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SOME LATENT FUNCTIONS OF IMPRISONMENT

HANS W. MATTICK

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The present article was recently read before the Illinois Academy of Criminology. The author challenges us to think seriously of some usually unthought-of effects of our traditional methods of dealing with criminals.—EDITOR.

I. THE CONCEPTS OF MANIFEST AND LATENT FUNCTIONS

The latent functions of an act, in Merton's sense of the term,¹ are what we bargain for in ignorance. Given A, B and C we want to achieve X, but when we analyze the objective consequences of our purposive activity, we find we have actually achieved Y and Z, either along with, or without, X. Such lack of control in scientific activity is so common that in the physical sciences (to make a poor joke) they already have a name for it and call it Heisenberg's principle of indeterminacy. The Greeks called such lack of control chance or fate.² More modern social theorists, naturally, cannot agree on what to call this phenomenon, so we find, in historical order, that Macchiavelli called it "fortune,"³ Mosca called it "luck,"⁴ Sumner called it "the aleatory element,"⁵ Pareto called it "the non-logical"⁶ and Merton, elsewhere in his work, refers to it as "the serendipity pattern."⁷ What they all meant, and what we all still share in common, is a social "science" without the necessary degree of social control to make it a science. That is why some of us speak of the behavioral disci-

plines rather than "the social sciences," for we are aware that such a category as "latent functions" represents a residual category. It is that category, among the known areas of the social disciplines, in which we place the as yet unknown in an effort to constantly reduce its scope and thus, by gradual increments, attempt to gain more social control.

The naming of a phenomenon, even before we know what it implies, is a first step in the reduction of our ignorance. This is what Merton has done by distinguishing between manifest and latent functions in the field of human affairs. The basic notion to be grasped is the relation between our subjective motives and the objective consequences in the field of purposive social action. When the objective consequences of our activity correspond to the subjective motives that gave rise to our activity, then those consequences are a manifest function of those motives. When, on the other hand, the objective consequences of our subjective motives and activity are something other than that which we intended to achieve, whether tangential, irrelevant or contrary to our subjective motives, then we have a latent function. This, and a good deal more, is what Robert K. Merton was writing about in his article on "Manifest and Latent Functions," and we can see, even in this oversimplified presentation, that this is a general principle of wide application.

II. THE TRADITIONAL NORMATIVE MOTIVES FOR IMPRISONMENT

The elaboration of some latent functions in the case of imprisonment is probably an easier task than it is in the cases of (1) the legal process, (2) law enforcement, (3) the judicial process and (4) post-institutional procedures. The reason for this relative ease is that the social motivations that

¹ ROBERT K. MERTON, *Manifest and Latent Functions*, in *SOCIAL THEORY AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE*, Glencoe, Illinois, Free Press, 1949, pp. 21-81.

² Cf. GILBERT MURRAY, *The Failure of Nerve*, in *FIVE STAGES OF GREEK RELIGION*, Garden City, New York, Doubleday and Company, 1955, pp. 119-165.

³ NICCOLO MACCHIAVELLI, *THE PRINCE AND THE DISCOURSES*, New York, New York, Modern Library, 1940, p. 91 ff., and p. 380 ff.

⁴ GAETANO MOSCA, *THE RULING CLASS*, New York, New York, McGraw-Hill Company, 1939, p. 456.

⁵ WILLIAM GRAHAM SUMNER, *FOLKWAYS*, Boston, Massachusetts, Ginn and Company, 1906, pp. 6-7.

⁶ VILFREDO PARETO, *THE MIND AND SOCIETY*, New York, New York, Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1935, para. #2111 and *passim*.

⁷ ROBERT K. MERTON, *The Bearing of Empirical Research on Sociological Theory*, in *op. cit.*, pp. 97-111.

