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Cover picture

Asylums. Cover design by Briggs and McClaren for 1968 Penguin edition.

The cover of this landmark book features a man trapped in a maze. The image of the man is by Van Gogh, who produced both a lithograph and, some years later while he was a patient at Saint Remy asylum, a painting entitled *Old Man in Sorrow (On the Threshold of Eternity)*. The Pelican publishers clearly saw Goffman's book as part of the anti-psychiatry genre. The asylum is represented by a maze, which suggests it is a difficult place from which to escape. The maze also dwarfs the small lonely figure of the old man, which conveys the impression of the asylum as a large, overwhelming and de-humanising institution. The old man is portrayed in a pose of deep despair, and the viewer is invited to conclude that this is the result of his incarceration. The would-be reader of Goffman's *Asylums* is thus primed to see the book from a certain perspective and one that puts the patient in an unequal struggle with the institution. (By kind permission of Penguin Books.)

We are always looking for interesting and visually appealing images for the cover of the *Journal* and would welcome suggestions or pictures, which should be sent to Dr Allan Beveridge, British Journal of Psychiatry, 17 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PG, UK or bjp@rcpsych.ac.uk.

