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## Book Reviews

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## BOOK REVIEWS

THE MIND OF THE MURDERER. By *W. Lindesay Neustatter*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1957. vii 232 pp. \$6.00

There are two mutually exclusive theories as to the societal effects of murder. One, that it is societally disintegrative; second, that it is societally integrative. Without considering the respective merits and demerits of the two, it can be said that the former is overwhelmingly the more popular. Dr. Neustatter, an English psychiatrist with much forensic experience, has written a book that supports this theory.

The discussion of the death penalty has most often been conducted in moralistic and theological terms, in which emotion has seemed to dominate cognition. Dr. Neustatter's book is devoid of this unenlightening approach. His contribution is to specify, from a psychiatric orientation, some of the ways in which murderers differ in their life-experiences, and in the presumed dynamics of their behavior. The cases that he cites vary in their medical and psychiatric diagnoses, including schizophrenia, hysteria, mental defect, epilepsy, psychopathy, low blood-sugar level, melancholia, and hypnosis. "The Mind of the Murderer" indicates some of the problems of forensic psychiatry likely to be encountered under the British Homicide Bill (5 Eliz. 2), which provides amendments to the law relating to homicide and to the trial and punishment for murder in England, Wales, and Scotland.

Psychiatrists will find, as Dr. Neustatter says, the analyses of the various disorders very elementary. This is because the book is written primarily for laymen. One wonders why, in writing for the psychiatric laity, he found it necessary to distort and to mislead. One hopes that few laymen will read it, and that it will otherwise have a limited distribution.

First, although he has drawn to some extent upon his own cases and those of some colleagues, he has also found it necessary to employ other sources of "evidence" that are of doubtful value for the making of diagnoses, namely, the Notable Trial series and, to a great degree, newspaper stories. "Murder under Hypnosis" is based entirely on translations from a Danish newspaper! Is the practice of psychiatric diagnosis in fact as naive and cavalier as Dr. Neustatter's in this book?

Second, he presents the psychiatrist in the English court in a very unfavorable light—although his wide experience as an expert qualifies him to know what he is talking about: "Yet a doctor who should be strictly objective . . . is forced to subscribe to statements which can only be defended by very specious arguments as the only way a verdict of insanity can often be reached as the law stands" (p. 15). He is referring to the McNaughton Rule.

Third, Dr. Neustatter presents a biological version of the fallacy that "evil" results must have "evil" precedents: bad behavior results from bad heredity. A murderer had bad heredity, for example, as shown by the fact that he had a plausible, dramatic, and anemic mother, an alcoholic father, a sister who died of tuberculosis at the age of nineteen years and a younger sister who had the same disease; and the murderer himself was examined, to ascertain if he had it (pp. 155, 161). Another murderer had a history of familial instability; an uncle who was epileptic on his father's side and an aunt who was schizophrenic on his mother's side. Any disciple of S. and E. Glueck, Ernest Hooton, Kretschmer, W. H. Sheldon, or Lombroso will realize at once that these two poor men never had a chance!

In addition, "psychopaths are constitutionally unstable individuals, and their main characteristic

is an inability to learn from experience" (p. 170). It is, of course, a notorious fact that very few of those psychiatrically diagnosed as psychopathic have been subjected to a comparative constitutional examination. Therefore, the specific constitutional differences between the normal and the psychopathic person—if there are any—are still unknown even to psychiatrists. Is Dr. Neustatter ignorant of what was done to the constitutional theory of his colleague, Dr. Lombroso, by Mr. Charles Goring in 1913? Furthermore, the unqualified statement that the alleged psychopath is unable to profit from experience is manifestly incorrect. They have learned to walk and talk, to dress, to find their way about, to commit their crimes, and to do innumerable other things. Is not the time long overdue when a psychiatrist who claims that a given person is unable to learn should be forced to present the constitutional and neurological evidence upon which his allegation is based? If psychiatrists should protest that they do not mean that psychopaths are unable to learn anything, the reply will be that they should say what they mean, because they do not mean what they say.

Fourth, Dr. Neustatter's diagnosis of psychopathy is definitional and circular, and eliminates the necessity for a psychiatrist in the detection of the psychopath. ". . . the more dreadful a crime is, the more likely is the criminal to be deranged" (pp. 107-23). An interesting question, he says, is "whether there is any essential difference between wickedness and being a psychopathic (sic)" (p. 147). If the two states are equal to each other then there are indeed tens of thousands of psychopaths running loose in England. Could it also be that all sinners, being wicked, are all of them psychopaths? One cannot logically distinguish between them if Dr. Neustatter's question is affirmatively answered.