lead society to imprison some of its members are a complex of contradictory, normative, historical survivals. In an earlier day, when social organization may have been simpler, there was more concern with the well-being of the group, and relatively less concern for the individual. When an offense occurred in such a society, the offender was either isolated through ostracism, or simply killed, and the group's unity was thought to have been maintained. We recognize here two notions, namely isolation and punishment, which are still two of the major normative motives for imprisonment. A little later on in history, and probably as the result of some miscegenation between two antagonistic streams of thought, the redemptive notions of Christian theology mated with the hedonistic calculus of utilitarian rationalism, there arose the idea that isolation and punishment would lead to an exercise of the reason and the will, which in turn would lead to a negative kind of deterrence, even if it did not lead to redemption. This third notion, the negative idea of deterrence through a rational fear of the consequences of wrong-doing, is also, still, a major normative motive for imprisonment. Finally, under the influence of the behavioral disciplines, and perhaps under an exaggerated conception of the degree of social control they implied, imprisonment, under proper conditions, was conceived of as a mode of positive deterrence, commonly called reform or rehabilitation, with the emphasis placed on individualized treatment. At present this fourth notion, that of positive deterrence or rehabilitation, is still largely, and firmly, lodged in the area of subjective motivations for imprisonment in the form of ideological slogans and public relations window-dressing, and remains to be evidenced in the objective consequences of imprisonment.

In any case, imprisonment today represents an interpenetration of these four sets of normative social motivation: isolation, punishment, negative deterrence and rehabilitation, and that is why they were referred to as a complex of contradictory, normative, historical survivals.

III. A PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF THE TRADITIONAL NORMATIVE MOTIVES FOR IMPRISONMENT

Even the simplest analysis of these four normative motives for imprisonment, as an exercise in elementary logic, would soon lead to a violation of the law of the excluded middle, i.e., a prison as a

system of social relations that is supposed to have some determinate effect on its members whether that effect be to isolate, punish, deter, or rehabilitate, has to be one thing or another, but it cannot be all of them simultaneously. If we complicate the analysis by introducing human groups, social attitudes, technical procedures, physical facilities, and the time perspective of cultural lag in the realm of ideas and matter, we might be able to get an approximation of the social reality represented by such an abstraction as imprisonment. Any particular, concrete, prison is a mixture of isolation, punishment, negative deterrence and rehabilitation. The social attitudes of its human groups, inmate, staff and external society, will reflect this mixture despite an identifiable emphasis on one motive or another. Its technical procedures, in turn, will be a reflection of these social attitudes. Its physical facilities, as embodied in plant, space and equipment, will, more than likely, reflect the social knowledge of the teachers of the architects and other planners who built them. Finally, the short-term social interests of politicians concerned with patronage, contracts and survival, as over against the long-run interests of society in dealing with offenders successfully, will be reflected in the chronic problems that beset any prison.

Perhaps enough has been said about imprisonment, in general, to indicate why it is such a fertile field for the elaboration of latent functions. When we say that the social motives for imprisonment are mixed, we are saying there is a lack of consensus in society. When there is a lack of consensus, motives either cannot be specified or they are muddled due to apathy, or perhaps due to some secondary gains of a psychological or material order. In any case, regardless of the reason for a lack of consensus, such a situation is pregnant with latent functions, and, from the standpoint of a person bent on bringing such latent functions to light, it really would make very little difference what value position, or motivation for imprisonment, were fixed upon as a reference point, for as between the motives of isolation, punishment, negative deterrence and rehabilitation, the prison system serves none of these social motives very well. In an actual evaluation it could probably, and most honestly, be said that the prison system serves these social motives in a historically descending order of efficiency today. The prison system manages to isolate prisoners fairly well, at least it isolates prisoners from primary contacts

with external society and the conventional social order. Punishment in prison has, by and large, lost its corporeal character, and has been attenuated to the various forms of psychological and physical deprivations that accompany institutional existence. The negative deterrent effect of imprisonment is probably *favorably* reflected in such partial measures of performance as continually increasing crime rates and recidivism rates that approximate 65% of all discharged prisoners within a five year period after release. The rehabilitative value of imprisonment, under generally prevailing conditions, is not even a moot point. Whatever evidence has been gathered is all on the other side, as indicated by recidivism and parole violation rates, and no perceptive person would equate lack of recidivism with rehabilitation. An ex-convict may not recidivate for a variety of reasons, but a rehabilitated ex-convict does not recidivate because his style of life has undergone a decisive change incompatible with crime.

