

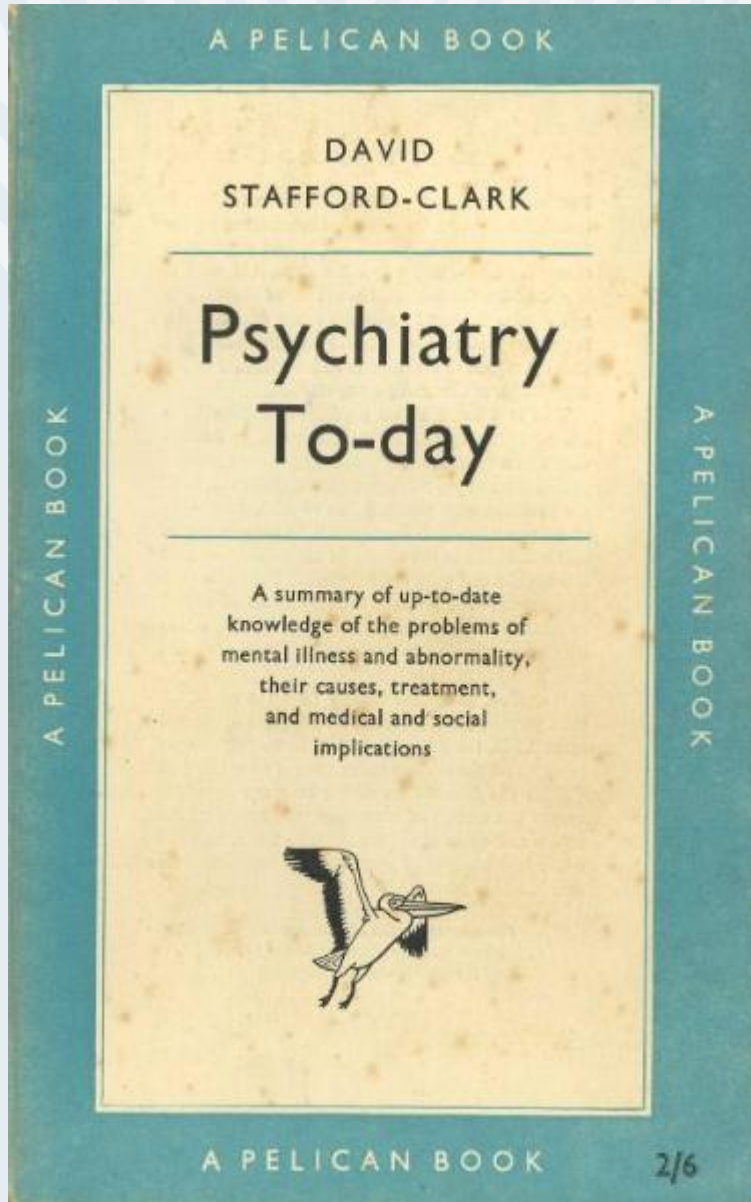


# Psychiatry in the Media

An exhibition created by Dr Gavin Miller, Glasgow University

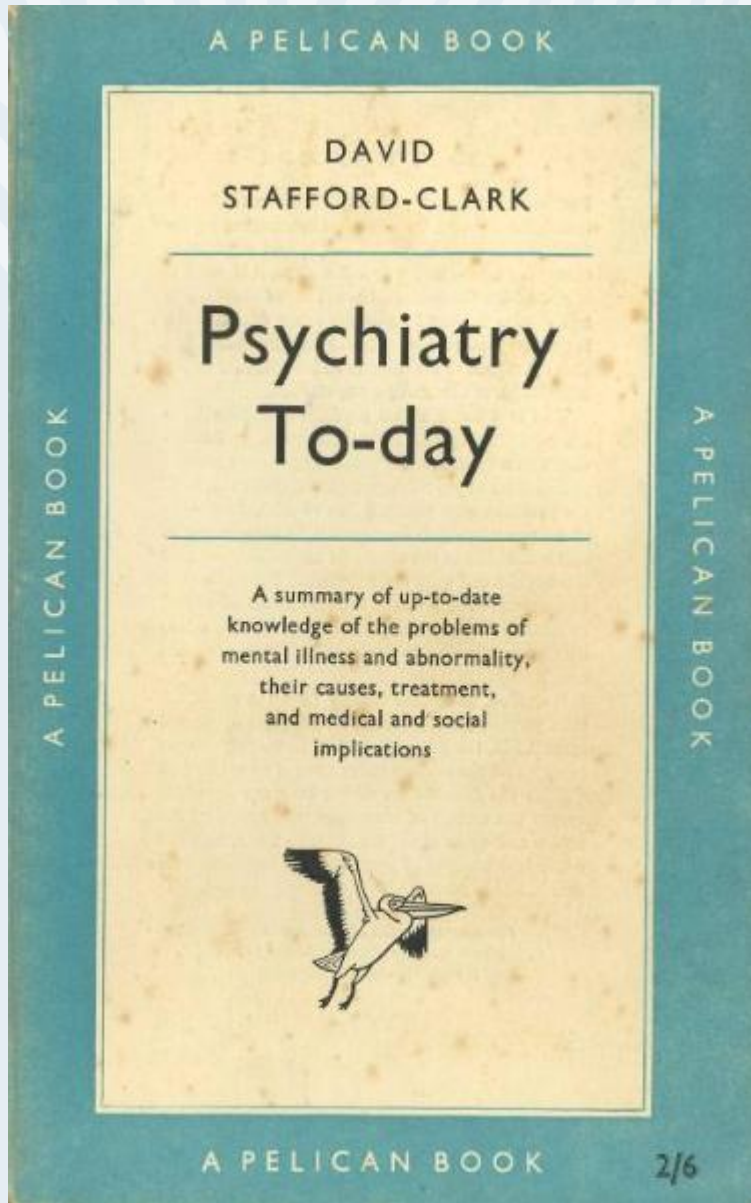
This exhibition showcases twelve books published by Penguin Books between 1949 and 1975 on matters of psychiatric interest. They have been selected because they have particularly interesting archival file material in the Penguin Archive at Bristol University. Most of the books are by psychiatrists, although three are by non-psychiatrists, including a female psychologist, Rona Fields. Reflecting the biases of Penguin's list in this period, the psychiatrist authors are white men. Nonetheless, as the exhibition shows, women often played an important but hidden authorial and editorial role.

The exhibition gives a longer historical view on the opportunities and risks in writing about mental illness and psychiatry for the general public. The creator of the exhibition, Dr Gavin Miller of Glasgow University, hopes that it will inspire contemporary professional reflection on what he calls 'responsible media work' – a term which encompasses issues broader than narrowly ethical questions such as patient confidentiality. What motivates authors to address the general public beyond merely the desire to educate and help? We might think here of the 'shadow-side': the accrual of power and money, a need for admiration, the pursuit of professional rivalries. What are the wider social and cultural implications in media work? These might include questions of exclusion from public representation, the formation of parasocial relationships, and the moulding of media work by the contemporary 'attention economy'.



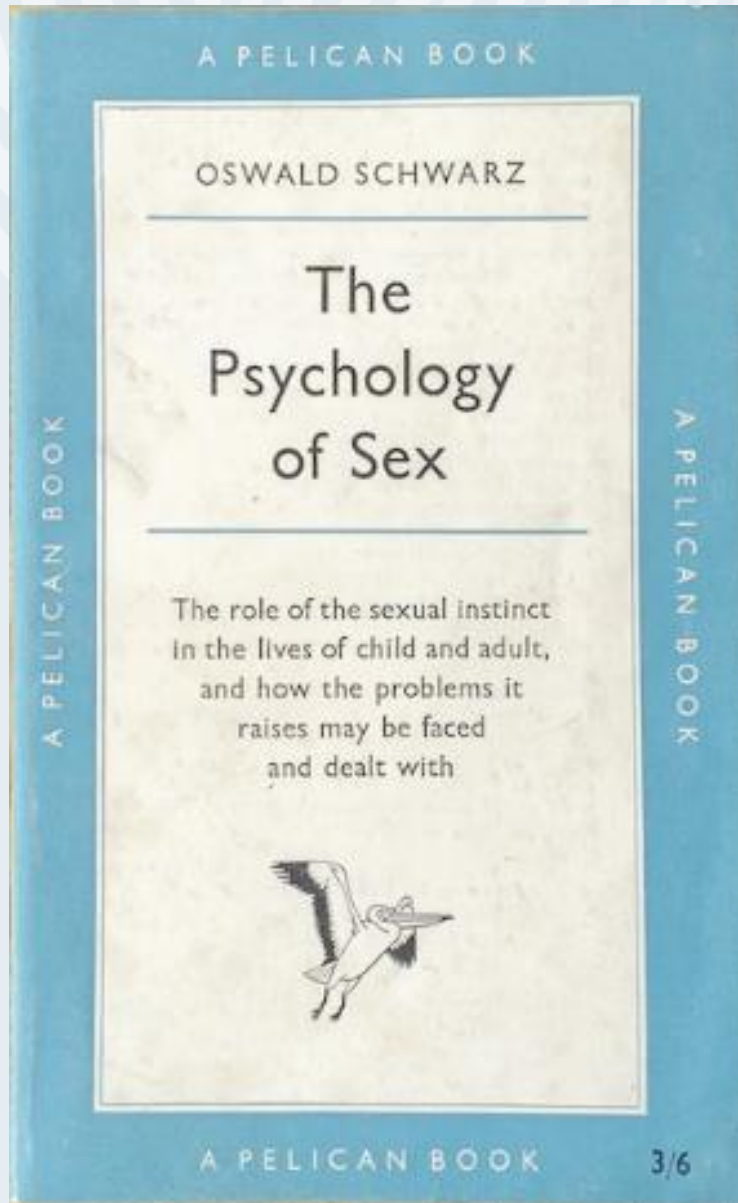
**“who the devil is this dealer with sick people, to pontificate like this about the whole of human life?”**