Fifth, there is an unnecessary and misleading resort to analogy. Dr. Neustatter, accepting Freud, advances the following theory to explain the "psychology" of an hysteric convicted of two murders: ". . . primitive man was not far below the surface in some individuals who had aggressive, indeed, bloodthirsty, wishes toward those whom they feared or hated for some reason" (p. 38). It will at once be seen that the concept, "bloodthirsty wishes below the surface" is about the most deceptive, delusive, and fallacious of the physical analogies concerning human behavior that one can employ. How far "below the surface" should

one dig? How far can one probe before coming through on the other side? Beneath what surface should one excavate: the epidermis, the cerebral cortex, or what? And the analogy is certainly not based on any recognized anatomy, because no such wishes are to be located on any atlas of the human body.

One can be scientifically opposed to capital punishment on behavioral grounds, as this reviewer is. "The Mind of the Murderer" is not a contribution to any science of human behavior in general, or to criminology in particular. What Dr. Neustatter's book demonstrates again is the necessity for research in criminology conducted by those who are trained in criminology and in research, and, in this reviewer's preference, in sociology and social psychology as well.

FRANK E. HARTUNG

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CLINICAL PSYCHIATRY. By *W. Mayer-Gross, Eliot Slater, and Martin Roth*. The Williams and Wilkins Company, Baltimore, 1955, pp. xx + 652.

THE PRACTICE OF DYNAMIC PSYCHIATRY. By *Jules H. Masserman, M.D.* W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia-London, 1955, pp. xxx + 790.

Modern psychiatry began with Kraepelin's painstaking and ingenious attempt to bring order into the chaos of mental aberrations. The acceptance of his taxonomy was from the beginning fraught with difficulties. The same syndromes occurred in diseases with different causes. The known etiology did not tally with nosological entities. Shortly after Kraepelin's beginnings a radically different attempt to understand the abnormalities of the mind was made by Freud. He put the emphasis on the psychological structures which does not need to be pointed out in detail here.

The year 1955 has given us two books by competent authors, each illustrative of one of the just mentioned points of view. The book by the English authors, which appeared with an American publisher, is excellent in its sober description of groups and entities of diseases. While they reject in the preface the necessity of discussing general concepts and theories, they start in their introduction precisely with such concepts. Mayer-Gross and his co-workers refer to the present status of American psychiatry by quoting from a paper by R. W. Lidz and T. Lidz: "Description of phenomenologic aspects is not of prime interest (in present American

psychiatry) as it is little guide to understanding the person and even less to therapy." The English authors refer to Jules Masserman's *Dynamic Psychiatry* of 1946 as an uneasy marriage between neurophysiology and psychoanalysis.

Jules H. Masserman's *Practice of Dynamic Psychiatry* is indeed the best approach to dynamic psychiatry at present. The tendency of the book is outlined in this sentence: "Diagnosis is presented not as a product of some stereotyped case taking scheme or outline for mental examination but as an appraisal of the patient's problems of adaptation." It may be remarked that the English authors recommend warmly arriving at a diagnosis in just the way which is rejected in the first half of Masserman's sentence. A particularly valuable feature of Masserman's book is the case histories of which 104 are given. The English authors have no case histories at all. They want the readers to familiarize themselves with diseases not with personalities.

The reader who wants to form an idea of modern psychiatry should read these two books simultaneously. No better introduction to psychiatry could at present be offered.

W. G. ELIASBERG

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REACHING DELINQUENTS THROUGH READING. By *Melvin Roman*. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C Thomas, 1958, pp. 125, \$4.50.

The author's hypothesis is that children who manifest a reading disability in conjunction with severe emotional disturbance, should benefit from "integrative efforts" both in therapy and remedial reading. Therefore, the author attempts to investigate the effectiveness of tutorial group therapy in facilitating psycho-social adjustment and correcting "some aspects of reading retardation." The small monograph contains 134 titles in its bibliography, with ten figures and nearly 40 tables. For those practitioners and readers who deal with children, retarded in their reading abilities, this book should be "it."

HANS A. ILLING

Los Angeles

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THE OFFENDERS: THE CASE AGAINST LEGAL VENGEANCE. By *Giles Playfair* and *Derrick Sington*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957. viii 305 pp. \$3.95.

