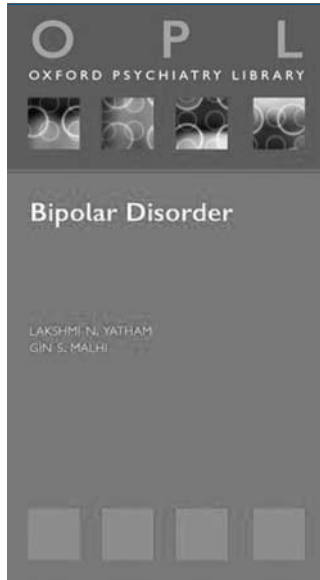


Book reviews

Edited by Allan Beveridge, Femi Oyeboode
and Rosalind Ramsay



Bipolar Disorder (Oxford Psychiatry Library)

By Lakshmi Yatham & Gin Malhi.
Oxford University Press. 2011.
£9.99 (pb). 96pp.
ISBN: 9780199562305

'Pocketbook' is usually a misnomer; few of these books actually fit into the average pocket. But this title really is a pocket reference in the most literal sense. In 96 slender pages (8 of which are blank), it attempts to summarise the current consensus on bipolar disorder. This is no mean feat considering the ever-expanding research landscape. It is to the authors' credit that they largely succeed in their goal, and do so in succinct, uncomplicated prose.

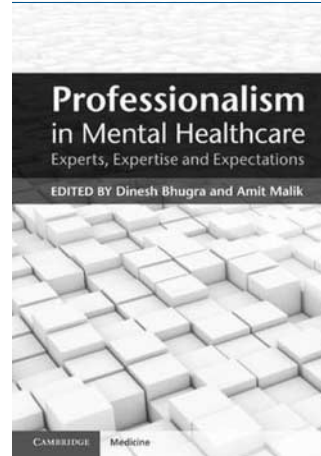
The appeal of pocketbooks is in the ability to condense masses of evidence into concise practical advice. In this respect, evidence-based treatments are covered well, interspaced with the authors' clinical experience. References for further reading are listed at the end of each chapter. Unfortunately, these are not cited in the text, leaving the reader unable to connect each claim with the corresponding publication.

Although the history, epidemiology and aetiology of bipolar disorder are briefly visited, the focus is rightly on clinical management. Accordingly, over half the book deals with treatment. Key points and tables are used to good effect. Treatment algorithms, though useful, are almost small enough to be illegible. The chapter on diagnosis provides an overview of bipolar disorder classifications and a comprehensive differential diagnosis. However, DSM-IV is the sole diagnostic tool included, with obvious repercussions for those working under ICD-10.

It would be churlish to complain about omissions in such a short book. Although aimed at busy professionals, I think it is an ideal companion for medical students on psychiatric placements. When the rate of published research seems to grow unabated, it is helpful to be told exactly what is worth remembering. Students should also be attracted by the price: could ten pounds be better spent?

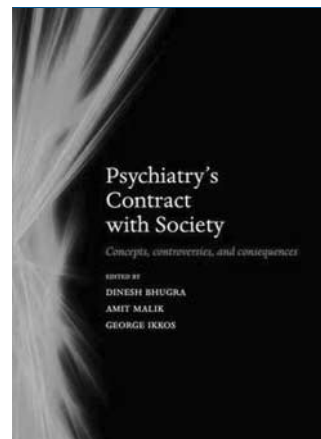
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Professionalism in Mental Healthcare: Experts, Expertise and Expectations

Edited by Dinesh Bhugra
& Amit Malik.
Cambridge University Press. 2010.
£29.99 (pb). 208pp.
ISBN: 9780521131766



Psychiatry's Contract with Society: Concepts, Controversies, and Consequences

Edited by Dinesh Bhugra,
Amit Malik & George Ikkos.
Oxford University Press. 2010.
£29.95 (pb). 272pp.
ISBN: 9780199566778

Two books sharing two editors published by the leading university presses in the UK have been bundled together for a combined review. Is this justified over and above their alliterative subtitles? On the face of it, no, it is not. Only the two shared editors out of the 54 contributors write in both books. The first book promises to 'redefine the professional role' given a recent debate on 'doctors as experts and professionals'. The other one seeks to document changes in the 'implicit contract [that] sets out society's expectations of psychiatry and mental health professionals and, in turn, of professionals' expectations of society'. In practice, there is a great deal of overlap, although *Psychiatry's Contract with Society* has a broader perspective.

I have spent my working life as a doctor, almost all of it as a psychiatrist. That this was a 'profession' was from the start axiomatic. I was aware of the sociological literature that identified the socialisation process involved in my induction into the profession as a medical student and trainee. This process was for me very benign and I assimilated the behaviours and values of my teachers (rejecting some on the way). I hope I learnt skills to put these values into practice and that I have continued to learn as the demands on me as a psychiatrist evolved. *Professionalism in Mental Healthcare* is focused on how to help mental health professionals follow this journey. It contains chapters on the evolving regulatory frameworks for doctors in a number of jurisdictions and on the teaching of 'professionalism'. Highlights are chapters by Vikram Patel on what professionalism means in resource-poor settings, by John Talbott on the practicalities of introducing a curriculum for professionalism in a medical school and by Jim Sabin and Steven Moffic on the ethical foundations of professionalism.