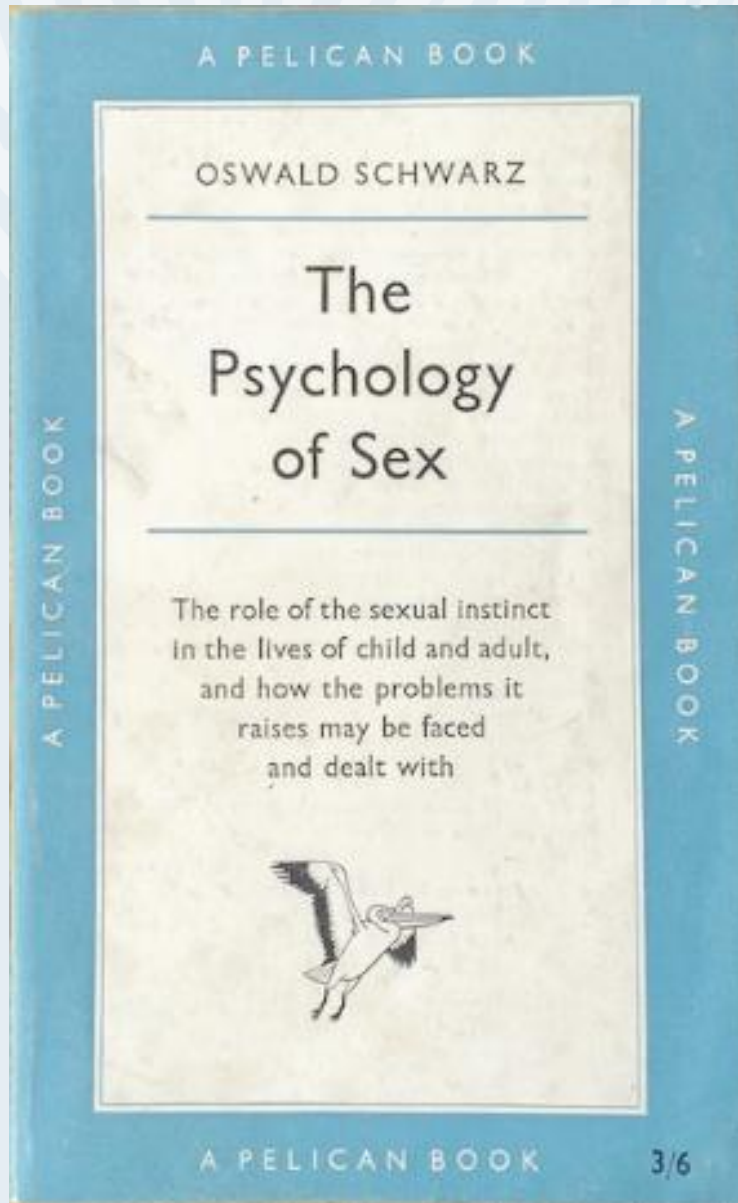


### **David Stafford-Clark, *Psychiatry To-day* (1952)**

This Pelican Original by the psychiatrist David Stafford-Clark (1916–1999) sold at least 140,000 copies in its lifetime and remained in print until the early 1970s. The book was partly a product of the author's thwarted literary ambition: Stafford-Clark was convinced he was an unrecognized major poetic talent, and he used his dealings with Penguin to pitch unsuccessfully a collection of his poetry directly to the founder, Allen Lane. The book was also a launch pad for Stafford-Clark's subsequent career as a broadcaster. His BBC TV career started in 1955, before rapidly flourishing via the series *Lifeline* (1957–1962), through which he became 'the BBC's psychiatrist'. At the height of his fame in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Stafford-Clark was a minor national celebrity. He was also inclined to use his media profile to comment on wider spiritual, moral, and cultural issues. As a BBC producer noted in 1965, Stafford-Clark's broadcasts were like 'sermons' whose 'aim is to do good to the general public': 'My personal reaction is "who the devil is this dealer with sick people, to pontificate like this about the whole of human life?"'.



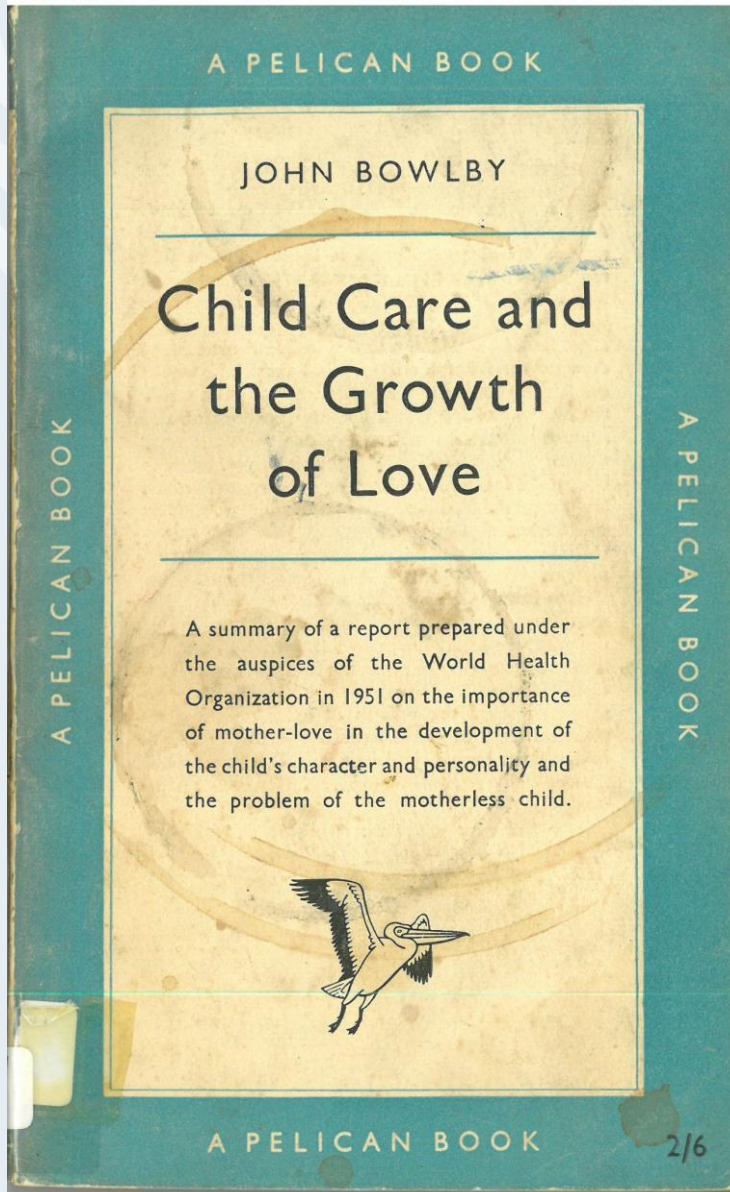
**“mixture of whimsy,  
misinformation, prejudice and  
inaccuracies”**



### **Oswald Schwarz, *The Psychology of Sex* (1949)**

Oswald Schwarz (1883–1949) was a Viennese urologist and Adlerian therapist who fled for Britain in 1934, where he established a practice as a sex therapist in Chelsea. His *Psychology of Sex* was one of Penguin's best-selling titles in the third quarter of 1949, selling over 70,000 copies. However, the anthropologist Geoffrey Gorer, reviewing for *The New Statesman* and *Nation*, thought the book was a 'mixture of whimsy, misinformation, prejudice and inaccuracies'. He was aghast at Schwarz's opinion that normal male sexual development proceeded from masturbation, to use of sex workers, to affairs, then finally to marriage. Since Schwarz counselled women to abstain from sex before marriage, who were the men to have affairs with? The answer lay in Schwarz's nostalgic musings on the office workers, shop girls and flower sellers of 'Imperial Vienna', who could be relied on for temporary affairs (and to refuse 'material gain in any form'). Despite this warning signal, Schwarz's book remained in print until the late 1960s. In 1977, a feminist writer recalled her teenage encounter with Oswald's views on female masturbation: 'It was [...] infrequent and abnormal and quoted as examples, some poor woman who had done it so much (how much is so much?) that she ended up with a deformed pelvis. My God, visions of having to take my O levels with my pelvis in traction.'

