

Bearing Witness to Change: Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology Practice

Edited by Ezra E. H. Griffith, Michael A. Norko, Alec Buchanan, Madelon V. Baranoski, and Howard V. Zonana. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2017. 408 pp. \$79.95 paperback.

This is a thoughtful and ambitious effort, edited by leaders of the Law and Psychiatry program at Yale University School of Medicine. (Disclosure: The first two editors are editors of the *Journal*, and three of the editors are past presidents of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law.) Their premise is made clear in the first pages:

It is in contemplating past events in the context of their development and evolution that we may find ways to modify our present activities and even design a pathway for the future. Change is influenced by a variety of events, people, political activity, fiscal considerations, scientific discoveries, legal decision-making, and other circumstances. It is in understanding their interactions and effect on our work that we can become better practitioners and more able theorists [p xiii].

The editors have gathered 20 chapters written by accomplished authors, exploring historical and future change. The book is organized in four general sections: major external influences; forensic disciplines as their own change agents; changes in the traditional evaluative and consultative roles of the forensic practitioner; and forensic practice in the treatment and care of patients.

Opening his Introduction on “Legacy of Change for Mental Health Professionals,” Dr. Howard Zonana takes us on a whirlwind historical tour. In short order, he touches on patient civil rights, U.S. Supreme Court decisions on the death penalty and mental health matters, involuntary medication, transformation of state mental hospitals into forensic facilities, sex offender civil commitment, mental health treatment in jails and prisons, and ethics guidelines and expert witness testimony, all in a spare 24 pages (not including references)! Were it not for the fact that Zonana was a major participant and observer in nearly all of the events, the reader might be left breathless and dizzy by this necessarily concise overview; however, he pulls it off admirably given his

“front row” involvement in much of the history he describes.

The 20 chapters, many contributed by leaders in their respective fields, cover the familiar and not-so-familiar topics one would expect in a volume exploring historical changes. I especially appreciated efforts to include topics often under-represented in our forensic literature (e.g., psychodynamic therapy with forensic offenders and forensic practice in religion, although this chapter focuses almost exclusively on Roman Catholicism with little reference to other traditions). As a history buff, I applaud the authors’ efforts to ground present status and future directions within a historical context. I found the chapters on neuroimaging and on correctional and institutional psychiatric treatment particularly rich in their well-researched historical detail.

For a book with 5 editors and 24 contributors, it is not surprising to find considerable variety in writing style and approach. To the editors’ credit, I found few historical errors or inconsistencies (e.g., different dates or factual inconsistencies from chapter to chapter), often seen in volumes with less consistent quality editing. Sometimes the difference in authors’ voice and style was more jarring going from chapter to chapter: the first-person, near-lyrical style of Dr. Griffith’s chapter on narrative and performance contrasted with the much more prosaic and concrete dry history found in several other chapters. Chapters also fluctuated widely of length and depth: two 12-page chapters on global developments and on veterans compared with 27 pages (plus 4 pages of detailed references) on the mental health system–criminal justice interface. The result sometimes felt more like a compendium of individual articles rather than a unified and systematically edited consistent approach.

The “Yale-centrism” is easily detected: all 5 editors and 17 of the contributors hail from Connecticut. The authors are clearly thoughtful experienced leaders, clinicians, and forensic practitioners. Dr. Norko’s chapter on legislative consultation makes fascinating reading, but I would have preferred more examples and perspective beyond New Haven and Hartford. Although the title gives equal billing to both forensic psychiatry and psychology, the content felt much more weighted toward psychiatry. Remarkably little attention is paid to different perspectives or approaches taken by psychology versus psychiatry. A final criticism of the published volume

itself (not the content): the paperback felt inexpensively produced, with frequent incompletely inked pages in this reviewer's copy.

Overall, I enjoyed reading this book, learning quite a lot of new history and perspective along the journey. The editors have achieved what Dr. Griffith described as "my hope that this text has fulfilled its promise to bear witness to the decades-long process of progressive change in forensic psychiatry and psychology practice" (p 381). He concludes: "Looking back, both forensic disciplines have made substantial strides and have established solid foundations. Thus the future is bright for both groups of professionals . . . there is work to do, despite the fact that much ground has already been covered" (p 392). This volume is a worthy addition to the bookshelf of forensic practitioners, trainee and senior clinician alike, as we forge into the decades ahead. As Dr. Paul Amble noted in his chapter, citing the oft-quoted chestnut of Santayana and Churchill: "Those who do not learn history are doomed to repeat it" (p 361). This thoughtful book makes those important history lessons a little easier to absorb and contemplate.

Stuart A. Anfang, MD
Springfield, MA

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Psychiatric Aspects of Criminal Behavior: Collected Papers of Eugene Revitch

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The editor, an enthusiastic and grateful supervisee of Dr. Revitch, portrays this book as a memorial issue (*gedenkschrift*) published after the subject's death. The editor's introduction also immediately categorizes this work as a labor of love (dare we say transference love? Perhaps). From the introduction:

Although many of Dr. Revitch's papers were published 50 years ago, they are as relevant today as when they first appeared. I edited this book because I did not want these seminal papers to become lost in the archives, to be only referenced in term papers or literature review [p. v].

This description is not entirely hyperbolic; some of the conditions discussed below are not as well de-

scribed as elsewhere. The introduction is followed by a biography of Dr. Revitch.

Like any collection of papers, the essays range over a considerable field, sometimes redundant, always intriguing. The book is divided into three major sections, each with its own introduction, and each with six or seven component chapters.

Section I is entitled "Sex Murder and Sex Aggression" and includes articles on the titular themes, "gynocide" [sic], unprovoked attacks against women, and sexual aspects of burglaries, the latter perhaps the first discussion of this topic.

Section II is entitled "Mental Disorders and Crime" and includes discussions of psychopathy and pedophilia, patients who kill their physicians and examples of conjugal paranoia. This last concept was completely new to me in this form. The essay provides useful guidance, not only to forensic psychiatrists, but to attorneys involved in marital disputes. A highly important point here is the manner in which the paranoid member of a couple may seem more organized and superficially rational.

Section III, "Psychiatric Aspects of Epilepsy and Epileptoid Violence," includes discussion of psychiatric problems in epilepsy, differing forms of paroxysms, and social effects of epilepsy.

Two points that may be stressed about the clinical work described is Dr. Revitch's use of sodium amylal interviews and his insistence on a thorough and patient clinical examination as the sovereign approach to assessment. As can be inferred from these titles alone, the forensic relevance of these topics is obvious.

Dr. Revitch's approach could be described as a mixture of forensic, descriptive, dynamic, and neuropsychiatric viewpoints, fairly smoothly integrated; the author's disdain for psychoanalysis, however, is noted in passing. The great strength of this work is Revitch's professional access to a very large number of cases, expressed in his writings in the generous salting of case examples, rich in descriptive detail. Several of these examples are cited repetitively in different essays in the book. He makes connections often forgotten in current clinical work, such as between lingerie fetishism, breaking and entering, and assaults on women. His crossing of models reveals the uselessness of "box diagnosis."

Besides the occasional redundancy, another problem with this book is the goodly number of typographic errors, distracting but not fatal to the au-