The subtitle of this book suggests its main message: all legal punishment, being vengeance, is

wrong. In particular, all punishment by killing is wrong, and the only rational approach to the problem of crime is the "clinical or curative approach." Playfair is a former English barrister who is at present Professor of Drama at Williams College. Sington was the chief witness for the prosecution at the trial of the Belsen concentration camp war criminals, and foreign correspondent for several English publications.

The authors explicate but do not elucidate their conclusion that all punishment is wrong, by reviewing six cases of crimes against the person, property and the state. Their aim is to state their conclusion "implicitly (sic) and dramatically." Their conception of drama seems to be that it is a synonym for hyperbole. They say, for example, that "total outlawry of the death penalty is an essential first step in any program of penal reform" (p. 142). This will certainly be news to people in such states as California, Louisiana, Massachusetts and New York. Concerning the execution by the English—after a trial—of a female Nazi who willingly participated in the German program of genocide by selecting civilian Jews for the gas chambers, Playfair and Sington refer to "the cold-blooded violence (of the English) in the name of deterrence, which, like the methods of the totalitarians themselves (Nazis), . . ." (p. 210). The Germans may agree with this likening of English and German justice, but hardly anyone else will find it cogent. Playfair and Sington would have been on solid ground had they studied the ruthless violence of the English in their role of imperial rulers, as exemplified today on Cyprus. Of the execution of the Rosenbergs, the authors state that the United States "is capable of the same barbarities which it condemns in the Communist nations." The error in this comparison is that our victorious political parties have never killed their opponents, but rather have only discharged them from their jobs. This was the case even after our Civil War. Had Playfair and Sington referred to our former national policy in relation to the American Indian they might have made a point concerning our policy of systematic treaty-breaking and attempted extermination.

Playfair and Sington employ the long-outmoded psychiatric concept, "moral insanity", a number of times (pp. 32, 48, 123, 131, 136, 185, 260), in trying to maintain their contention that the criminal is "mentally ill" (pp. 3, 275, 276, 286). They propose an anti-democratic assault on the rights and dignity of the individual by suggesting the jettisoning of certain Anglo-American

juridical procedures and the substitution thereof of the arbitrariness of the psychiatrist for that of the medieval judge. They demonstrate again, however, the incompetence of the psychiatrist in this area by showing that sadistic murderers have not been detected by psychiatrists even after repeated examinations, and by showing, once more, that procuring by the prosecution and the defense can always produce mutually exclusive diagnoses by equally qualified psychiatrists.

Playfair and Sington absolve their six criminals—and by extrapolation absolve everybody—of any responsibility for their actions by undertaking what they term a social worker report (pp. 188 ff.). This report consists of a chronological statement of events in the life of Irma Grese (the executed Nazi), to which are added certain value-judgments by the authors, and much padding by means of speculation concerning the significance of her life for her. This combination of fact, moralisms, and speculation enables the authors to lay the blame for her behavior upon “the madmen who called themselves National Socialists” (p. 202). Millions of Germans not only “called themselves” but were National Socialists. Playfair and Sington stop too soon. If the beautiful and blonde Irma is absolved through a “social worker report,” logic and justice demand that it also be applied to her bosses. Why were they madmen? Through an extension of Playfair and Sington’s argument, the answer can readily be given: Hitler and Himmler also had mothers! Let us not, however, work an injustice upon Hitler’s mother by blaming her for producing him. We must, instead, apply the same social worker report to her; and when this is done it will be found that Hitler’s mother had a mother, and that that mother in turn had a mother. And so on, back to Adam and Eve. This is the infinite regress upon which the psychoanalytic theory of superego lacunae embarks us.

Many millions of Orthodox Catholic and Protestant Christians will dispute the allegation by Playfair and Sington that the gospel of the Saviour is in trust in “sovereign Vatican City” (p. 248). That the approach of these authors is theological rather than scientific is shown in their statements that “any attempt to fix an exactly just measure of retribution is a (sic) usurpation of Divine Authority” (p. 236), and, “who, except Almighty God, can judge what punishment is the exactly just one . . . ?” (p. 253). There can be no weaker argument advanced against any sanction. Even the imposition of treatment, according to their argument, usurps divine authority, because it

states that the traitor knows that treatment and not punishment is the “just measure.” Considering the enormous crimes against man and nature that Christians have committed during the past 2,000 years—in the name of their Lord—it certainly would be better for them to forget Him when it comes to the matter of crime.

Those who work in the several correctional systems in the United States will be interested to learn that “individual treatment” has become the underlying principle of American and British penal methods, that minimum custody is part of treatment, as are also correspondence-school courses, psychotherapy, and weight-lifting. One can think that it will not be long before the very guards will turn their keys therapeutically!

