil Thomas notes that compelling critiques of biomedical psychiatry originated in those groups most directly affected and constrained by its power – service users, feminists, Black people and those in the ex-colonial world.

Ingleby notes that it is important to distinguish between ‘critical’ approaches (which ask fundamental questions about the validity of interventions developed for one population being applied to another) and ‘technical’ approaches (which take the Eurocentric and biomedical assumptions of mainstream mental health treatment as a given and see the provision of services as simply a technical problem). Fernando, Ingleby and other contributors such as Laurence Kirmayer of McGill University, Canada, have critiqued the movement for ‘global mental health’ as an example of the latter approach. This movement disregards the range of mentalities and systems of value across the non-Western world and the gritty fact that as the source of their problems most people would point outwards, to their poverty-haunted predicaments, rather than inwards to the space between their ears. Fernando calls it the myth of ‘global’ mental health. The technical approach to health is not essentially different from that used to sell

any other goods and services to ethnic minorities or ‘third world’ countries.

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**Improving Mental
Health Care:
The Global Challenge**

Edited by Graham Thornicroft,
Mirella Ruggeri & David Goldberg
Wiley-Blackwell, 2013.
£74.99 (hb). 462 pp.
ISBN: 9781118337974

It is difficult to quantify the population burden of mental illness. Many individuals who die prematurely do so from physical illnesses which are recognised in death certification; those who die by suicide may be reported in injury figures. However, it is estimated that in 2010 mental health and substance misuse disorders accounted for 7.4% of all disability-adjusted life years globally. Many affected people do not have access to the treatment they need. This book aims to provide guidance on how mental health services can be provided, bearing in mind the resources available in both high- and low-income countries.

The book is set in four sections. Sections 1 and 2 present various challenges and evidence-based solutions for global mental health, including (but not limited to) the human and financial resource gap, how to build capacity in primary and community care and make an economic case for improved services; the need for research, particularly in low- and middle-income countries; the need to develop understanding of personal recovery, how this might be translated internationally and interventions which have sought to re-focus care workers on patients’ personal goals; and ensuring equality for people with mental illness, including employment and access to preventive healthcare. The final section returns to similar themes.

Section 3 was my favourite part of the book. Here, approaches to research are presented including quantitative epidemiological designs, clinical brain imaging and qualitative research techniques. These chapters describe complex and sometimes unfamiliar concepts in clear and engaging ways.

A major strength of the book is the narrative. The book was inspired by and is dedicated to Michele Tansella and the fact that many authors have a connection to him may be part of the reason for it being a cohesive read. However, this may also be considered a weakness in a book about global mental health. Italy (particularly south Verona) and the UK are overrepresented in the pages and 42 out of 67 authors come from these two countries. There are no authors from low-income countries and just one middle-income country is represented (India). This means the reader cannot be certain that perspectives are not missing.

The other major strength of the book may also be considered a weakness. It is a contemporary look at a fast-changing landscape, with recent and ongoing work presented. This may put a sell-by date on it. I recommend reading it in the next 12 months to derive the greatest benefit.

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The Alzheimer Conundrum: Entanglements of Dementia and Aging

By Margaret Lock
Princeton University Press. 2013.
£19.95 (hb). 328 pp.
ISBN 9780691149783

Dementia has never had a higher profile and governments are falling over themselves to commit funds, though dementia research is still grossly underfunded in comparison with less common and less costly conditions. Despite this, concerns have been expressed about a narrowness of focus, the majority of dementia research focusing on the hypothesis that amyloid is the key to Alzheimer's disease.

Thank goodness for anthropologist Margaret Lock and her intelligent, comprehensive survey of the state-of-the-art in dementia research. Professor Lock's book begins and ends by examining three tensions in Alzheimer's disease research. First, do brain changes directly cause dementia or is there a complex 'entanglement' between mind, body and environment throughout the life course? Second, can dementia be disentangled from normal ageing or is it inevitable if one lives long enough? Finally, how much of the disease can be ascribed to genetics alone and how much to changes in gene expression due to gene-gene and gene-environment interactions – 'a revitalized and reformulated nature/nurture debate' (p. 6)?

The intervening chapters provide a robust and accessible overview of current dementia research, the fruit of over a decade's study, including attending numerous conferences and interviewing many of the leading researchers (albeit, understandably, with a North American bias). The book considers attempts to standardise the diagnosis of dementia, although noting that it may represent a 'moving target', a term coined by the philosopher-historian-mathematician Ian Hacking. Lock refuses to accept that the recent impetus to drive diagnosis earlier and earlier through the use of biomarkers truly represents a paradigm shift, though hints that there may be one in the offing. Her detailed work examining the long-term effects of being given one's APOE status – a genetic risk factor for Alzheimer's disease – as part of a research project is fascinating. Many participants merely assimilated this genetic risk information alongside everything else, including assessments of risk based on similarity to family members who developed dementia, and few made major changes to their lifestyle.

This is an extremely important book and one which I am very grateful to have read. There is much here for the interested general reader but the rich endnotes provide guidance to those wanting to explore the area in more detail. It is wonderfully refreshing to read such a clear survey of dementia research and some interesting speculation of the way things may develop in the future.

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Moving Images: Psychoanalytic Reflections on Film

By Andrea Sabbadini.
Routledge. 2014.
£29.99 (pb). 140 pp.
ISBN: 9780415736121

Moving Images follows *The Couch and the Silver Screen* and *Projected Shadows*, both edited by Andrea Sabbadini. However, this book is neither a collection of contributions by experts in psychoanalysis or film, nor a review of European cinema. As its title suggests, it offers Sabbadini's own reflections on 25 feature films from Europe and Latin America. Being a prominent psychoanalyst and the director of the European Psychoanalytic Film Festival, he not only brings a psychoanalytic perspective to these films, but also uses them as a vehicle to discuss important psychoanalytic themes.

Starting with the representation of psychoanalysis itself and the relationship between the therapist and the patient, he moves on to explore how prostitution has been portrayed in film-making, an almost explicit reference to free association ('from a young profession . . . to the oldest one'). He then focuses on films about children and adolescents. This comes as little surprise considering the crucial role of the earlier years on the psychic development in the psychoanalytic theory. Sabbadini then moves on to adulthood and selects five films on love and intimate relationships to explore the Freudian concepts of Eros and Thanatos. This exploration of intimate relationships takes us back to the couch in the consulting room where it all began (relationship between therapist and patient, transference and countertransference). Finally, the author discusses films on scopophilia and voyeurism and we oscillate to the screen where another intimate (voyeuristic) experience takes place.

There are certainly many more films that I would have liked to have seen included in this book, mostly because Sabbadini's narrative and reflections bring exactly what he promises: a psychoanalytic perspective to the films discussed and an illustration of the power of film to promote psychoanalytical thinking. Like the psychoanalyst in analysis, the author creates a space where films (or dreams), fantasies and emotions can be explored and thought about, offers new insights and ultimately lays the foundation for a journey that only begins in the book (the consulting room). It is up to the reader (viewer, analysand) to