

Books Reviewed

Alan Stone makes his controversial argument for eliminating civil commitment under police powers, feeling that dangerous people should be treated in prisons (presumably subsuming danger to self under *parens patriae*). I wish a formal rebuttal position paper to Stone's had been included. Somewhat sadly, the book closes with the pessimistic outlook of the sociologist Simon Dinitz, who points out the failures of the liberal-reformist movement in corrections and the unlikelihood of success of traditional approaches with the "new. . . underclass of unmeltables," and who offers no suggestions.

Reviewing a book of varied, unintegrated (and in this case often dated) contributions is difficult. A slim volume of proceedings of the 1979 Chicago conference would have been worthwhile; the other now-historical contributions could have remained in the original sources. □

THE INSANITY PLEA. By William J. Winslade, JD, PhD, and Judith Wilson Ross. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1983, 226 Pp., \$15.95.

Reviewed by Melvin Goldzband, MD

These are the times that try *mens rea*. The insanity defense has become one of the most popular targets of the day. Doubts have even arisen in many outstanding legal scholars and forensic psychiatrists who might have been expected to be defenders of the faith. I shall not provide examples of those who argue just as thoughtfully and in a very scholarly manner that the insanity defense remains an invaluable aspect of the criminal law in this country, as it has been determined to be elsewhere. Instead, I shall merely point out that Winslade has pitched his tent firmly in the camp of detractors. How much real aid he will provide them, however, is a point yet to be determined.

The impression is gained that Winslade did not set out to write a scholarly tome. What he has accomplished appears more representative of a populist tract, a work that appeals to a mass market of individuals who already probably feel that the insanity defense represents an abuse and that psychiatrists in American courts are a heinous presence. In brief, it is not a detached or dispassionate view. The subtitle, "The Uses and Abuses of the Insanity Defense" gives the author's hand away, as do the jacket blurbs by such notables as Ashley Montagu ("Murder is murder, and against that there can be no defense. . .") and the author's associate at UCLA, Norman Cousins.

In his discussion of the seven cases, the most celebrated of which is *Hinckley*, Winslade demonstrates considerable literary facility in handling the backgrounds of the individuals involved, as well as laying out the drama of the courtroom scenes. It is an interesting book to read. Winslade has read and studied his Norman Mailer well.

As a lay analyst, he also has demonstrated a capacity to look beneath some of the apparent and superficial facets presented by the individuals, and to ask some

pertinent questions about them. The impression gained, though, is that regardless of the recognition that mental illness may be present or may play a part in the activities that led to the tragedies represented by these cases, the manner in which the legal process handled these issues did not lead to the authors' impression of a "correct" result.

Winslade presents a solution that appears to be akin to the fashionable "guilty but mentally ill" statutes. He stresses his wish that mentally ill defendants who are found guilty of having committed crimes should be treated (Where? Under whose auspices? For how long?). Finally, on page 210, he even acknowledges "It is not psychiatry or psychiatrists alone who are at the center of this problem. The law permits this and even encourages it," and he goes on to decry the adversary system.

There are many people and organizations in this country who must reason whether the defense is viable. They ought to delve into the matter further than the depth provided by the Winslade book. □

PSYCHIATRIC DRUGS: HAZARDS TO THE BRAIN. By Peter R. Breggin. New York: Spring Publishing Company, 1983, 319 Pp.

Reviewed by Donald A. Swanson, MD

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This is a disturbing book and must be considered as a companion to the author's earlier publication, *Electroshock: Its Brain Disabling Effects*. Once again Dr. Breggin sets out to prove that the prescribing of psychoactive drugs is not therapeutically effective but results in brain damage and mental dysfunction. These effects become, then, the primary and overriding effects of prescribing drugs to treat psychiatric illness.

Dr. Breggin bases his "proof" on his "original" analysis of the literature and on anecdotal reports of dissatisfied patients. After admitting his conclusions may not be shared by most of his colleagues, he attempts to explain this discrepancy in terms of some sort of vague conspiracy by the pharmaceutical industry, which, he insinuates, has misled the psychiatric profession for purely economic reasons.

In actuality, the issue of damaging side effects following exposure to adequately prescribed psychoactive drugs is not as simplistic as Dr. Breggin would have it. Although there is some evidence that persistent subtle deficits, especially tardive dyskinesia, may in fact occur, the vast bulk of both clinical and experimental evidence clearly suggests that the picture of profound, irreversible impairment presented by Dr. Breggin is not a common occurrence.

This book has twelve chapters plus an extensive (albeit idiosyncratic) bibliography. For the most part, it emphasizes the damaging effects of the major tranquilizers, and it briefly mentions the major antidepressants and lithium as other