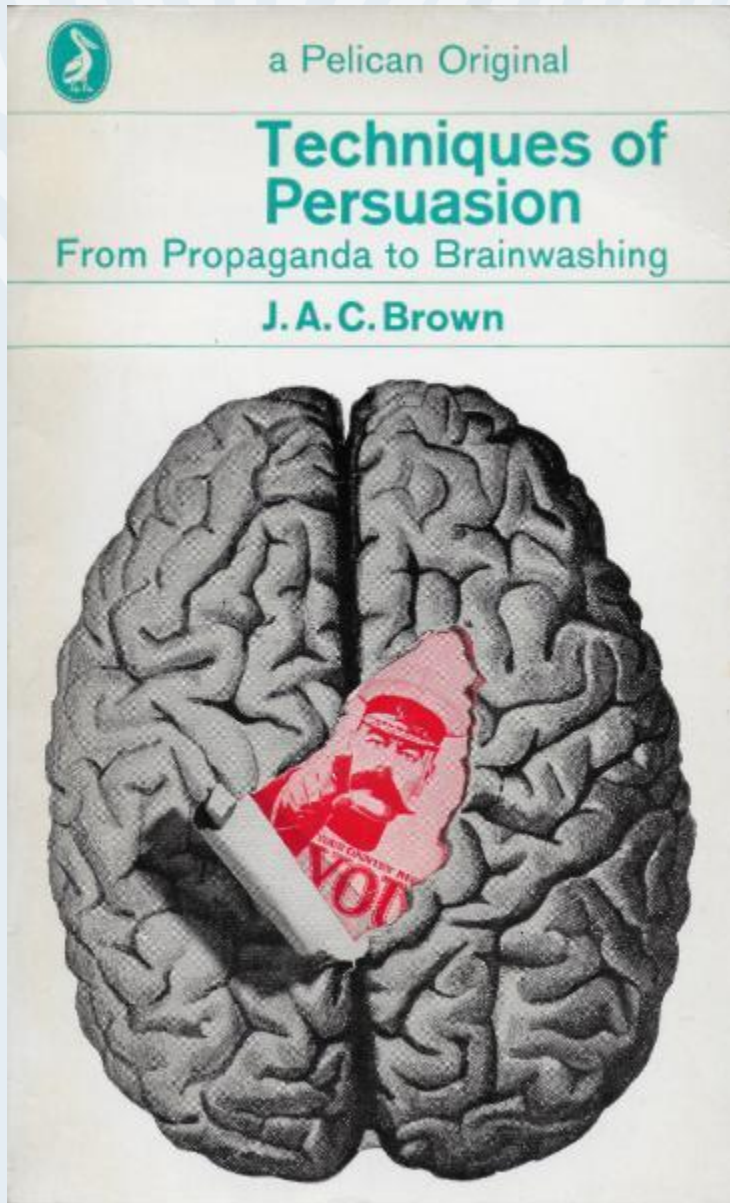




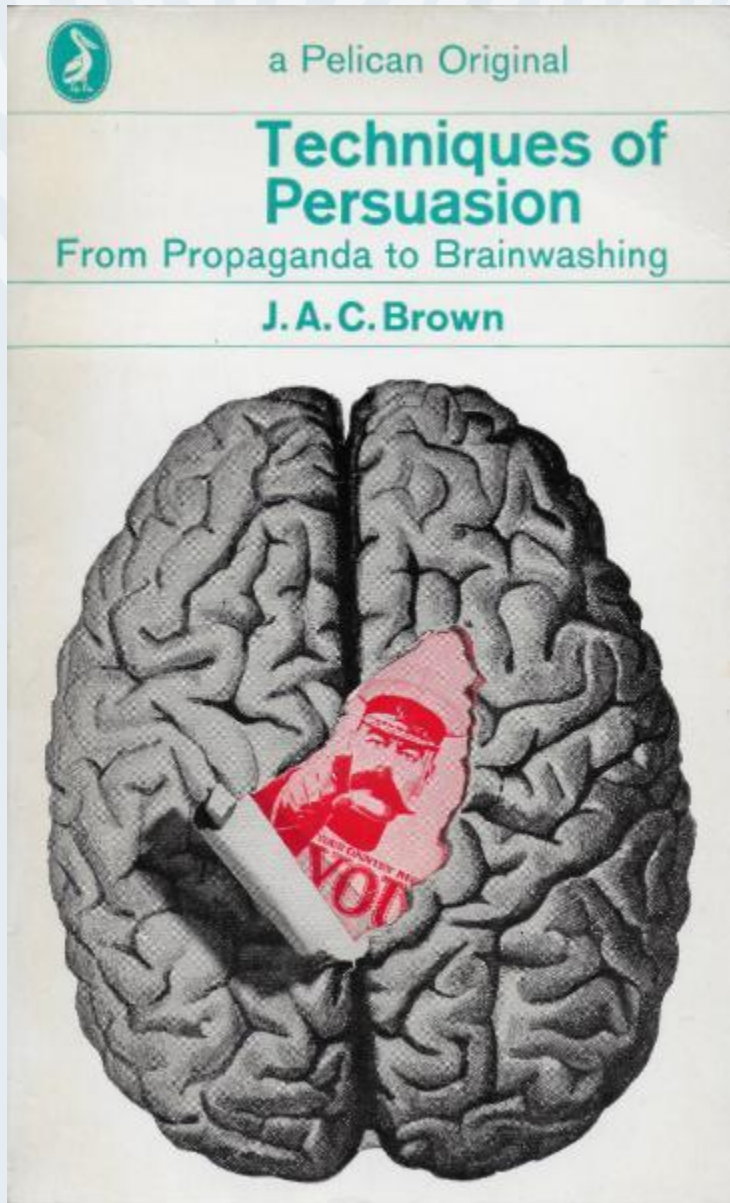
### **John Bowlby, Child Care and the Growth of Love (1953)**

Attachment theory has been a staple of British childcare for many decades, providing a psychological account for the basis of infant and adult mental health. It has also been central to the scientific authorisation of British welfare state politics. This Pelican is an abridged and simplified version of psychiatrist John Bowlby's 1951 report to the World Health Organisation entitled Maternal Care and Mental Health. Bowlby (1907–1990) had been chasing the popular book market for several years but failed to deliver a book on Difficult Children that he contracted with Penguin in 1940. The manuscript of the Pelican edition of Child Care was written not by Bowlby, but by the penal reformer Margery Fry (1874–1958), who saw the potential in a simplified and rewritten version of Bowlby's specialist report. At the commissioning stages the book was explicitly framed as a collaboration or 'joint effort' by Bowlby and Fry, since the latter would shorten and rewrite the original text. (She also took care of tedious work such as the many copyright permission requests.) Yet the eventual contract was made solely with Bowlby, who reaped the rewards of what proved to be a strong commercial success. Fry seems to have been rewarded for her role with £5 worth in copies of the final paperback.





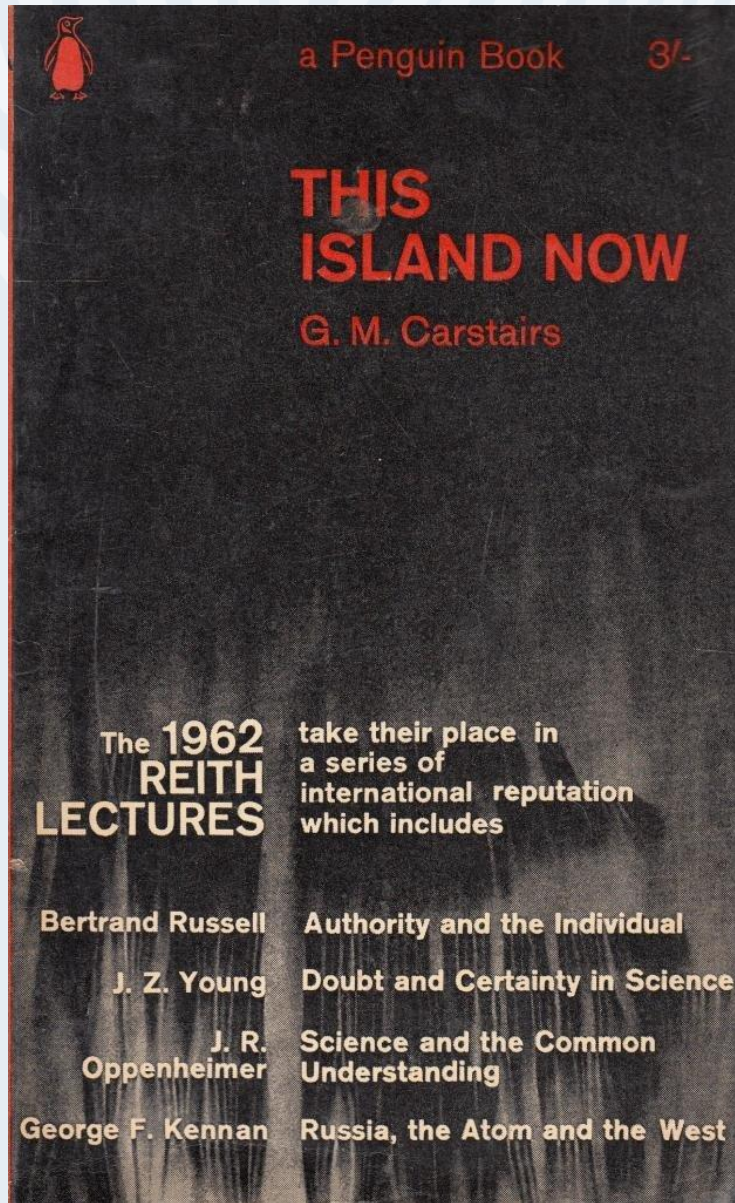
**‘the easiest thing in the world for a reviewer to do is pick up any points that are not accurate, be rude about them, and not pay attention to the main argument of the book’**



