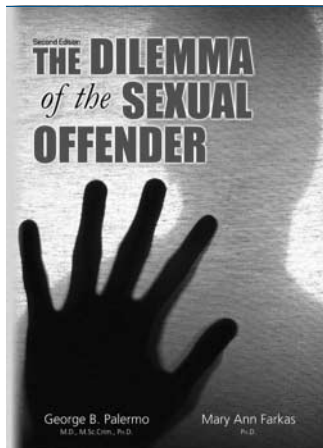


Book review

Edited by Allan Beveridge, Femi Oyeboode
and Rosalind Ramsay



The Dilemma of the Sexual Offender (2nd edn)

By George B. Palermo
& Mary Ann Farkas.
Charles C. Thomas – Publisher.
2013.
US\$69.95 (hb). 356 pp.
ISBN: 9780398088606

This book aims to attract readers from the field of mental health and law in its exploration of the psychological and moral aspects that contribute to sexual offending. In this second edition, concepts such as violence and treatment are re-evaluated in the light of the latest evidence, and readers are brought up to date with the dilemma of the sexual offender in the context of a

technologically advanced world. The authors attempt to explore sexual offending from a psychodynamic stance to aid understanding and to achieve a better degree of prevention. Although the authors are American, most of the concepts are universal and examples from other countries, including the UK, are included.

The book starts with a discussion of the role of women in society and how they might be perceived by their aggressors, and moves on to an examination of the ancient concept of 'evil'. The diversity of the paraphilias is laid out, as well as the link between mental illness and offending.

The authors have included new sections on the idea of cyber-crime and the complexities around policing the internet, as well as women offenders and clergy offenders. The text is well illustrated with case examples.

Most interesting is the debate as to whether sexual offending is a genuine mental health diagnosis or purely immoral behaviour. Treatment for sexual offenders is varied and depends on comorbidities and individual risk factors, and there is variability in the effectiveness of sexual offender treatment and recidivism. Mental health and criminal justice systems are then left with the dilemma of how best this population should be managed, and by whom. Society is tasked with balancing public safety concerns against the reintegration of this population safely back into the community.

Rebecca Marriott ST4 forensic psychiatry, Bracton Centre, Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust, Bracton Lane, Leyton Cross Road, Dartford DA2 7AF, UK.
Email: rebeccamarriott@doctors.org.uk

doi: 10.1192/bjp.bp.113.135004