

## Book Reviews

THE ESSENTIAL HOLMES. Edited by A Posner. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992. 336 pp. \$24.95.

Reviewed by Melvin G. Goldzband,  
MD

No, it's not Sherlock, although for some crime-preoccupied forensic psychiatrists Sherlock might not seem at all inappropriate. This Holmes is Oliver Wendell Holmes, *JUNIOR*, the namesake son of an illustrious father who, himself an eminent essayist, physician, poet, philosopher, and distinguished teacher, probably remains best known to our contemporary generation as the autocrat of the breakfast table.

Richard Posner makes no bones about his fandom. He describes the subject of this book as, "... the most illustrious figure in the history of American law." Legal scholars may quibble about the absolute ranking but I doubt that any would demean the actual importance of this jurist who became the most influential member of the Supreme Court in which he served, and in which he wrote some of his most significant opinions. Certainly, few of Mr. Justice Holmes' successors have been able to fill his shoes, and these days, when many observers of that same Court tend to shudder, memories of Holmes may create a state more intense than simple nostalgia.

Posner moderates his fandom to some

extent, noting that he is drawn to his subject more by Holmes' writing and rhetorical skills *per se* than by the actual reasoning inherent in the man's legal decisions. In that, this psychiatrist notes, he is aware of the success of Holmes' Oedipal resolution. He seems to second the idea that it was still possible for Junior to identify positively with Senior despite the old man's crustiness and demanding attitudes. Physicians may be able to rear fine children after all!

Reading through this volume is a distinct pleasure. Posner is right. Holmes was a distinguished writer, and his capacity to clarify his thinking remains enviable. He was a good communicator. I confess that many of the things he communicated were of relatively little interest to me, not being any kind of legal scholar. However, at times it is impossible not to be caught up in the power of Holmes' words. The son of the writer of "Old Ironsides" knew his stuff. The selections in this volume were chosen by the editor who also tended to cut many of them, especially the letters. Otherwise, in the main body of this book there is no indication of Posner, only Holmes.

Holmes' letters interested me more than his decisions. He was a man who lived during the earlier days of the telephone but never allowed that instrument to assume major importance in his contacts with others. How I envy recipients of letters such as those he wrote, with their style varying between courtly (to Lewis Einstein's daughter: "It is short

and, as you say, long since a direct word passed between us, and I am truly rejoiced that the silence is broken.”), through rueful (to Harold Laski: a frequent correspondent, “I am worried by this letter—because I have read your book and it does not command my sympathy and I hate to have any words but praise for you.”) to outright but modified critical (to Franklin Ford: “I do not see what you are driving at in your demand for a new theory of law.”).

The correspondence illuminates the far-seeing interests of this man who obviously did not keep his nose buried in any dusty, musty tomes. It is also illuminates an age long since passed, particularly mourned by me because what passes for correspondence across my own desk these days is really only a printed shadow of sound bites.

Posner’s volume makes for pleasant reading, although for most forensic psychiatrists I doubt that it will represent more than that. Digging for quotations that one might use in reports or the like is a tough task: the index is not adequate to that particular task, nor was it meant to be. Besides, it is probably wisest to let the lawyers with whom we deal quote their own masters. It is hard enough for forensic psychiatrists to be good psychiatrists and to quote their own—or at least to keep up with their own current literature.

**CRIME, CRIMINAL JUSTICE, AND THE PROBATION SERVICE.** By R Harris. New York: Routledge, 1992. 208 pp. \$69.95.

Reviewed by Graham D. Glancy, MB, ChB, MRC Psych, FRCP(C)

This book is written by Robert Harris, who is Professor of Social Work at the University of Hull. His stated aim in the book is to write a text book for British criminal justice professionals, covering the areas for a course he taught on crime and delinquency in the criminology department at his university. He also states that he has attempted to write a book that is “not, I hope, dull or even unopinionated”. For the forensic psychiatrist this book then is a glimpse into the theoretical underpinnings of one of our adjacent professions.

I have to admit I approached this book with some trepidation, since I probably would not normally have even come across it in the shelves, never mind picked it up. I was surprised to find that it was easy to read, informative, and taught me a great deal about the training and thinking behind the probation service. It is eloquently written, and the author notes that he has attempted to take “to heart the injunction of the late Mr. Samuel Goldwyn to avoid clichés like the plague.”