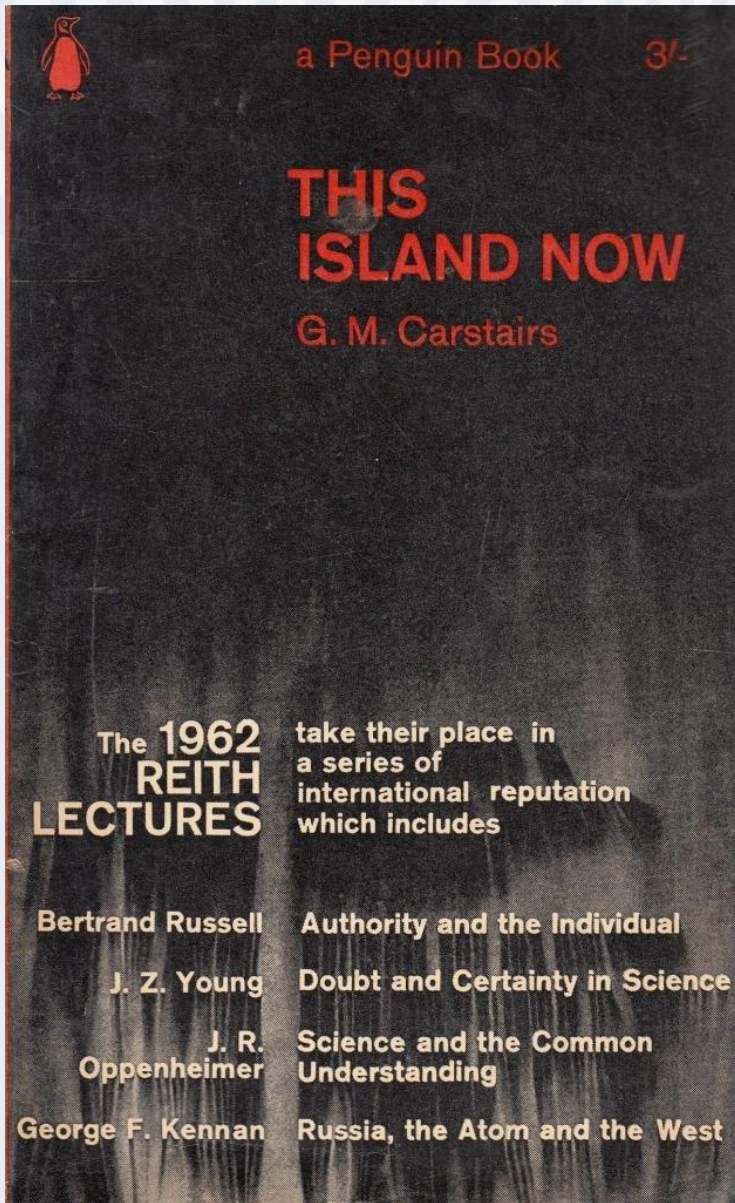
### **J.A.C. Brown, Techniques of Persuasion (1963)**

This Pelican original was contracted under the working title *The Psychology of Propaganda* with an established Penguin author, the psychiatrist J.A.C. Brown (1911–1964). It was intended to rival (or cash in on) bestsellers such as the US journalist Vance Packard's 1957 *The Hidden Persuaders* (on advertising) and the British psychiatrist William Sargant's 1957 *Battle for the Mind* (on brainwashing). The working title was changed in attempt to emulate Sargant's success, but the book was intended as a 'conscious counterblast' to Sargant since it was sceptical about the reality of brainwashing. The topic took Brown into historiographic debates for which he was poorly qualified, leading to a painful editorial process of correction and revision. His editor gently admonished him that 'the easiest thing in the world for a reviewer to do is pick up any points that are not accurate, be rude about them, and not pay attention to the main argument of the book'. Even then, the *New Statesman's* review noted diplomatically that Brown's 'touch as a historian may seem a trifle uneven'. The striking cover design was by Germano Facetti (1926–2006), a leading postwar graphic designer who had overhauled Penguin's outdated typographic cover designs. Facetti, who had been arrested as a member of the Italian resistance, was a survivor of the Mauthausen slave labour camp.





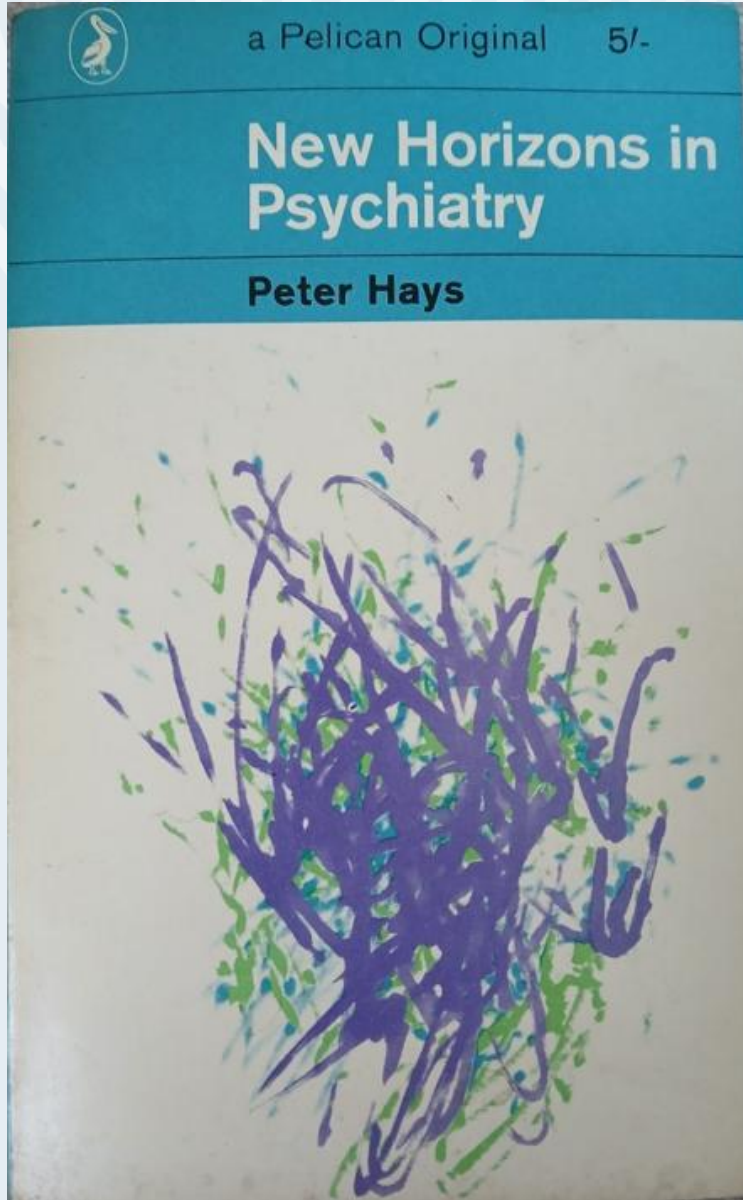
**‘if our greatest national danger is not nuclear destruction but the sinister death that is now amongst us because of this lack of purity and discipline’**



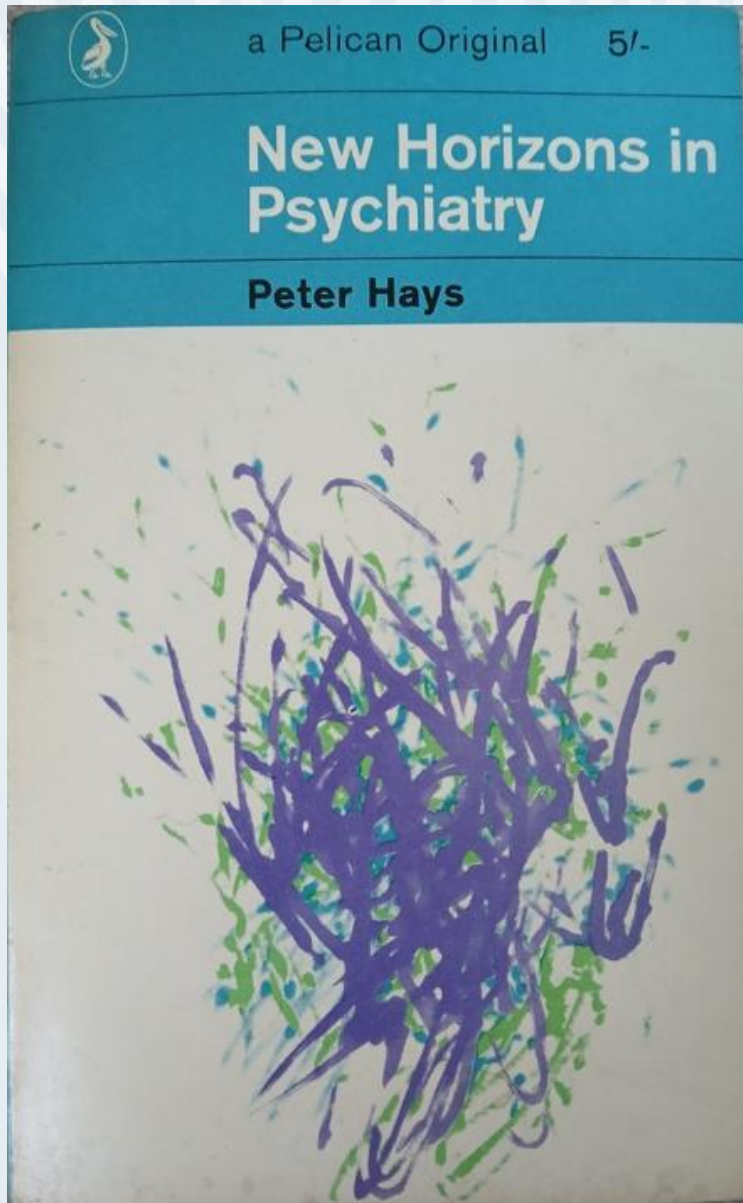
### G.M. Carstairs, *This Island Now* (1964)