IV. THE ESSENTIAL OR PRIMARY PURPOSE OF IMPRISONMENT

However, before proceeding with an analysis of imprisonment, we must specify our subjective motivation by stating what the purpose of imprisonment "ought to be." We can then explore the objective consequences of imprisonment by that standard. In such a specification we reject isolation, punishment and negative deterrence as normative motivations for imprisonment. Not that such motives are not served, but that we do not consider them *the essential or primary purpose* of imprisonment. We believe that the primary purpose of imprisonment should be the protection of society, by the prevention of crime, through the rehabilitation of offenders. A prison, in short, should be a social institution designed to reconstitute a social consensus that has, for one reason or another, been rendered defective. Crime prevention *in the first instance*, that is, the original constitution of social consensus, is a function shared by *all* the social institutions that contribute to the training of the young and *all* the social institutions that provide for the assimilation of the trained into the conventional social order. If the social institutions of the community are deficient in either the training or the assimilation function in the first instance, they are faced with the task of re-training and re-assimilating those whose deficiencies have been expressed as crime. A prison should

be a specialized social institution that concentrates on the re-training function, while post-institutional agencies should assume the re-assimilation function.

There are some philosophical and political reservations to be raised about such a motive for imprisonment and the conception of crime on which it rests, but these must be met, at the moment, by the assertion that we are concerned with imprisonment for traditional (not to say "conventional") crime, and we are not considering social revolution or politically defined crimes. For our purposes, in this paper, we define imprisonment in terms of rehabilitation, and propose to examine some aspects of imprisonment in terms of how well or ill the objective consequences of imprisonment correspond to the social motivation of attempting to rehabilitate offenders who are subjected to imprisonment.

V. THE TRADITIONAL CRIMINAL LEGAL PROCESS

Imprisonment is, of course, only one element in a larger process designed to deal with offenders. Many of the problems related to rehabilitation are completely outside the province of imprisonment, being lodged elsewhere in the legal process or in the social processes of the community at large. The entire machinery of what may be termed the traditional criminal legal process⁸ (i.e., arrest, detention, indictment, arraignment, trial, conviction, imprisonment and release), is set into motion by an act, a crime. This process acts as a selective device through which persons of a different social background than that of others come to public notice. Behind the individual cases selected lies the social background of these cases in the aggregate. This aggregated social background is far more important than the individual attributes of individual offenders who have been caught in discontinuous offenses that are now to be discontinuously considered. By such a selection, the legal process is really indicating the degree of maladjustment that characterizes the community, and, in the long-run interests of the community, it is far more important to come to grips with the aggregated social background of these individuals, which gives rise to the symptomatic acts that preoccupy the legal process, than to deal with the acts themselves. Yet the legal process is a reaction

⁸ HANS W. MATTICK, *PAROLE TO THE ARMY*, Unpublished M. A. thesis, Department of Sociology, University of Chicago, pp. 284-300.

to an act which is irrevocably lost in the past, while both the individual and his social background, who together brought the act to pass, continue their existence into the present and the future. Thus, by dealing with acts and individuals, rather than the social background that contributes to crime, neither the prevention nor the interruption of criminal careers, aside from individual cases, is provided for. The traditional criminal legal process is inexorable in its dealing with criminal acts, but the frequency of their initial incidence, and the criminal recidivism rates, seem to indicate that it is the individual and his social background, and not the acts as such, that require attention and treatment. In short, from the standpoint of preventing crime in the first instance, the traditional criminal legal process, by its very nature, must be invoked too late, and from the standpoint of rehabilitating individuals by dealing with their social background, it is inadequate.

VI. LATENT FUNCTIONS OF THE TRADITIONAL CRIMINAL LEGAL PROCESS

One aspect of dealing with acts, rather than the social conditions which give rise to these acts, is the assumption of the legal process that the criminal is an individual to be dealt with on an individual basis. Such an assumption may be required to fix legal responsibility in an individualistic society, but anyone who has had experience in handling offenders knows that the offender is, almost always, the member of a group and a participant in an intricate system of social relations. It is the group which provides the necessary elements of a delinquent sub-culture in which the individual criminal finds his identity, social role and value system. Twenty years ago, Tannenbaum said, "To offer to reform a criminal by tearing him out of his own value-giving environment . . . without making him part of another group which provides an equally genuine essential base of existence, and one which he recognizes and is capable of responding to, is to attempt the impossible. All such efforts have broken down and must continue to break down."⁹ The implication for the social composition of both the community and the prison, as we know it, is clear enough. It is not likely that offenders will be rehabilitated if

the groups surrounding them, in or out of the prison, remain criminal in orientation.

