

Book Reviews

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PSYCHIATRISTS AND THE LEGAL PROCESS: DIAGNOSIS & DEBATE. From *Psychiatric Annals*, 1973-1977; commentary by Professor Richard J. Bonnie. Insight Communications, Inc. Pp. 350. 1978. \$5.75 (paperback).

This book, as the cover indicates, is a collection of articles that have appeared in *Psychiatric Annals* between 1973 and 1977. In fact, the original illustrations have been included, adding a welcome distraction from the heavy prose. The avid reader of law and psychiatry literature has probably encountered most of these articles already. Professor Richard J. Bonnie of the University of Virginia Law School has added comment throughout the text.

The articles, unlike all Gaul, have been divided into four parts. The first deals with the role of psychiatrists in the legal process and consists of articles by Curran, Pollack and Bonnie. Despite the section title, they offer us little hope or enlightenment for the expansion of the psychiatrist's role, for in fact they deal with the past and the *status quo*.

In the second section, dealing with the criminal process, numerous articles are devoted to different facets of the insanity defense (criminal responsibility). It is unfortunate, in my opinion, that so much time and energy are still being channeled into what I have come to regard as the "irrelevant obsession." After a brief visit to another relative wasteland (competency to stand trial), there follows a number of well written essays on prisons and prisoners, which call our attention to a very basic dilemma of our times.

The section on the juvenile process consists of three articles by Donald Hayes Russell. The discussion, often tortuous, deals mostly with the underlying philosophy and history of the juvenile courts. It fails to address itself squarely to the crisis in juvenile justice: why the "dream" failed and what the mental health professional can do now to salvage it.

The last section deals with three subjects in today's headlines: patients' rights, the right to treatment, and the right to refuse treatment. The discussions are generally pertinent and worth reading, particularly for those who do not keep up with these developments on a regular basis. On the whole, however, as has already been implied throughout my comments, this compendium of articles represents traditional forensic psychiatry. They are pertinent and informative for those psychiatrists who function comfortably within the system now and are satisfied in catering to legal needs. But for those of us who remain hopeful of altering the roles of the psychiatrist and reassessing priorities, these essays will probably prove disappointing.

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