This Penguin was a takeover of the hardback edition of the BBC's 1962 Reith Lectures, delivered by the psychiatrist G.M. ('Morris') Carstairs (1916–1991). The lectures attracted enormous press attention because of Carstairs' suggestion that 'chastity' was a virtue less important than 'charity', and that pre-marital sex, with contraception, might be 'a sensible preliminary to marriage'. In the ensuing furore (analysed in his appendix to the Penguin edition), Carstairs was apparently characterised by one daily newspaper as a 'Scottish sex bomb', and 'a bold invader of bedrooms'. Penguin understood the new public role for the psychiatrist that these Reith lectures heralded. Before commissioning the takeover, they invited comment from psychologist C.A. Mace, who described the book as a "Tract for the Times" – a bit of "Honest to God propaganda" that was 'most important as a forthright statement of moral judgement on sex and love in courtship and marriage which are very widely accepted by so many educated people'. Social and cultural conservatives had a different view. The leader of the Salvation Army had denounced Carstairs' radio lectures as 'another symptom of the general lowering of moral standards', and wondered (in 1962, just after the Cuban Missile Crisis) 'if our greatest national danger is not nuclear destruction but the sinister death that is now amongst us because of this lack of purity and discipline'.



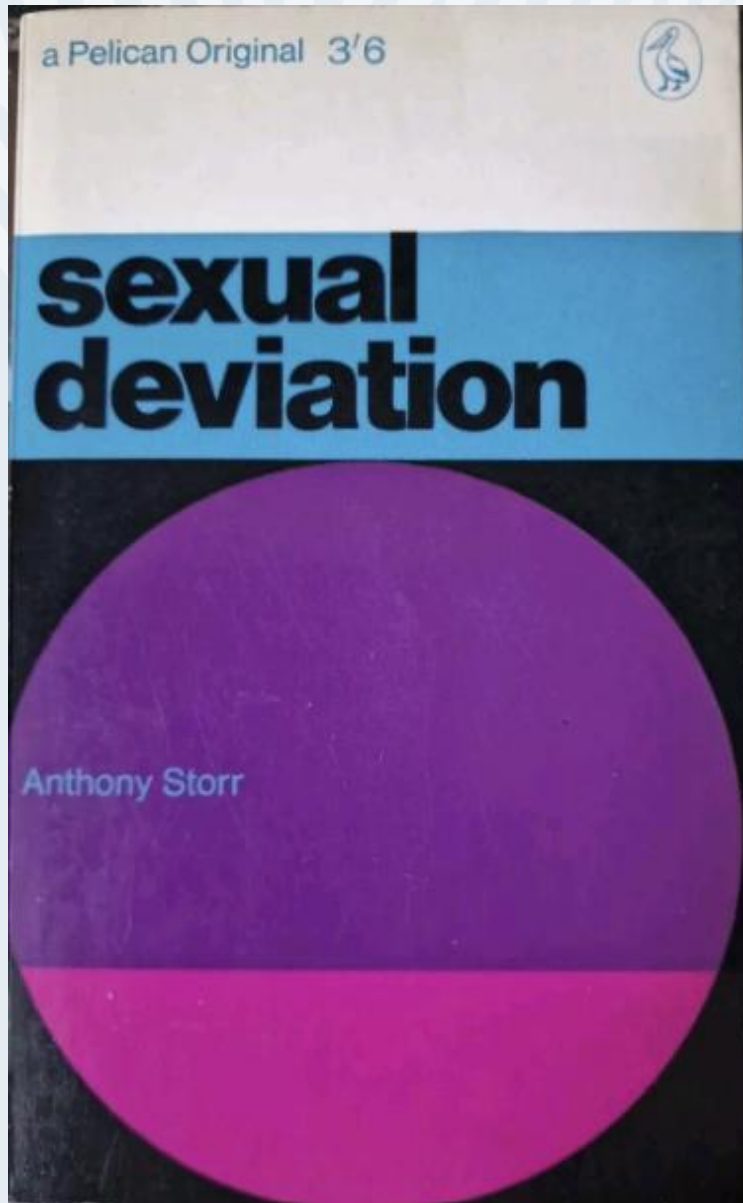


**‘It all sounds very simple, and one begins to wonder why people like Freud and [theologian Paul] Tillich ever bothered so much about it.’**



### **Peter Hays, *New Horizons in Psychiatry* (1964)**

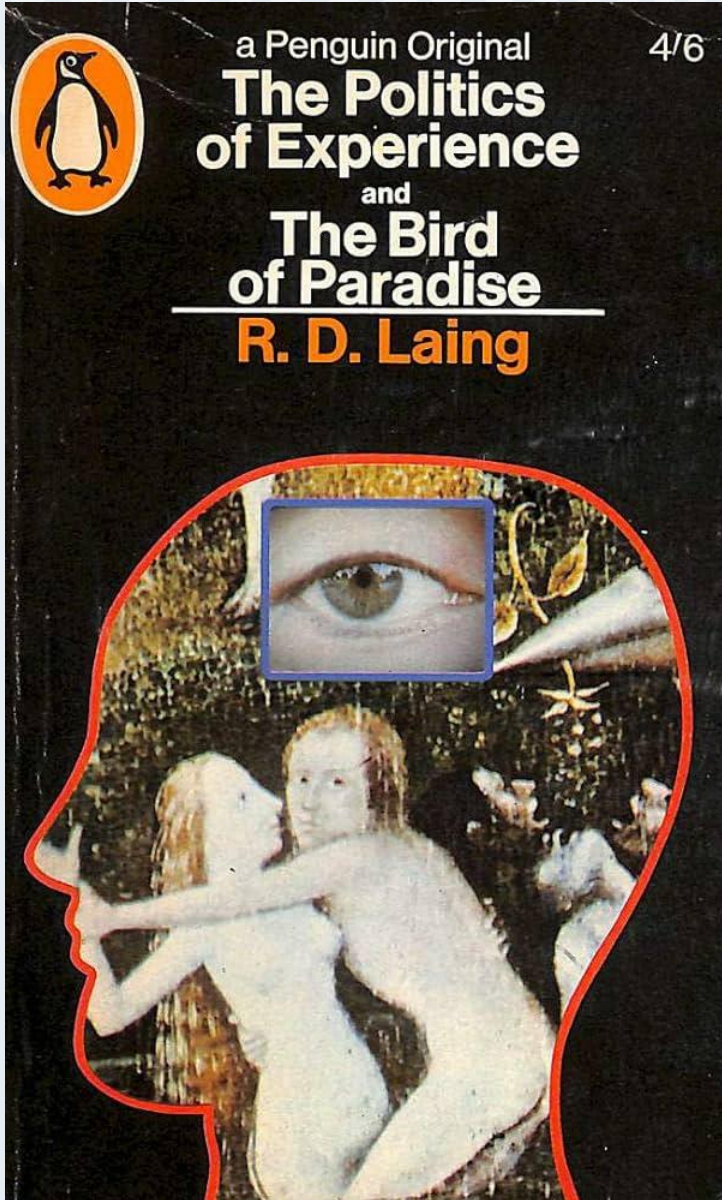
Penguin were inspired by the success of Stafford-Clark's *Psychiatry To-day* (1952) to commission an updated Pelican by the psychiatrist Peter Hays (1927–2016). Hays appealed because he was already a commercially successful fiction author for Jonathan Cape, writing under the pseudonym Ian Jefferies. The psychiatrist Morris Carstairs, who reviewed Hays' synopsis for Penguin, thought the book 'could have quite an appeal to a general medical and interested lay audience serving as a companion volume to Stafford-Clark'. For Hays, the book provided an opportunity to debunk public perceptions of the importance of psychoanalysis to psychiatry. His book repudiated the scientific credentials of psychoanalysis, clearing the way for somatically oriented chapters on topics such as neurosurgical advances, the rise of outpatient care, behaviourism, addiction, and legal issues in psychiatry. *New Horizons* had only modest success. One problem was that Hays was writing a general account, rather than conveying his specialist expertise: Carstairs was concerned at the 'wide, but hasty reading' in early drafts. Another question was whether Penguin's lay readership really wanted psychiatry to dispense with the mysteries of the soul. Psychotherapist Peter Lomas (a former surgeon and GP) reviewing for *New Society* diagnosed 'a psychiatric myth', 'the widespread belief that a medical degree automatically confers wisdom and human understanding'. To Hays' proposal that patients with anxiety usually had some mundane problem, Lomas retorted ironically, 'It all sounds very simple, and one begins to wonder why people like Freud and [theologian Paul] Tillich ever bothered so much about it.'