A second assumption of the legal process is that the criminal is responsive to the mobilized sentiments and force of the conventional community, as embodied in its legal and punitive agencies. However, the criminal, like the rest of us, is far more responsive to the primary groups that surround him. They, and not the "out-group strangers" who arrest, try and convict him, are his significant reference group. It is in the eyes and hearts of the delinquent group that the individual criminal seeks and finds his social status and prestige. As such, the traditional criminal legal process, with all its ceremonial ritual, takes on a quite different coloration for the criminal than for the conventional community. That is, while society is under the illusion that it is staging a drama of righteous retribution, the delinquent salvages the status-giving symbols out of the same drama and reflects on how his prestige has been enhanced, in a variety of ways, in the primary group he is responsive to, as well as in the eyes of the community at large.¹⁰ Tannenbaum mentions some of the latent functions of "the dramatization of evil" when he says, "The very process of arrest, trial and conviction have a dramatic quality. . . . If we wished to make a criminal out of anyone, no better method could be devised than to dramatize and herald his activities. . . . It not only conditions him towards an estimate of himself; it sets the attitude of his fellows, and forms on the part of the world at large a basis of judgment that makes change on his part proportionately more difficult."¹¹ We are all aware of the sense in which the fact of having been "busted" or "in the pen" carries an aura of prestige among the members of a delinquent group.

Thirdly the fact of imprisonment has a latent function of which most of us are aware. It is what Lohman has called "the creation of a community of interest"¹² that is the by-product of a prison being a system of social relations or a community. In the language of Tannenbaum, "The real diffi-

¹⁰ A recent fad in delinquent circles is the wearing of sun glasses at all hours and seasons, for these are now known as "Senate Committee shades." This is a latent effect of the Senate Committee hearings which illustrates the salvaging of status-giving symbols from what is intended to be a fear and guilt inspiring "drama."

¹¹ TANNENBAUM, *op. cit.*, p. 477.

¹² JOSEPH D. LOHMAN, "Introduction," in HANS W. MATTICK, *THE COOK COUNTY JAIL*, Cook County, Illinois, Office of the Sheriff, 1957, p. 6.

⁹ FRANK TANNENBAUM, *CRIME AND THE COMMUNITY*, Boston, Massachusetts, Ginn and Company, 1938, p. 475.

culty with the procedure of imprisonment is that it congregates a lot of criminals whose entire web of emotional and social life together, insofar as they have such a life, is in terms of their career as criminals. It would be difficult to invent a more effective method for conditioning the criminal in his career than imprisoning him with some hundreds of other prisoners.¹³ That is why imprisonment, as a method of dealing with offenders, can do so little by way of rehabilitating them.

If we would want to gain a deeper understanding of what is implied by "conditioning the criminal in his career," as a result of imprisonment, a more intensive analysis of a prison as a system of social relations would be required. Space does not permit a thorough analysis, but perhaps a few suggestive remarks on the intra-mural caste system and the personality distortions that result from a variety of general and specific social pressures in prison, may indicate why the objective of rehabilitation more frequently is achieved despite rather than because of imprisonment. It might be added that although such "sociologic" factors as the caste system and personality distortions have been chosen for a few exploratory remarks, the same intrinsic argument about the prison as a poor environment for the process of rehabilitation could be made from a whole variety of analytic points of view. We need think only of budget problems, employment standards, architecture, political interference, overcrowding, idleness, and a host of others.¹⁴

VII. CASTE RELATIONS IN THE PRISON COMMUNITY

First, let us consider a prison as a closed and isolated community within which a relatively small number of men control and restrain the activities of a much larger number of men. The predominant character of the social relations between the administration on the one hand, and the inmates on the other, is that of a superior and a subordinate caste, regardless of the personal or objective qualities of the individuals concerned. The inmates' point of view, like that of the administration, is essentially ethnocentric. The primary distinction made on both sides is that of "us" and "them," the classical in-group out-group

orientation. Both sides perceive this caste relation in terms of a conflict that is temporarily accommodated but in constant need of adjustment so that the conflict does not become overt. As long as a delicate balance is maintained the prison runs "smoothly," except for isolated and sporadic acts of marginal and unstable individuals within this closed community. In such a social situation intra-caste contacts and influence are maximized and cross-caste relations are strictly defined and minimized. Reserve, suspicion and hostility fill the psychological atmosphere of what should, from the standpoint of rehabilitation, be a therapeutic community.