The book covers such issues as criminal statistics, fear of victims in the community, situational crime prevention, “women and girls,” race, all as they relate to the probation service. He then concludes by discussing sentencing practice and supervision in the community.

As I encountered each chapter in turn, I was impressed by the way it engendered my interest. I was particularly impressed by Chapter 4, entitled “The Pro-

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bation Service and Situational Crime Prevention." Professor Harris defines situational crime prevention as "reducing or eliminating the opportunity to commit specific crimes." This chapter epitomizes how he is able to assess and summarize academic data, for instance in measuring the effectiveness of certain programs in reducing crime. Professor Harris presents his hypotheses in a logical and ultimately almost a chatty manner, which leads the reader to the end of the chapter almost like a LeCarre novel. He does present his opinions in a forthright manner, and true to his promise he eschews jargon and political correctness as well as cliches. The chapters are presented in a logical sequence and cover a wide range of issues relevant to the probation service, and therefore of interest to those of us working in related areas.

This book makes excellent reading for those of us who are working in close cooperation with our colleagues in the probation service. It certainly helps us understand their thinking and their mandate. It is a book of unusually high quality, and although I suspect not many forensic psychiatrists would be drawn to it, I recommend it.

**WOMEN, VIOLENCE, AND SOCIAL CHANGE.** By R Dobash and RP Dobash. London: Routledge, 1992. 366 pp. \$49.95 cloth, \$17.95 paperback.

Reviewed by Ellen McDaniel, MD

Rebecca and Russel Dobash teach in the School of Social and Administrative Studies at the University of Wales Col-

lege of Cardiff and are Co-Directors of the Institute for the Study of Violence. In 1979, their widely acclaimed book, *Violence against Wives*, was published. That earlier work explored the nature of such violence. In *Women, Violence, and Social Change*, their very scholarly research focuses on the dynamic relationship between the battered women's movement and the political, social, and judiciary systems in Britain and in the United States. The authors state that their intent is to examine changes in progress, including how the political and judicial responses to creative innovations can result in a subversion of the original intent of the innovation.

The reader is led into the history of the battered women's movement, after a brief introduction of the problem of violence against women. In a very readable, concise, fact-filled style, the authors make sure that the reader has some appreciation for the nature of social theory and movements in general, and the wide range of issues involved in a grassroots movement that has achieved international prominence. Familiarity with both American and British culture is apparent.

The shelter is the core, the heart and soul, of the battered women's movement. The authors acknowledge that the shelter is so much more ". . . than simply a roof over the heads of battered women." It has emotional, political, and economic implications and enables the women to heal and make choices about their lives. Considerable attention is given to the expansion of shelters from the first one, Chiswick's Women's Aid,

opened in Britain in 1972. The reader develops an appreciation for the many issues involved in establishing and maintaining shelters, including an examination of the differing philosophical and organizational approaches to the development of shelters within and between the two nations.

An analysis of the characteristics of the state as an organizational institution is followed by an examination of the dynamic relationship between the battered women's movement and the state in the arena of public policy and social change. Each nation gives different emphasis to the disease model and to the social status of women in society in public debate about battered women. They likewise differ in their legislative responses. Similarly, an examination of the justice system as a vehicle for social change, and in particular its response to women over time, including battered women, is made.

Chapter 7 addresses the impact of what might be called the disease model (the therapeutic society) to explain battered women and violent men and suggests alternative ways of looking at what is basically a problem of social order. The traditional therapeutic model is contrasted to the pro-feminist approach. The remaining two chapters examine the role of research in making social policy recommendations and summarize the challenges that emanate from the changing status of women in Britain and America.

This book is extremely comprehensive and informative. Many forensic psychiatrists might not have the interest to pursue a study of the battered women's movement to the scholarly depth of this volume. Those who do will be richly rewarded with a lesson on the political and social structure of our society and on the many issues involved in influencing social change.

#### ERRATUM

Galley proofs of the article "Treatment Boundary Violations: Clinical, Ethical, and Legal Considerations" (Bull Am Acad Psychiatry Law 20:269-88, 1992) by Robert I. Simon, M.D., were not sent to the author because of an oversight. As a consequence, typographical errors in the galley proofs remained uncorrected. In addition, the case of *Omer v. Edgren* cited in the text was misspelled. We regret these errors.