### **Anthony Storr, *Sexual Deviation* (1964)**

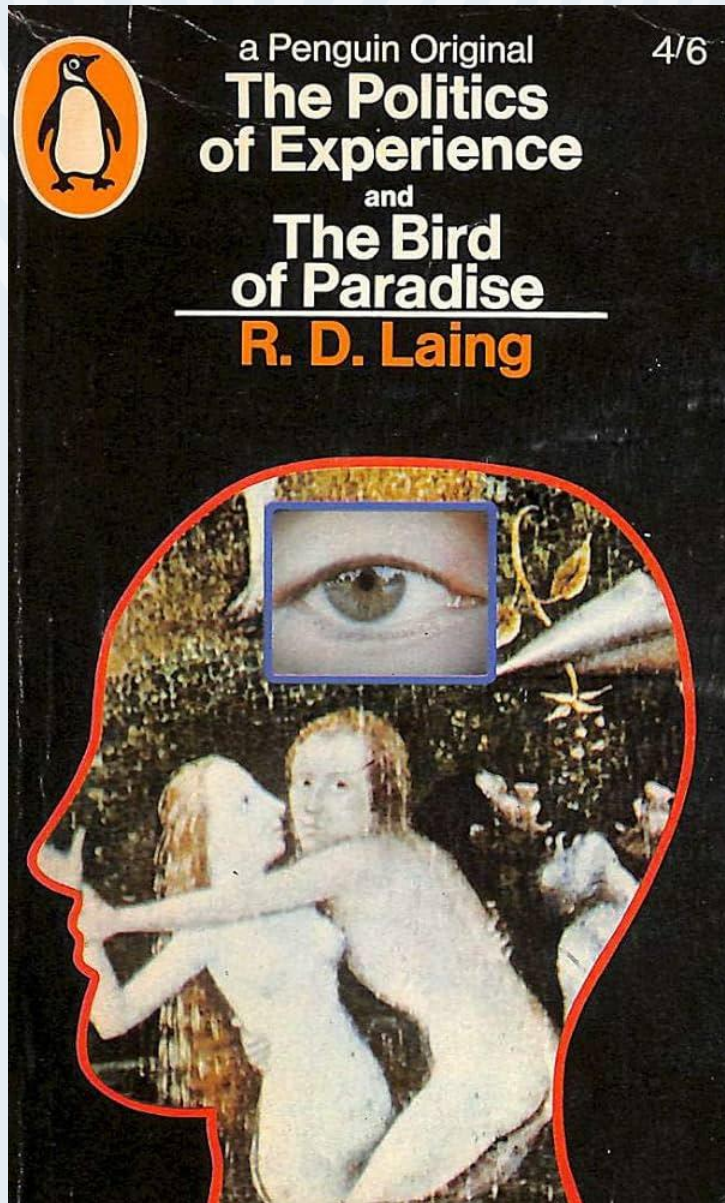
Psychiatrist turned psychoanalytic psychotherapist Anthony Storr (1920–2001) was already a published Penguin author and had a growing profile in newspapers and magazines as an expert commentator on issues such as brainwashing, racism, criminality and aggression. This book was among the early entries in the series *Studies in Social Pathology*, edited by the psychiatrist Morris Carstairs. Its central aim was to use psychoanalytic theory to establish a continuity between ‘normal’ and ‘abnormal’ sexuality. The Wolfenden Report of 1957 had advocated the legalization in England and Wales of homosexuality between adult males. In similar fashion, this short book positioned sexual variation as a matter best approached with compassionate psychological expertise rather than the force of the criminal law. A review for *New Society* endorsed this effort to supplant ‘the rantings of chief constables’ and commented, ‘There, but for the grade of God, go all of us’. For Storr, all sexual differences from heterosexuality were essentially ‘forms of immaturity, childish attitudes which have not been outgrown’. This view of homosexuality as deficiency, not difference, was soon challenged by social and cultural changes in succeeding decades, as the case of Moses Laufer’s *Adolescent Disturbance and Breakdown* will illustrate.





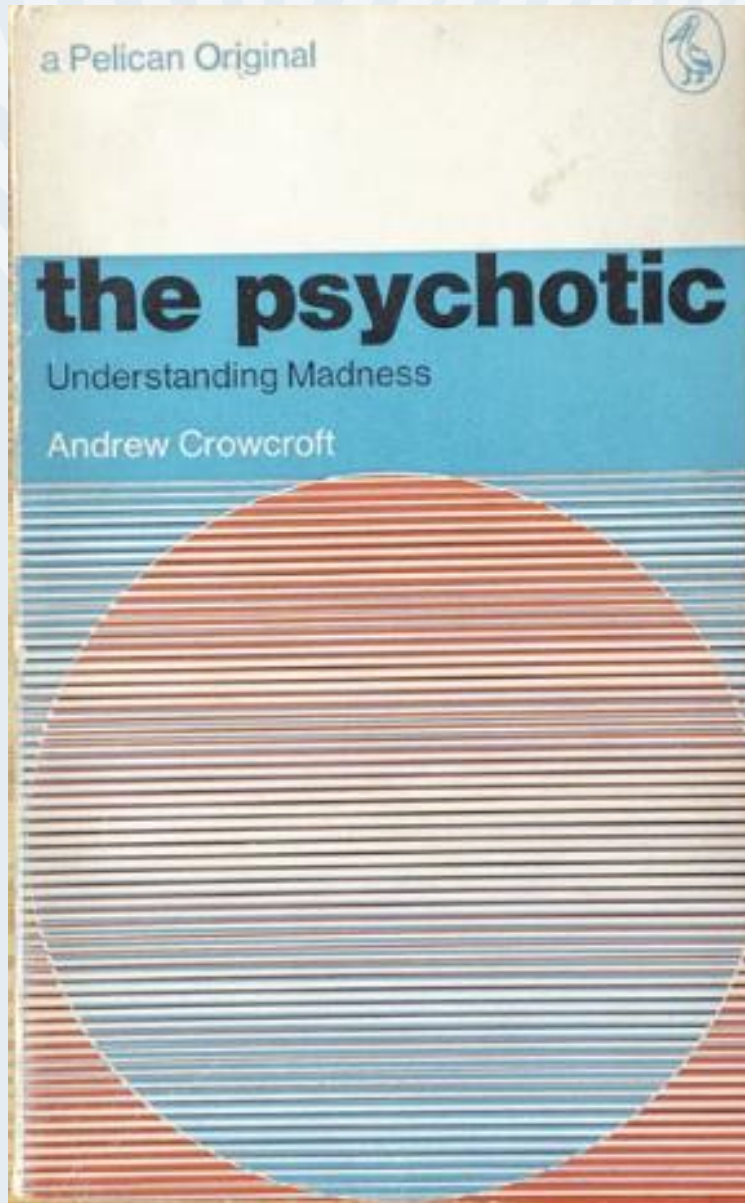
**‘a scathing critique of Western society from a nominally psychiatric perspective’**





### **R.D. Laing, *The Politics of Experience and The Bird of Paradise* (1967)**

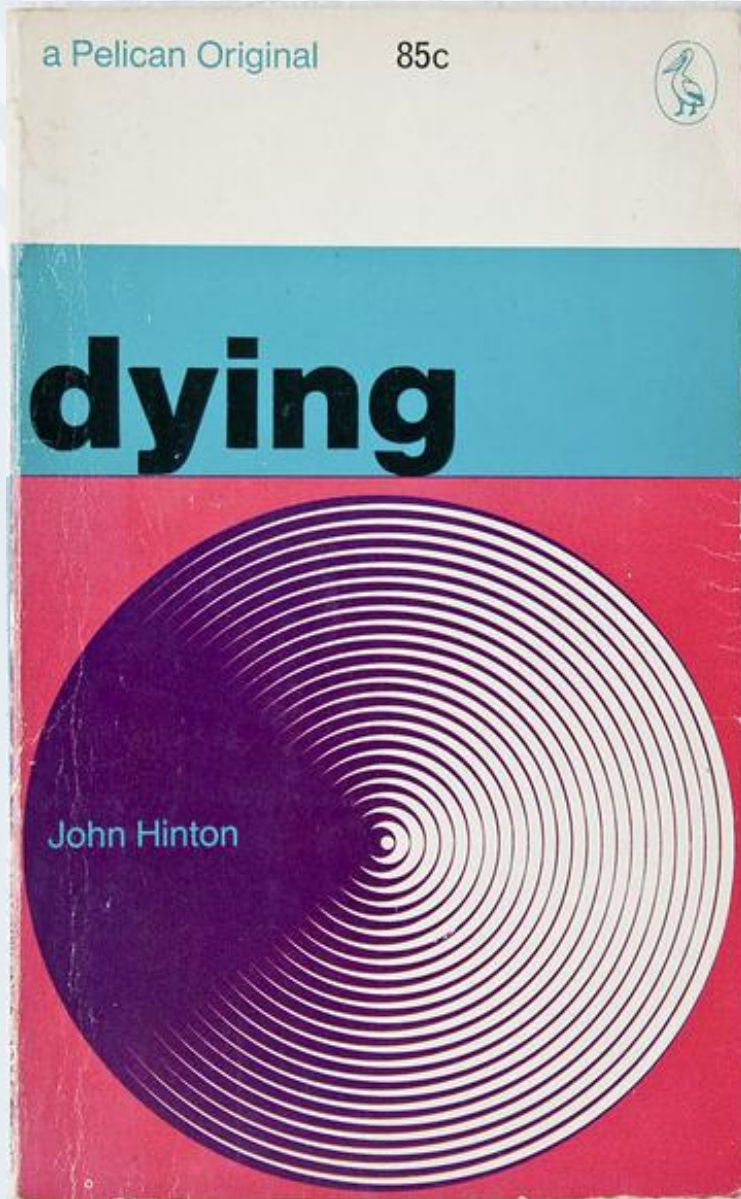
This countercultural classic by the avant-garde psychiatrist R.D. Laing (1927-1989) was originally commissioned as a Pelican entitled *Understanding Human Behaviour*. The eventual manuscript was peer-reviewed by psychiatrist Andrew Crowcroft who praised it as the work of 'the most original thinker in British psychiatry and an incredibly powerful writer'. He admired Laing's prose-poem, *The Bird of Paradise*, for its 'splendid' use of tabooed vocabulary. While this assessment may seem unusual to contemporary eyes, Crowcroft was writing only five years after the unsuccessful prosecution of Penguin under the Obscene Publications Act for its 1960 paperback of D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Laing's book was in no way a 'Pelicanized' introduction, but rather a scathing critique of Western society from a nominally psychiatric perspective. The philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre reviewing for *The Observer* thought *The Bird of Paradise* was 'incoherent poetry', 'a prophetic meditation, an incantation rather than a description'. *British Journal of Psychiatry* was bemused by Laing's promotion of psychosis as a potentially healing voyage through inner space. The playwright David Storey writing for *New Society* was more sympathetic but warned of 'the old puritan elitism': 'Only those who go crazy have any hope of being saved'. Regardless, Laing's book was an international bestseller that remains in print today.