Within the predominant caste relation of superior and subordinate, both sides make further distinctions that lead to refinements of social ranking. These secondary distinctions are made in terms of the interests of both groups, as each contemplates the other. The major axis along which prisoners are classified by the administration is *custodial convenience*. Custodial convenience criteria include such things as: degree of conformity, number of previous commitments, type of crime committed, work skills, and, to a lesser degree, age, race, physical appearance, glibness, and intelligence. Most of these criteria have little relation to a treatment program, but an inmate population successfully classified along these lines, and appropriately placed in the social structure of the prison, will make for a minimum of "trouble."

The main axis along which members of the administration are classified by the prisoners is *equality and fair treatment*. The prisoners appear to acknowledge their inferior caste position but nonetheless make distinctions among their keepers. Fair treatment criteria include such attributes of the staff as being consistent or arbitrary, tough or soft, humane or cruel, alert or lax, intelligent or stupid and close to, or removed from, the center of power in the prison.¹⁵

The various types of offenders view other criminals from their own point of view. Thus con-men, embezzlers, forgers and other larcenists view those who use weapons, force or intimidation as an

¹⁵ RICHARD H. McCLEERY, *Policy Change in Prison Management*, POLITICAL RESEARCH STUDIES, Michigan State University, 1957. This short monograph is one of the more perceptive analyses of a prison as a social structure. It illustrates how the entire orientation of a prison was re-directed through the re-location of the center of power in that prison, by a re-alignment of intra-mural communications channels for inmates and staff.

¹³ TANNENBAUM, *op. cit.*, p. 478.

¹⁴ MATTICK, *THE COOK COUNTY JAIL, op. cit.*, pp. 9-20.

inferior breed, and are quick to say, "I never put a gun on nobody." Similarly, the armed robbers, jack-rollers and other assaulters view those who use cunning as being, somehow, underhanded. They assert, "I didn't weasel it out of the guy; I took it from him honestly." Offenders against persons point out, "I never stole anything in my life," while property offenders add, "I never laid a hand on a woman or child." Drug offenders have said, "I only sold people what they wanted," or "I didn't hurt nobody but myself," depending on whether they were sellers or users.¹⁶

Dominant over these egocentric points of view is the more generalized inmate caste-structure which is ethnocentrically, and ultimately, determined by the long-timer's¹⁷ attitudes toward crimes and prisons. This intra-mural hierarchy reflects the long-term prisoner's value system in relation to (1) success in crime, (2) longevity in prison, (3) type of offender, (4) connections, past or future, with the outside underworld and (5) the ideational complex that makes up the cult of delinquent masculinity. This latter includes the stereotypes of "the good con" who is "a stand-up guy" as opposed to "the stool-pigeon or rat, and the square-john or the lame."¹⁸ Success in crime is rated mainly in terms of "the size of the score" or the money-value involved in the crime. Some of the old-timers or specialists also attach status to crimes of craftsmanship or long tradition. In this scale of values the offenders accorded the highest status are those who rely on cunning, fraud or deceit, called "face" or "front," many of which depend on the larcenous motives and gullibility of the victim. These offenders are the con-men, embezzlers, forgers, frauds and impersonators.¹⁹ Next come the practitioners of crimes with long

traditions or intricate techniques: pick-pockets, safe-crackers, counterfeiterers, shoplifters, burglars and sneak thieves.²⁰ Below them are those who have combined violence or threat with theft: the armed, and a variety of unarmed, robbers. Then come the non-sexual offenders who have resorted to violence for its own sake: the murderer, manslaughterer and mayhem type of assaulters. The next rank down, and a caste presently being re-evaluated because greater numbers of them are entering prisons for longer periods, are the narcotic offenders, with the non-addicted sellers rated lower than the addicted "pusher" or simple addict. The lowest caste are the sex offenders, in descending order of rapists, voyeurs and exhibitionists, child-molesters and incest cases.²¹