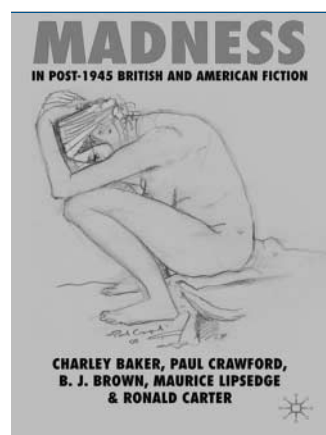
It had never occurred to me that as a psychiatrist I had a contract with anyone other than my employer. I have always been aware that in my role I have had to balance competing interests

(my own, those of my patients – each of whom might have competing interests for my attention – those of my employers and broader societal concerns). *Psychiatry's Contract with Society* seeks to interrogate the 'contract' between two abstract entities, 'society' and 'psychiatry', neither of which is clearly defined. An intriguing chapter by Robin Downie interrogates the concept of a profession from a philosophical viewpoint – quoting Bernard Shaw's nice put-down that 'All professions are conspiracies against the laity'. Richard Cruess and Sylvia Cruess provide strong chapters on the teaching of professionalism and the (metaphorical) social contract between psychiatry and society. Others address, with varying degrees of success, very important issues relating to the economics of mental healthcare, evolving regulatory frameworks and the psychiatrist as leader and manager.

Refreshingly, these books provide food for thought rather than definitive answers to highly complex issues. The questions raised sent me on a search through the internet and my bookshelves. I would really like to think that the ability for moral reflection and intellectual curiosity are the twin hallmarks of the professional.

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Madness in Post-1945 British and American Fiction

By Charley Baker, Paul Crawford,
B. J. Brown, Maurice Lipsedge
& Ronald Carter.
Palgrave Macmillan. 2010.
£50.00 (hb). 240pp.
ISBN: 9780230219755.

Nottingham University has done much to promote the view that an engagement with the humanities leads to a deeper understanding of mental disturbance. Staff at the university have recently launched the 'Madness and Literature Network' (www.madnessandliterature.org) which seeks to inform and involve those interested in the subject, and last year they hosted a successful international conference attended by psychiatrists, literary scholars and those who experience mental illness. Several of the individuals associated with these developments have contributed to this book, which marks an important addition to the evolving field of literature and madness. The authors' backgrounds range from literary studies to social psychology and psychiatry. Rather than just considering the familiar works in the field, such as Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*, the authors examine a great many lesser known novels and several that have been written only in the past few years, for example Clare Allan's *Poppy Shakespeare*, Adam Fould's *The Quickenning Maze* and Sebastian Faulk's *Human Traces*. Drawing on these and other works, the authors demonstrate how novels can illuminate many aspects of mental illness and psychiatry, such as the experience of psychosis, being a patient in a mental hospital, and the link between creativity and madness. In their examination of fictional accounts of madness, the authors are keen to stress that this should not be

merely an exercise in seeing how faithful imaginative literature is to the descriptions of mental illness contained in diagnostic manuals; rather, novels can tell us about the inner experience of mental disturbance.

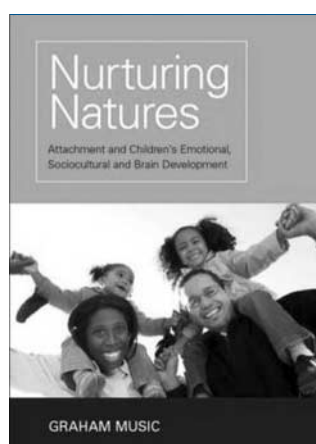
In a chapter that will interest clinicians, the authors consider the emotional and psychological stresses of being a psychiatrist, by analysing such novels as Patrick McGrath's *Trauma* and Sebastian Barry's *The Secret Scripture*. Unlike some accounts that portray psychiatrists as pantomime villains intent on controlling and confining their patients, this book uses novels to sensitively examine the psychological pitfalls of the doctor-patient encounter: psychiatrists who become emotionally dependent on their patients; those who are overcome by the seeming futility of trying to resolve other people's difficulties; and those who use their patients to sort out their own problems.

In their account of what they term 'postmodern madness', the authors examine novels that attempt to evoke the experience of madness by fragmenting the text and trying to disorientate the reader. They draw on the writings of Louis Sass, who, in *Madness and Modernism*, maintained that there are parallels between the work of such writers as Kafka and Beckett and the phenomenology of schizophrenia: the alienated worlds of these authors are said to mirror the experience of psychosis. Whether this helps us understand schizophrenia any better or whether it is just a literary conceit, however, remains debatable.

My only criticism of the book is that it claims to look at British writers but in fact restricts itself to English authors. This is especially disappointing as modern Scottish fiction is marked by a preoccupation with the theme of mental disturbance, for example in the work of Iain Banks, Elspeth Barker, Iain Crichton Smith, Janice Galloway, Alasdair Gray, James Robertson and Muriel Spark. Despite this omission, the book represents a significant and intelligent contribution to what is usually called the medical humanities, but which the authors prefer to call the 'health' humanities.

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Nurturing Natures: Attachment and Children's Emotional, Sociocultural and Brain Development

By Graham Music.
Psychology Press. 2010.
£24.95 (pb). 336pp.
ISBN: 9781848720572

It was a pleasure to review this book which is very timely in its publication. The stated aim is 'To convey an understanding of recent research that has illuminated how the human child develops in its context'. I found that the book achieves this with clarity of language and cogency of reasoning that makes it easy to read and think about.

The book is set out in five parts dealing with key elements in early development, attachment theory, culture and neuroscience. These initial chapters provide the foundation for later ones on