Playfair and Sington allege that the death penalty failed to prevent, “in short, any violation of the law at any time anywhere” (p. 260). Since this is one of their many fancifully exaggerated statements, made for effect, they find it unnecessary to adduce confirming evidence. Where, indeed, could they find any?

The only value that I can see in this book is that it exposes the hypocrisy of those who hate and fear mankind, like Arthur Koestler, who would abolish the death penalty for crimes against property and the person, but insist upon retaining it for political crimes (espionage and treason).

Had I been in favor of capital punishment before reading this book, I am afraid that it would have reconfirmed my position. How can anyone be dissuaded from capital punishment by equating the judicial hanging of Irma Grese with the hundreds of thousands of people murdered in the gas chambers and furnaces of Auschwitz and Belsen: “To the crimes of Auschwitz and Belsen, immense and unsurpassed in their horror, had been added a vile deed in Hamelin, a deed with its own special brand of wickedness, its own particular aura of evil” (p. 209). But even though one believes that the execution of the Rosenbergs is an unnecessary blot on American honor, and even though President Eisenhower did not commute their sentences when he could have done so, the judicial execution of two people does not make Eisenhower a Stalin nor the United States a Russia. Social workers will no doubt want to dissociate themselves from Playfair and Sington’s “social worker report.” Their version of psychoanalytic psychology is too erroneous for even social workers to accept.

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THE GANG. By *Herbert Bloch and Arthur Niederhoffer*. Philosophical Library. 1958. Pp. 231. \$6.00.

*The Gang* is not a study of contemporary boys or their group life. Rather it is a careful, scholarly analysis of more than one hundred books on anthropology, primitive cultures, and general sociology. It is a well documented book with a good bibliography and numerous footnotes. As a sociologically oriented study of comparative cultures it should be examined to the end that the adolescent, his heritage, his needs, and stimuli may be understood.

Herbert Bloch's influence as a professor of anthropology at Brooklyn College is paramount. As a result this could be a textbook for courses in criminology or even at a police school. There is not enough original data to justify its use as a reference work.

The sociological and psychological motivations in boys' groups and young men's societies are disclosed and so are the ambitions, objectives, and the ideals that these groups serve.

The sub-title "A study in adolescent behavior" is most correct. There are two chapters with eight pages of tables devoted to the puberty rites of the polynesian, American Indian, and other primitive cultures. These lead to an excellent chapter entitled "The Contemporary 'Rites' of Adolescence."

The reader of this study is convinced that times change but boys do not. The adolescent boy generally has found his support and social life through group activity. The authors tell about the mutilation ceremonies of the *NEUER*, an African Nilotic tribe and say, "the cheerful acceptance by the boy of the frightening ordeal to which such mysterious rites may expose him is reiterated in our culture in the desire of the college freshman or fraternity neophyte to be hazed."

This book may interest teachers, college students, students of sociology, or social group workers. It contains little original material and is so technically oriented to anthropology and sociology that a lawyer or police officer will be confused at the references to Thrasher's social disorganization theories and Cohen's concept of cultural differences between what he calls "middle" and "working classes."

The conclusions in the last chapter are worth putting into the notebook of any social worker or teacher: (1) Adolescent gangs may be profitably studied by using as a frame of reference the theory of power; (2) The gang's attempt to gain status

and power through the domination of persons is a collective representation of the individual gang member's ambition to prove he is a man.

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THE PRISON COMMUNITY. By *Donald Clemmer* with a foreword by *Donald R. Cressey*. Rinehart & Co., New York, 1958. 341 pp., \$3.00

I think it is significant that some of the most interesting and important work in the social sciences over the last twenty years or so has been done not by academic sociologists but by men engaged in the day-to-day tasks of public affairs. Unfortunately, much of this material—in the fields of mental health, law, business, public welfare, and so on—has remained as the unarticulated experience of practicing administrators and has not been readily available in published form. The reissuing of Donald Clemmer's "The Prison Community" by Rinehart & Co. is therefore a welcome event, for this book still stands as an illuminating analysis of imprisonment seen by a man with long and varied experience in penal institutions.

The virtues of "The Prison Community" are undoubtedly well known to penologists, criminologists and sociologists: It is a book which developed a number of concepts—such as formal and informal organization, prisonization, etc.—which have become a part of the basic vocabulary of the social sciences. It taught us to see the prison not simply as a grab bag of problems such as discipline, industry, sanitation and so on, but as a culture which could be fruitfully studied in its own right. As Clemmer noted in the preface to the 1940 edition, ". . . since the interest of the book centers on the structure and social relationships in the prison community, it is more concerned with social processes than with incidents." And, of course, the book provides the only full-length, detailed description of life in an American prison written in a free and easy style without those twin plagues of much modern sociology, jargon and the affectation of science rather than the substance.