It will be noted that the caste-system among prison inmates shares some of the values that also determine status in the extra-mural, conventional society: the positive, but undifferentiated, stress on success and techniques of manipulating others; and the negative, but ambiguous, view toward violence and unsanctioned sexual activity. However, such shared values are much too generalized to play any role in the process of rehabilitation. A therapeutic change in prisoners which minimized their drive toward success or their ability to manipulate others could only maladjust them for a society that honors Horatio Alger and Dale Carnegie. Thus these shared values of the prison culture and conventional society, that are embodied in both their status systems, cannot, on a generalized and content-less level, be used to rehabilitate the great majority of inmates who are property offenders. Similarly, if we consider the emphasis on violence and sex in the mass media, or the results of the Kinsey studies in relation to the criminal statutes,²² it is apparent that these are not the crucial areas to be reached by a therapy designed to rehabilitate the *thinking* of an offender against persons. In this latter case, it is not an attitudinal or psychological, but an *actional* change that would be reflected in rehabilitation. However, prisons, as we know them, are tense with

¹⁶ Such sentiments, or their equivalents, have been repeatedly expressed to the author during prison interviews.

¹⁷ RICHARD H. MCCLEERY, *The Strange Journey*, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA EXTENSION BULLETIN, Vol. XXXII, No. 4, March, 1953. This short monograph contains an excellent illustration of how the "long-timer's" point of view pervades inmate ideology.

¹⁸ BERNARD PHILLIPS, *Notes on the Prison Community*, in PRISON ETIQUETTE (Ed. H. Contine and D. Ranier), Bearsville, New York, Retort Press, 1950, pp. 95-109. In this article a strong case is made in favor of the "rat", as opposed to the "square-john," but the analysis is given an odd twist by the author's special pleading of a politically radical point of view.

¹⁹ There is a vast literature on this aspect of crime. A good, short bibliography is contained in EDWIN H. SUTHERLAND AND DONALD R. CRESSEY, *PRINCIPLES OF CRIMINOLOGY*, New York, New York, J. B. Lippincott Company, 1955, pp. 249-250.

²⁰ Ditto and *ibid.*

²¹ The low caste status of sex offenders in prison is repeatedly commented upon by ex-inmate *litterati* who are, themselves, not sex offenders. Cf., e.g., PHILLIPS, *op. cit.*, or PAUL WARREN, *NEXT TIME IS FOR LIFE*, New York, New York, Dell Publications, 1953.

²² See especially the section entitled, "*Social Implications—In the Law*," ALFRED C. KINSEY, *et al.*, *SEXUAL BEHAVIOR IN THE HUMAN MALE*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, W. B. Saunders Company, 1948, pp. 384-393.

the hostility between inmates and staff, and with sexual deprivation, so they would be the least likely places to effect a change of attitude or action in the areas of violence and sexual conduct.

VIII. PERSONALITY DISTORTIONS IN THE PRISON COMMUNITY

Finally, the same characteristics that have been dealt with in a preliminary analysis of caste in prison, can be reinforced by an analysis of factors that make for personality distortion in prison. From this point of view we may consider that the normal social order is made up of men, women and children, but penal populations usually consist of men *or* women *or* juveniles of one sex. The absence of two out of three of the normal societal groups results *ipso facto* in an abnormal social environment. The effect of confinement in such uni-sexual and age-graded institutions is to eliminate all the tender emotions between human beings, except those arising out of friendship for members of the same sex and age group. However, even that remaining tender emotion is suspect for it is frequently interpreted as, or actually includes elements of, homosexuality.

The administrative and custodial necessities that enter into the management of prison populations are such as to make most contacts between inmates and the representatives of conventional society (the prison staff and visitors) bureaucratic and impersonal. Prisoners are psychologically dehumanized by being converted into statistical entities: they become numbers, cases, prison-count units, bed-space occupiers and work details. The conditions of confinement in most prisons, which are too large and overcrowded, require order, regularity, routine, conformism and predictability if the prison is to function smoothly. Thus penal populations are required to respond to non-human, or secondary, stimuli without question, and the exercise of initiative is systematically discouraged. Prison life is lived in response to rigorous time schedules, bells, whistles, warning signs, bulletin boards, rank symbols, written passes and the whole gamut of impersonal communication. The development of spontaneous and warm relations between inmates and staff are usually proscribed by security rules and reinforced by the caste system. The only area where warm and socially rewarding human relations remain possible is among the inmates themselves, i.e., what is positive in human relations is expressed by those bearing the de-

linquent culture with almost no admixture of human contact with conventional values.