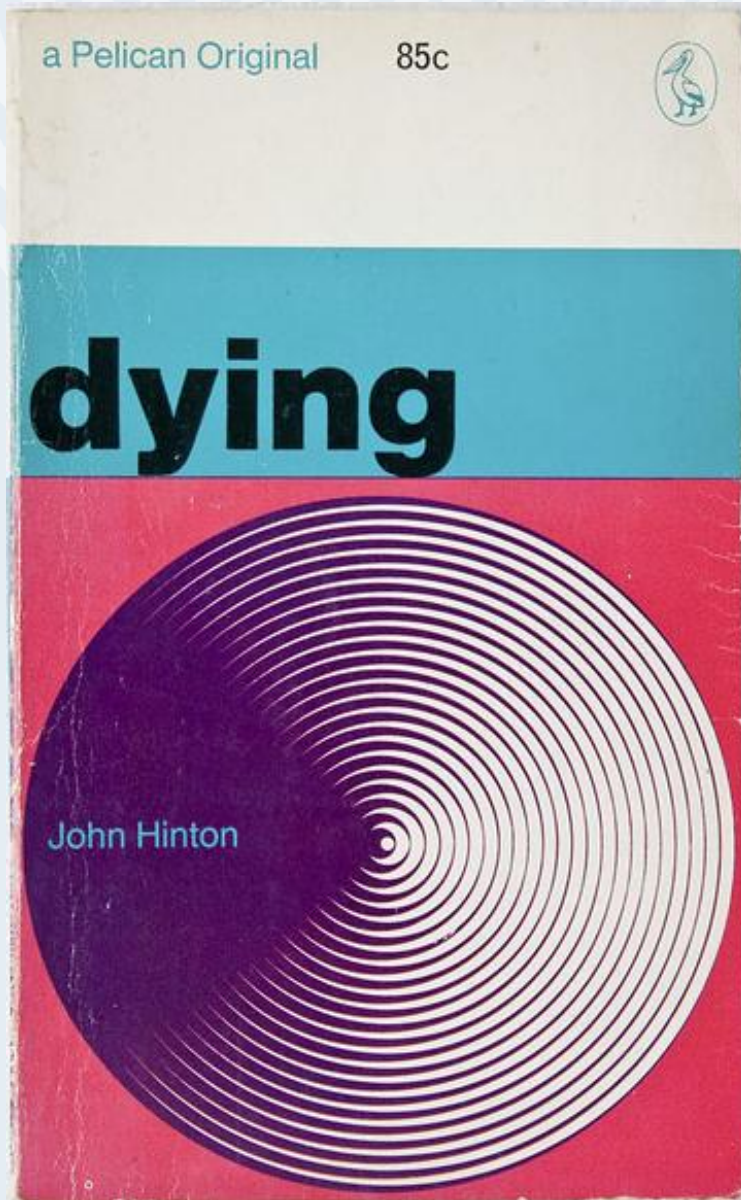
### **Andrew Crowcroft, *The Psychotic: Understanding Madness* (1967)**

Penguin were interested in the psychiatrist Andrew Crowcroft (1923–2002) for a book on ‘the psychoses’ because he had broadcast experience from the BBC’s Third Programme, which specialised in arts and culture. His pseudonymous 1963 broadcast ‘The Anxious Tiger’ (and article for BBC magazine, *The Listener*) proposed that modern societies had to successfully manage endemic anxiety. In a perhaps prescient diagnosis, Crowcroft argued that authoritarian governments arose when a ‘stressed population’ resorted to psychopathic leaders who appeared to be ‘under entire self-control, knowing what to do’ but were ‘in fact usually irresponsible in responsible positions’. Crowcroft was advised by his editor, Charles Clark, to follow Stafford-Clark’s *Psychiatry Today* (1952) as a ‘good example of Pelicanization’: a Pelican author must ‘be able to write at an intelligent Pelican level (roughly a Third Programme level) on the basis that [...] the assumption of intelligence in his readers is fundamental’. Despite Crowcroft’s journalistic experience, the book needed heavy revision, including external commentary from Dorothy F. Paddon, a freelance editor and former Tavistock employee, whose invisible hand improved other Penguins, such as Maxwell Jones’s *Social Psychiatry* (1968) and Gilbert Ryle’s *Student Casualties* (1969). Penguin deprecated Crowcroft’s preferred title *Understanding Madness*, arguing that “‘madness’ has become (or ought to be) a dirty word’. Crowcroft, with partial success, defended his title on grounds of clarity to an everyday reader.





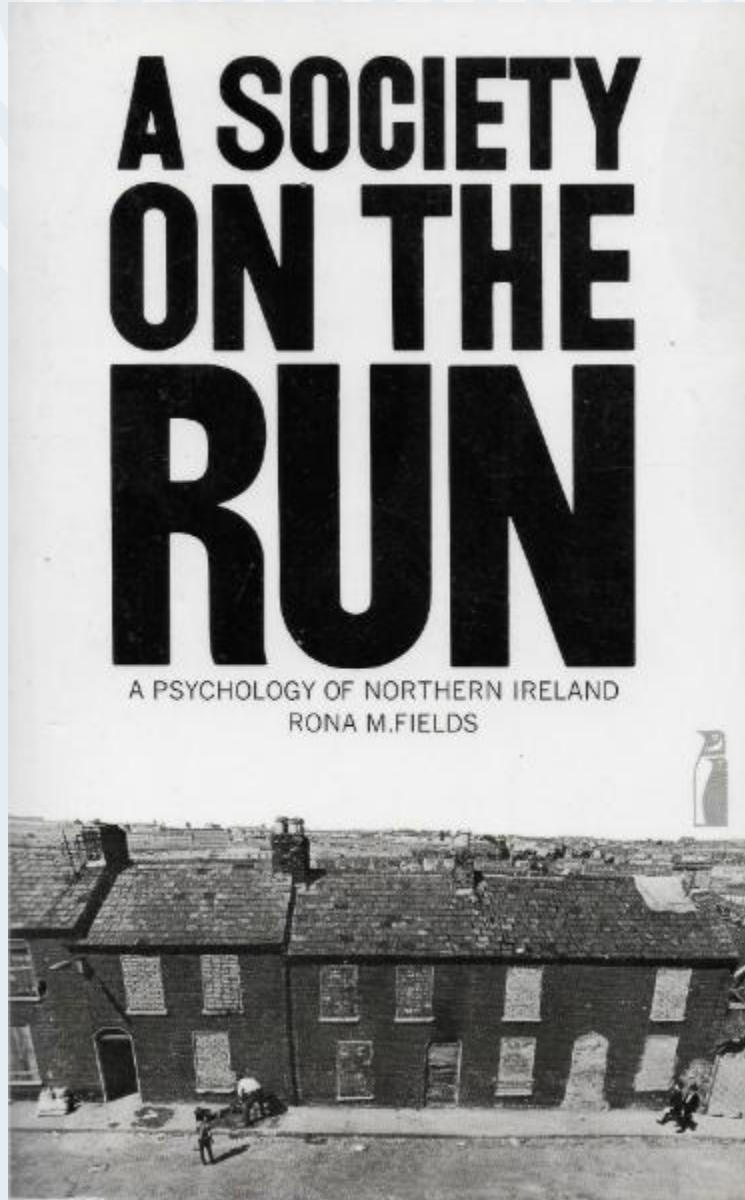
**‘the entire text was overhauled by an in-house editor to improve Hinton’s ponderous prose, which was suited better to medical journals’**



