

up by examples of research projects where the various scales have been road-tested.

The chapter on psychological approaches to the assessment and treatment of old people stands out as the most useful for the practising rather than research-orientated psychiatrist, and is full of interesting case vignettes.

One significant omission is an investigation of the usefulness of suicidal intent scales in the elderly, but otherwise this is a well-written and useful addition to the psychiatric literature and deserves a place on all hospital library shelves. It is a book to be dipped into rather than read at one sitting.

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Justice Unbalanced: Gender, Psychiatry and Judicial Decision. By HILARY ALLEN. 151 pp.

This is a relatively short book (six chapters and a conclusion), the brevity disguising the depth and intricacy of the author's exposition and analysis of the source material. A wealth of case material is examined, and Allen manages a good balance of quotes, comment and analysis.

Chapter two rehearses the legal arguments and traces the inconsistency and contradictory nature of reasonableness and diminished responsibility as it relates to gender, arguing that this is the first stage at which decisions affecting gender are made. Chapter three makes a detailed examination of the reports available, and discusses the differences between men and women in the verdicts reached: 24 males (3 diminished responsibility) and 22 females (6 diminished responsibility, 3 infanticide, one unfit to plead).

The chapter on the development of the prison medical service – its subservience to the 'system', followed by a period of ascendancy, with a regrettable return to the earlier position – makes fascinating reading. There is also an explanation for the difference between the provision of psychiatric services in men's and women's prisons, reflected not only in regimes but more crucially in the reports prepared for the Courts. Why is it that psychiatry seems reluctant to diagnose, let alone treat, a majority of the men whom the Courts confidently identify as 'mental cases'?

In conclusion, this is not a book to browse through, but to read at one sitting. Its examination of the case records is illuminating, and has certainly urged me to examine my own practice (especially as I recognise some of my own cases in the text!). The book has, unusually for the topic, avoided the superficial and 'obvious' explanations and treated us to a far deeper set of interpretations. While there is undoubtedly a disproportionate

'psychiatrisation' of women, the author is more concerned at the underuse of psychiatry for males. In her own words, "Contrary to my initial political prejudices, which saw the excess of psychiatry as personally oppressive to female offenders, it became increasingly clear as the analysis progressed that on the whole, female offenders do rather well out of it".

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Dream Fulfillment. Edited by MARIA C. GEAR, ERNESTO C. LIENDO and LILA L. SCOTT. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson. 1988. 230 pp.

This book is an attempt to do for the patient what Joseph did for the Pharaoh – the use of dreams to plot the future. The authors, who root their authority in psychoanalysis, should have heeded Freud's warning on this at the Berlin conference in 1920. They argue that patients develop "telemelodramas" or addictions to escape anxiety. The function of the therapist is to interpret away these defences so that they can have "reachable dreams". All this is wrapped up in a heavy dose of pseudobiology rampant with "left digital highlanders" and "right analogic lowlanders" living in "Krantzland" (Manhattan). It is an excellent example of what Thomas Szasz has called the use of language to mystify and discredit types of behaviour by the use of disparaging neologisms, and the reformulation of types of behaviour into acceptable rhetoric.

This book, aimed explicitly at the Manhattan market, is strictly for California dreamers and their disciples. Those who practice in the waking state may find the going soporific.

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The Chronic Mental Patient/II. Edited by W. WALTER MENNINGER and GERALD HANNAH. Washington DC: American Psychiatric Press (distributed in the UK by CUP). 1987. 255 pp. £18.50.

Psychiatric Rehabilitation of Chronic Mental Patients. Edited by ROBERT PAUL LIBERMAN. Washington DC: American Psychiatric Press (distributed in the UK by CUP). 1988. 341 pp. £17.50.

These two books are respectively the proceedings of a multidisciplinary conference, and what might be termed the companion to a regularly held workshop for health professionals. Both are multi-author works, and both