The criminal population that happens to be confined at any particular time is the result of a selective process that brings together an artificial group containing a disproportionate number of deviant types whose mutual effect on one another can only be in the direction of the abnormal. They have been publicly identified as criminals, and come to *conceive of themselves* as criminals, thus forming a community of interest at variance with conventional society. The physical conditions of confinement which emphasize repression and surveillance (lack of privacy), combined with the psychological conditions of confinement which reflect the mutual effects of deviant types on one another, are the major wellsprings of personality distortion in prison.

The two extreme personality types that result from the prison environment are the adjusted conformist and the chronic rebel. The adjusted conformist is the inmate who has been "prisonized." He has become dependent upon external, secondary stimuli to give direction to his life. He will have difficulty in a competitive extra-mural society where initiative and productive capacity are rewarded. The chronic rebel resists prison and organizes his period of incarceration around a contest of wills between himself and the whole prison apparatus. In so doing he embodies and displays the behavior, delinquent or not,²³ that the prison tries to suppress. Through frequent cycles of rehearsal, repression and re-assertion, he soon becomes a self-conscious rebel, and a hostile, embittered, anti-social personality type, whose subsequent life will be lived on the other side of the law. In time he may become "prison-wise," learning to do "easy time," where the external signs of open rebellion are less important to him. He will then dissemble and "go along with the program," but will actually constitute a greater danger because his repressed hostility will be allowed to erupt with less likelihood of interference

²³ It is not unheard of that prisoners who insist too strongly on civil rights, or who persist in questioning the rationale behind prison procedures, or who simply attempt to preserve their individuality and personal integrity, are considered "agitators" and "trouble-makers." Cf. McCLEERY in *The Strange Journey*, *op. cit.* on "incorrigibles." Such epithets do yeoman service in disciplinary reports. They are frequently a substitute for more substantial evidence of misconduct or merely reflect the disciplinarian's inability to verbalize what happened between him and an inmate, if anything.

by others, as he chooses the most propitious and damaging opportunity to "let go."

Between these two extreme personality types produced by imprisonment is the whole range of adjustment that approaches one or the other, and a few special types. Among the latter are the neurotics whose imprisonment has precipitated a psychosis: (1) the latent homosexual who has been unaware of his tendencies, or, who being aware of them has held them in check, now finds himself in an environment fostering these tendencies; (2) the person with mild compulsions who now finds his life practically ritualized and converts elements of the prison routine into a compulsive obsession;²⁴ (3) the person who has had a tendency to be reserved or withdrawn who now becomes schizoid or paranoid because he has no privacy to contribute to his adjustment. With nothing but idleness and time to bear, prisoners develop complex forms of psychosomatic illnesses and hypochondria. Prison menus that are strong on starchy foods simply help such tendencies develop objective organic symptoms. Disappointments in parole expectations produce fits of depression and melancholia. Sex offenders and drug addicts, whose offense already included an element of emotional disturbance, being outcasts in the prison's caste-system, are

²⁴ The author has observed prisoners by whose activity, quite apart from that required by prison routine, he could set his watch. A dental clerk at Stateville Penitentiary, now paroled, who was serving his 18th year, was observed pressing his uniform every day, at precisely 11:05 A.M., during a two year period that the author had occasion to observe him. He was distressed if interrupted.

further alienated and maladjusted because they are deprived of "normal" prison association with other inmates.²⁵ On the other hand, there are a few inmates whose job skills or prison assignments give them an enormous status in prison that they will never be able to enjoy in the free world. This is one reason why inmates who have been employed in clerical capacities in prison find the outside world inhospitable and soon recidivate.²⁶

A romantic, abstract and simple-minded analogy can be made between a prison and the Freudian concept of the subconscious. The inmates are id, the administrative and treatment staff are ego, and the custodial force is the superego. Conventional society, presumably, is the total mind of this fictional person. However, the only true analogical element in this picture lies in the dynamic functioning of these Freudian concepts. There is more going on in the sub-conscious prison-mind of conventional society than most of us know, or care to know, consciously. These are the latent functions; and until we make them explicit and are able to cope with them successfully, we will remain in a state of neurosis. That is the state of our prisons today because too many of their functions are still latent and have not been brought under rational control.

²⁵ State of Michigan, Report of the *Governor's Study Commission on the Deviated Criminal Sex Offender*, 1951, p. 58.

²⁶ The fact that the more literate types of offenders also happen to specialize in those offenses characterized by high recidivism rates, is a contributory factor to the poor post-institutional performance of inmate-clerks.