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Offenders, Deviants, or Patients?: An Introduction to the Study of Socio-Forensic Problems

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techniques he proposes. He mentions that neutral interviewing is important. This should be stressed because although it is crucial that the interviewer does not ask biased questions, in practice bias often occurs.

There is a great deal of valuable practical information in this book. The problem is that Thomas has too many concepts and repeats himself too much. More importance should have been given to an analysis of the socioeconomic background of the patient; whether a particular therapy is applicable and successful may depend to a certain extent on the educational level and ethnic background of the patient and on his or her lifestyle. At the end of each chapter Thomas has a summary in point form, but one has to study it carefully because so many concepts are presented. It would have been helpful if he had discussed the conduct of a few successful interventions and the techniques which were used. Despite a few reservations about the structure of this book, it pioneers a new area of practice and research.

Offenders, Deviants, or Patients?: An Introduction to the Study of Socio-Forensic Problems, by Herschel Prins. London: Tavistock Publications, 1980, 369 pp., \$25.00 hardcover, \$13.50 paperback.

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Offenders, Deviants, or Patients? was meant to serve as an introduction to the relationship between mental disorder and criminal behavior for a wide range of professionals and for interested lay readers. The book is divided into two parts. The first six chapters examine some of the general issues of criminal responsibility, the nature of the relationship between mental illness and criminal behavior, the relationships among psychiatry, the courts and the penal system, and the concept of "dangerousness." The substantive chapters in the second part explore arson, sexual offenses, alcohol and drugs, and "female" offending.

The relationship between criminal behavior and mental illness is a complicated topic and those who work in the field could benefit from a clear overview. The author, a senior lecturer in social work at the University of Leicester in England, has set forth an ambitious task for himself. The subject matter demands diverse perspectives. While social work treatment is a central concern, it is clear that a tremendous amount of legal, sociological, psychological and medical material has been amassed and organized in this book. For a variety of reasons, however, the presentation of the material does not live up to its promise.

Perhaps the most consistently frustrating issue for a reader in the United States is the cultural bias of the book. One should not fault the author for using his country's body of knowledge, but it is important that non-British readers be

aware of this limitation. With a few brief exceptions (usually a reference to the U.S. system) the material presented comes from the British mental health care and criminal justice systems. American readers will probably not be familiar with the British model, where one system exists for the entire country. In the United States, the general complexity of the issue is further complicated by the varying state regulations and policies concerning mentally ill offenders. If this information is important to the reader, more specialized sources in the American literature will be more useful.

The author has a habit of illustrating points by citing presumably "famous" cases. If, as may often be the case, the reader is not familiar with the case, the point of the illustration is lost. This is especially annoying in an "introduction" to the topic. I often found myself wishing for more information on fewer illustrations. The simple device of briefly describing the details of a particular case would have made the illustrations much more meaningful.

A great deal of research literature is presented. Each chapter has an extensive bibliography and a list of references for further reading on each subject. This is helpful to those readers who wish to explore a subject in greater detail (although much of the work which has been done in the United States is not presented). However, as was the case with the illustrations, I often wished for more extensive discussions of fewer studies.

The author is at his best when dealing with general introductions to the field. Chapter 3 on mental disorder and criminality is perhaps the best in the book and is especially useful for those unfamiliar with the area. The review of literature on the prevalence of psychiatric populations includes studies done from 1918 through the late 1970s. (Readers interested in these topics after 1980 may want to look at Steadman et al., 1982, and Monahan and Steadman, 1983.) The second half of the chapter provides a classification of specific types of mental disorders and their relation to criminal behavior, which will be especially useful to those unfamiliar with psychiatric labeling.

About halfway through, the focus of the book begins to blur. Chapter 6 (Are Such Men Dangerous?) for example, poses perhaps the most important question, but it lacks a clear focus and sense of direction. The first third of the chapter includes several cases taken from press sources in Great Britain. The purpose of these is not entirely clear. The author then briefly defines dangerousness and applies the definition to legal and ethical considerations. This is the heart of the matter but the question raised by the title of the chapter is never really answered. The remainder of the chapter covers prediction, management and assessment, all important issues, which are not developed beyond brief, almost commonsense recommendations.

The chapters on specific offender/patient groups are less satisfactory than the initial chapters of the book. It is not clear why the author chose to single out arsonists, sexual offenders, drug and alcohol users, and females for special

coverage. In the introduction he stated that "care and management are based best upon an indepth understanding of the complex aetiology of particular offender groups" (p. 6). The chapters do contain detailed classification schemes for these offender/patient groups. However, the connections between the categories and particular treatment orientations are never made.

These chapters also tend to be unclear and imprecise in conclusions drawn from the literature cited. For example, when discussing the rise in the crime rate for females, the author states, "Kestenbaum (1977) using official statistics, asserts that the arrest rate for females doubled in the period 1960-1970, and whilst the crime rate for men stood at about 25 percent, for women it was 74 percent. The arrest rate of women for violent crimes rose to 69 percent in 1969-1970" (p. 302). I assume that the author meant that the crime rate increased by 25 percent for men and by 74 percent for women, and that the arrest rate for women committing violent crimes rose by 69 percent. That would certainly make more sense than saying that the crime rate for women is three times higher than that for men.

Later in the same chapter, the author discusses the connection between the menstrual cycle and criminal behavior by citing the results of studies by Dalton (1961, 1964). "In her early study, she found that nearly 50 percent of a group of women offenders in prison had been *convicted* [reviewer's emphasis] in the menstrual or immediate premenstrual period" (p. 316). It is unclear what the time of conviction has to do with menstrual cycle influences on criminality. Without going to the original source, it is impossible to tell whether this was really the point of the study or whether Prins actually meant the women had committed their crimes during this phase of their menstrual cycles.

I would have preferred eliminating these last chapters and expanding on the themes introduced in the beginning of the book. While covering a wide range of material in an introductory work is important, it should not be at the expense of making what has been presented understandable to the reader who is not familiar with the field. I cannot wholeheartedly say that the author has created a work that will be of great benefit to those who are largely unfamiliar with the relationship between mental health and criminal behavior. However, the book may have some unanticipated benefits for some readers. The voluminous bibliographical material provides a good starting point for anyone interested in pursuing the cross-cultural aspects of mental illness and criminal behavior. The indepth coverage of research done in Great Britain may be useful to American writers who do not routinely cite it. Similarly, the discussions and descriptions of the British system for dealing with these offenders may be useful to anyone interested in the history and functioning of that system or for comparative purposes. Much of the book may therefore be more appropriate for those who are already familiar with the field than for the beginner, as was the author's stated intent.

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