It is true, as Cressey points out in his foreword to the 1958 reissue, that Clemmer did not account for the conditions of prison life which he observed; and there are a number of places in the book where the implications of the facts are by-passed or inadequately developed. However, as Cressey indicates, this is partly due to the changing per-

spective of the times (which leads to the setting of new problems) and partly to the advances in theory and research over the last two decades which allow us to see much that we could not see before. It is a tribute to Clemmer's painstaking, objective investigation that his description of prison life can serve as a basis for new, fuller interpretations and new questions.

Cressey's foreword is a valuable addition to the book, for it helps put the study of the prison in its proper intellectual setting. The examination of the prison, he notes, can be seen not only as the necessary groundwork for advances in penology and criminology, but also as a view of a social microcosm and as an opportunity to explore the nature of social organizations. Yet one cannot but feel somewhat disappointed at the lack of advancement in the field of correction in spite of studies such as these. "As humanitarianism increases," says Clemmer in his preface to the 1958 reissue, "as more good men enter prison work, as the much needed institutions for smaller populations are constructed, and as the sciences which deal with the nature of human nature invent improved tools for treatment, the criminality of some offenders . . . may well be decreased in that brave new world somewhere ahead." Perhaps so. But the very fact that improvements in prisons have come so slowly and laboriously since the first publication of "The Prison Community" some twenty years ago requires a long, hard look at the common assumption of the sociologist that his accumulation of knowledge about man and society must surely find a use.

GRESHAM M. SYKES

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THE PSYCHOANALYTIC STUDY OF THE CHILD. VOL. XIII. Edited by *Ruth S. Eissler, Heinz Hartmann, Anna Freud, Marianne Kris*, et al. New York: International Universities Press, Inc., 1958, pp. 573. \$8.50.

The Thirteenth volume of the "Study" is dedicated to the late Ernst Kris and is divided into five sections: The Ernst Kris Memorial Meeting, Contributions to Psychoanalytic Theory, Aspects of Normal and Pathological Development, Clinical Contributions, and Applied Psychoanalysis. Of the immense wealth of contributions a few may be cited, particularly those which are of significance to criminologists. K. R. Eissler presents "Notes on Problems of Technique in the Psychoanalytic

Treatment of Adolescents, with some remarks on Perversions." The author finds differences between the delinquent and the schizophrenic. According to Eissler, "in the delinquent the functions of thought and perception are intact, but the volitional system, abetted by the patient's intelligence and observational power, is put into the service of the pleasure principle unchecked by the restraint of an adequately developed superego." Therefore, all the delinquent's energy "is directed toward immediate wish fulfillment," and "thus the delinquent and the schizophrenic fail to curb or conquer the pleasure principle." Those readers who are less familiar with psychoanalytic jargon will sometimes find a sentence, as quoted above, difficult reading (since it could be stated simpler and hence better), but the psychoanalytic interpretation of delinquency (which is used as a clinical, not as a legal, term) appears to this reviewer as one of the best available, starting with Freud and Aichhorn. The present volume is in this, the symptom of delinquency, as well as in many other aspects, a worthy successor to the twelve preceding ones.

HANS A. ILLING

Los Angeles

THE SOCIAL WELFARE FORUM, 1958. *Official Proceedings, 85th Annual Forum, National Conference on Social Welfare, Chicago, Illinois, May 11-16, 1958*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1958, xiv + 311. \$5

Of its nineteen papers selected for inclusion in the 1958 *Proceedings* (the 1957 *Proceedings* contained 20), the average reader may discount those, which do not deal with specific issues of professional social work (it is this reviewer's opinion that the Conference grievously erred in changing its name from "Social Work" to "Social Welfare" a few years ago), such as presidential addresses, "welfare financing," or such cocktail-conversational "papers," as "Is All Well With the American Family?" (Joseph H. Reid). Of the remainder of the all-too-slender volume, Kermit T. Wilse's paper on "The 'Hopeless' Family," holds special interest. While the author's case illustrations (such as the improvement of a family's management of money, medical care for the children, housekeeping standards, etc.) are the run-of-the-mill of the caseworker's job today, it is noteworthy that the author believes that his case examples represent the "chronically dependent, socially inadequate, *mildly antisocial* (italics are