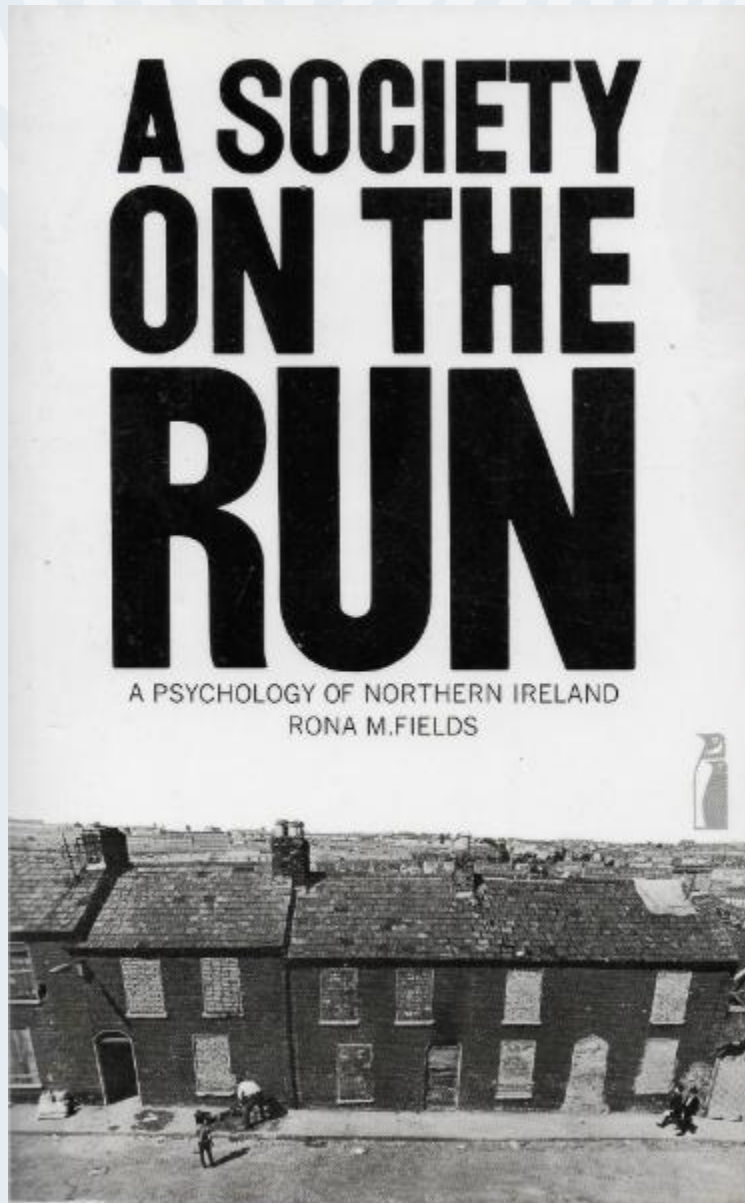
## John Hinton, **Dying** (1967)

This Pelican original by the psychiatrist John Hinton (1926–2016) was commissioned after an approach by Penguin. Hinton was a pioneer in the psychiatry of terminal illness in the UK, and a long-standing collaborator with Cicely Saunders, the leader in hospice care. Hinton and Penguin debated the title, whether the book was about Death, Understanding Death, Looking at Death or Facing Death – or, in the end, just Dying. Like many Pelican originals by psychiatrists, the process of authorship was more collaborative than the title page indicated. Hinton's wife was paid by Penguin for her typing, referencing, and indexing duties, and the entire text was overhauled by an in-house editor to improve Hinton's ponderous prose, which was suited better to medical journals. The book was favourably reviewed in the USA by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross (inventor of the five-stage model of grief), marking its international significance. Dying remained in print until the 1990s, sustained perhaps by its appeal to a growing professional market in end-of-life care as much as to the general reader.



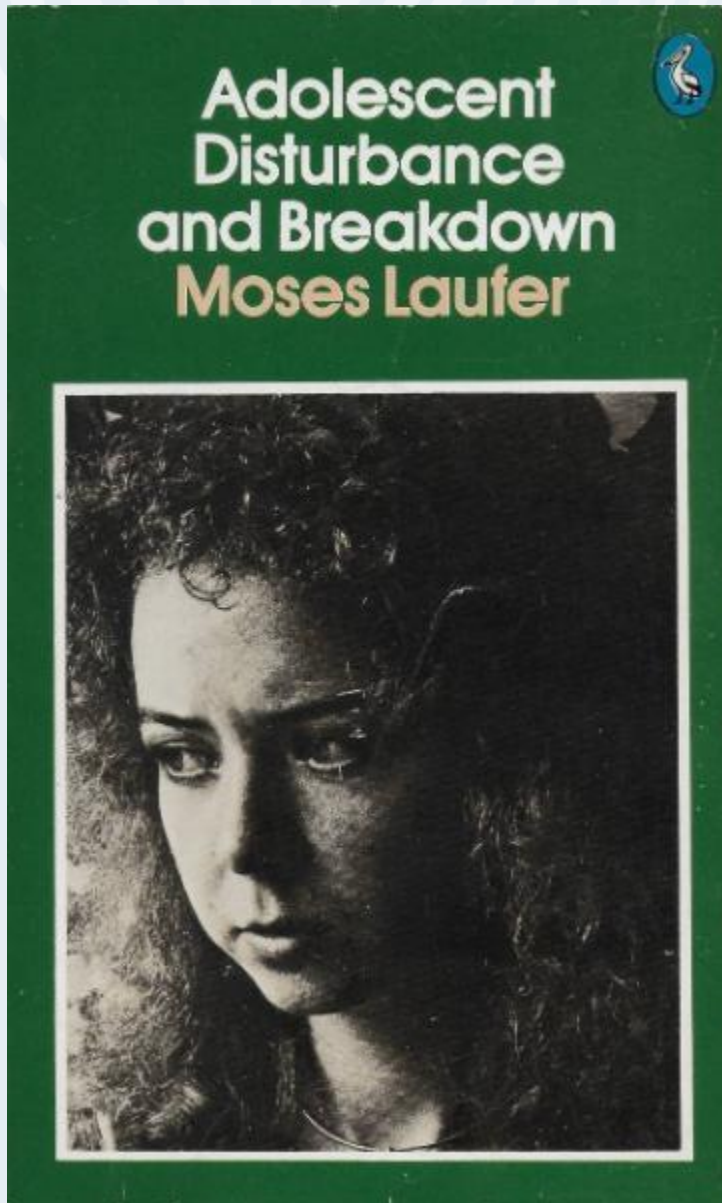


**‘fierce partisanship, unsubstantiated accusation, repeated inaccuracy of fact and phrase, and the misspelling of 27 different proper names; and all this from a trusted publishing house, and in the name of education’**



### **Rona M. Fields, *A Society on the Run: a Psychology of Northern Ireland* (1973)**

This original for the Penguin Education imprint was authored by the US psychologist and activist Rona M. Fields (1932–2016). The book offered Fields's findings on the harmful psychological effects of the Troubles, and challenged what she saw as the complacency of Northern Irish psychiatry and psychology. Fields claimed to have been allowed into 'the homes and guts' of the local population, who trusted that 'I'd be fair and understanding. The book was published in October 1973 but was withdrawn shortly afterwards by Penguin following a scathing review in *The Sunday Times* which alleged 'fierce partisanship, unsubstantiated accusation, repeated inaccuracy of fact and phrase, and the misspelling of 27 different proper names; and all this from a trusted publishing house, and in the name of education'. Fields claimed vocally, particularly in the Irish press, that the withdrawal was really due to pressure on Penguin from the British government to suppress her findings. Penguin repudiated Fields's account and offered to republish the book in a revised and corrected edition. Mutual trust between author and publisher was though in short supply. The publishing agreement between Fields and Penguin eventually dissolved, and her text was published in 1976 an expanded and revised form in the US by Temple University Press as *Society under Siege: A Psychology of Northern Ireland*.



### **Moses Laufer, Adolescent Disturbance and Breakdown (1975)**

The psychoanalyst Moses Laufer (1928–2006) trained as a social worker before moving into youth work. He was central to the founding of the Brent Consultation Centre (now Brent Centre for Young People) – a psychotherapeutic treatment, research and educational centre for young people. This Pelican original is one of three volumes created in collaboration with the mental health charity MIND, which received a share of the royalties. Laufer claims in his book that homosexuality in older adolescents is ‘always a sign of the presence of disturbance’ attributable to a repudiation of their maturing body. This pathologizing account of gay adolescents was contested by a gay campaigning group, who wrote to Penguin (and to MIND) requesting that the book be withdrawn or that a rejoinder be inserted. Both Penguin and MIND agreed with this criticism. Penguin suggested to Laufer that he alter the text in later reprints to acknowledge that gay men and women might be free and happy on their own terms. Laufer declined, and other possibilities such as a disclaimer from MIND were impractical. The text therefore reprinted verbatim.



For more information on the exhibition,  
please see this interview with Dr Miller  
conducted by the College's Historian in  
Residence, Dr Gordon Bates:



Dr Miller has previously written for the  
*Psychiatric Bulletin* on a related theme:  
'Beyond a literacy model for psychiatry in  
the mass media' (48(4), pp. 250-253:



## Acknowledgements

HoPSIG members, the RCPsych Exhibitions Group, Corinne Bishop, Fiona Watson, Catriona Grant, Georgia Johnson and all the other staff who facilitated the exhibition at the College.

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Please complete the brief evaluation survey. You can find this by following the QR code:

