

BOOK REVIEWS

Edited by Marian Duggan, Anne Robinson & Jake Phillips

THE ANATOMY OF VIOLENCE: THE BIOLOGICAL ROOTS OF CRIME

Adrian Raine (2013) London: Allen Lane pp496 £25 ISBN: 978-1846143076

The name Lombroso is seen differently in Adrian Raine's latest book, *Anatomy of Violence*. Within the field of criminology, it is general knowledge that though Cesare Lombroso brought scientific methodology to the study of crime, his findings are widely discredited as they posit that criminality is genetic and is identifiable through many physiological features. But with Raine's ability to shift once infamous ideas into thought provoking ones, Lombroso is depicted as a criminologist who had the right idea regarding the origins of crime.

In *Anatomy of Violence*, Raine sends the reader on a journey of developments in neurocriminology, arguing for the consideration of biological factors in crime policy. An unusual but refreshing combination of autobiography (the reader learns how Raine established his interests in the biology of crime), quirk (comic book hero Tintin is involved) and honesty (sometimes he admits that the relationships for crime and violence are complicated), the book clearly demonstrates Raine's passion and enthusiasm toward his research. Unlike a standard academic text that exclusively targets fellow scholars, *Anatomy of Violence* is an open invitation for anyone interested in crime.

The approach is reminiscent of an amicable conversation between a teacher and student. The writing style acknowledges the reader, using plenty of "you"s. Raine aptly fuses mainstream references and his academic work to create accessibility to his lifetime's work, a skill that tends to be lacking in academia. Understanding plays a major role in the exchange as Raine provides numerous examples, stories and hypothetical scenarios for the reader to follow along. In a way, it is interactive, and the reader finishes the book knowing just as much about Adrian Raine as about his research, demonstrating that his life is intertwined with his work.

Raine showcases ground breaking studies he and his colleagues have conducted, from abnormal areas of the brain to malnutrition, supporting evidence that crime, particularly violence, has a biological basis. But Raine is also honest with the reader. He points out the findings' limitations and contradictions and carefully emphasises that biological factors are not the only culprits increasing the likelihood for violence. Rather, the social environment

plays an important interaction with biology to either protect or place individuals at risk for violence.

The challenge for Raine is how to convince a sceptical reader that genetics and bad brains are responsible for some of the most horrendous and sensationalised acts of violence. The idea of a biological basis for crime is controversial and Raine mentions a panel he attended where protestors broke in and denounced him as racist despite having his study sample as all Caucasian Dutch. The inferences from this research are also disturbing: according to his work, free will is an illusion and policy implications hint dystopia. But without genuine understanding of Raine's work, the visceral reaction is one of instant repulsion because biological factors are associated with the notion of fixed fates and actions that are beyond one's control. However, like the psychologist that he is, Raine is already aware of his reader's mind and impressively addresses all concerns, misunderstandings and fears that arise from the neurocriminological literature. He anticipates these throughout the book and offers counterpoints that leave the reader pausing. For instance, in the concluding chapter, Raine sends the reader to an alternate reality where governments fund programmes that rehabilitate prospective violent offenders called LOMBROSO. Critics would argue that such programmes deny basic human rights, a return of eugenics. However, Raine points out that in the current climate, criminals are imprisoned and denied the right to send or receive sperm, a form of passive eugenics. Few are aware of this point and it shifts one's original perspective.

Raine persuasively argues his point, leaving the reader convinced that there is credence in biological factors for violence. The question is to what extent? Raine does not make it particularly clear as at times, he dazzles the reader with evidence supportive of biological markers for violence, only to add caveats that the relationships between biological factors and violence are complicated. As a result, some may accuse Raine of lacking a stance. Others may find his approach as a honest and accurate depiction of criminological research. Although the middle of the book seems to teeter between uncertainty and support of neurobiological factors for violence, Raine makes it clear in his conclusions that there is strong evidence for the influence of neurobiological factors on violence— Fish eating and low resting heart rate included.

Anatomy of Violence is a reflection of extensive thoughtful research from one of the most prominent criminologists. It is hard to believe that decades ago, without tenacity and enthusiasm, this research may never have come to light.

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THE MODERN PRISON PARADOX: POLITICS, PUNISHMENT, AND SOCIAL COMMUNITY

Amy E. Lerman (2014). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp299 (pbk) £19.99 ISBN 978-1107613850

Lerman opens her book with a persuasive analogous retelling of the now infamous Stanford Prison Experiment after which Philip Zimbardo, the study's principal investigator, concluded: 'We had created a dominating behavioural context whose power insidiously frayed the seemingly impervious values of compassion, fair play, and belief in a just world. The situation won; humanity lost' (p.3). She uses this to lay the groundwork for her assessment that the American prison system, and California in particular, have produced a contemporary criminal justice paradox: 'the crime control politics of the past half-century have given rise to institutions that (re-)create the conditions that arguably gave rise to criminality in the first place, and they do so in a particularly intense and toxic form' (p.12).

The Modern Prison Paradox examines the relationships between prisoners and prisons, the rising influence of politics on punishment, and the impact these have had on the social community over the past fifty years. Her primary argument is that 'the social ties forged in prison ultimately foster social norms that are anathema to broad-based, cooperative community engagement' and 'the result is that, by sending people to increasingly punitive and dangerous prisons, we do not resocialise them into the norms and roles of American culture. Rather, we socialize them into the norms and roles of *prison* culture' (p.12). Lerman presents data from multiple sources specific to the state of California to provide evidence of how the varying cultures developed within prisons result in varying effects on people, institutions, and communities. Although focused on the American correctional system, the analysis is universally applicable and relevant, especially in the UK, as the prison population continues to rise and overcrowding, the building of Titan prisons, and politics are influencing the penal landscape more and more.

The book departs from existing literature and research in four important respects: it centralizes the state by establishing it as a key player in shaping citizenship; emphasizes institutional variation through the ways in which some prisons have more damaging effects than others; goes beyond 'just' inmates to explore the impact of correctional environments on officers and their lives; and tests causality at these individual levels. Lerman stresses that, 'This book is about prisons, but it is also a broader story about why political institutions matter for how citizens come to view their social world, how they interact with others, and how they experience and respond to the particular context in which they are placed' (p.23).

The first three chapters review the changing use and culture of incarceration, how these act as a reflection of shifts in political values and priorities (the 'politicization of American corrections'), and how institutional characteristics influence civility, as well as social networks and social norms of citizens. Lerman contends that prisons, along with other institutions of crime control, teach people that certain attitudes and behaviours, rather than others, are normal and 'role appropriate', and that 'prisons can powerfully reshape social identity and orientation toward the broader social world' in both positive and

negative ways (p 58). The ways in which prisons promote the 'dark side' side of social capital (e.g., prisons as schools of criminality) is interwoven throughout.

The subsequent four chapters present her methodologies and data, with substantial analytical discussions regarding the social effects of incarceration and prison work, and how those living and working within prisons transmit these effects to outside communities. For me, 'The Social Effects of Prison Work' is the most compelling chapter, as it attempts to unpick the complex professional roles of prison officers, to what extent they produce distinct institutional cultures, and how these impact on officers' lives within the community. Lerman's analyses reveal several noteworthy findings that carry important implications for institutional reformation. For example, when examining the attitudes of guards, their orientation towards prisoners, and workplace satisfaction, she finds that 'for those who work within more punitive prisons, daily experiences can be conducive to the construction of strong social solidarities with peers, while simultaneously incubating a broader sense of distrust' (p 124) and that 'officers at higher-security prisons are more likely to believe that incarceration in the prison where they work has a detrimental effect on inmates' (p 132). Her analysis also shows that 'prison context appears to have a significant effect on attitudes toward rehabilitation programs but no effect on attitudes toward rehabilitation as a professional ideology' (p.142).¹³ As we continually revisit, and struggle with, what the purpose and goals of prison and punishment are and should be, we often fail to recognize the significance of prison officers in the process and delivery of 'justice'.

The findings presented in *The Modern Prison Paradox* bring to light two important features of the prison experience: prisons are *socializing* institutions, and prisons are *social* institutions; indeed, they are not hermetically sealed storage areas, rather, they are 'small communities unto themselves, and the context of life inside these state institutions has important consequences for the kinds of people they produce' (p 7). Lerman's work continues to impress me, and this book does not fall short. Anyone interested in the ramifications of often damaging institutional practices, and potential solutions toward reforming them, should read this. It is beautifully written, and the author's passion shines through, especially in the epilogue. In the final pages she poses a challenge that all practitioners, researchers, and students should continually contemplate: 'The question, then, becomes how we create institutions that encourage the kinds of thought and action we hope to achieve' (p 200).

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¹³ I would be remiss, however, if I did not suggest that substantial research in this area has and is being carried out in the UK, and I refer specifically to the studies conducted by Alison Liebling and her colleagues. Their work on prison culture and its effects on suicides, institutional performance, wellbeing, and the work of prison officers could have advanced the analysis and provided a valuable avenue in which to further examine how culture impacts those who live and work in penal establishments.

WOMEN EXITING PRISON: CRITICAL ESSAYS ON GENDER, POST-RELEASE SUPPORT AND SURVIVAL

Carlton, B. and Segrave, M. (eds.) (2013) London: Routledge, pp212. hbk. £90.00, ISBN 978-0-415-63076-4

The damaging impact of women's imprisonment has been a focus of international attention for many years. The punishment of women, many of whom have been criminalised as a direct result of their attempts to survive poverty, violence and abuse, has been highlighted as a phenomenon that is replicated internationally, and one which continues to perplex policy-makers, politicians and academics. The 'revolving door' appears to be an international phenomenon, where women are given short-term prison sentences for minor but frequent offences (often related to addiction); such sentences do not provide sufficient time for interventions within the prison (if such facilities exist) to take effect, but do effectively and consistently ensure that women will accrue additional problems as a direct result of the period of incarceration. Internationally, reforms have been implemented with little visible effect; leaving activists and abolitionists struggling to ameliorate the damaging effects of prison as they are experienced by individual women, while at the same time, waging ongoing campaigns for a broader abolitionist agenda that links into their calls for wider structural reforms.

Women Exiting Prison engages with these debates by focusing on the issues facing women as they leave prison. The post-release period is considered as one aspect of a lifetime trajectory; and a potential opportunity for individual (ex) prisoners to make a new start in their lives. This state of transition is referred to in official-speak in a variety of ways: 'reintegration', 'through-care', 're-entry'. However, as this edited collection of critical essays highlights, unless the circumstances that impacted on the lives of women prior to imprisonment are addressed, their chances on the outside are likely to be limited. The provision of adequate post-release support often appears to be lost in wider preoccupations with penal policy and 'effective interventions'. The international dimension of the 'post-release and reintegration industries' (Carlen and Tombs, 2006) is referred to throughout the book; as is the significance of 'intersectionality' where multiple structures (gender, class, race) interact.

Drawing upon international research, this edited collection highlights the variable policy attention directed towards post-release support and the subsequent allocation of resources. Contributors draw upon examples of prison exit from the United States (Bumiller, *chapter 1*; Shaylor and Meiners, *chapter 9*); Australia (Carlton and Baldry, *chapter 3*; Baldry, *chapter 5*; Kilroy et al., *chapter 8*); Canada (Hannah-Moffat and Innocente, *chapter 4*); England and Wales (Kendall, *chapter 2*; Corcoran and Fox, *chapter 7*) and Northern Ireland (Kerr and Moore, *chapter 6*). The introduction (Segrave and Carlton) and postscript (Carlton and Segrave) set the context of the book by focusing on gendered transcarceral realities; and the significance of a radical vision for system and social change.

While each chapter provides a thorough account of the circumstances facing women post-release within these national contexts, a number of themes are evident throughout the

book which powerfully illustrate the international limitations of reforms initially intended to reduce the imprisonment of women but which actually serve to increase or to draw more women into supervisory and surveillance measures. Bumiller (*chapter 1*) highlights this process with her analysis of the links between re-entry and labour markets, illustrating the overlap between welfarist and punitive state institutions in the US. The international congruence of penal policy operating as a form of social control is evident with specific impact on marginalised groups. Baldry (*chapter 5*) powerfully evidences the impact of penal policy on indigenous women in Australia, directly resulting from the colonial past and its continuing legacy. Her account of the impact of systemic discrimination clearly illustrates the structural impacts that govern individual experiences. Kerr and Moore (*chapter 6*) highlight the effects of post-conflict transitions and the impact of this on systems of punishment, as mediated by gender. Kendall (*chapter 2*) illustrates how the implementation of the Corston Report, despite good intentions, has served to expand punishment within a neoliberal structural context wherein voluntary service providers are co-opted into wider systems of punishment. The ongoing individualisation and responsabilisation of women is highlighted by Hannah-Moffat and Innocente (*chapter 4*) who illustrate the tendency of parole boards in Canada to individualise women's needs, thus deflecting attention from system issues in the process.

The book powerfully illustrates the way in which systems of criminalisation impact on women and the harmful effects of this for women and communities. Contributors provide rigorous accounts of the way in which well-intentioned reforms become distorted in the process of implementation and operation, as a result of the dominance of neoliberal social forms and the punitive pull centred on the prison.

This book is certainly likely to convince the reader of the need for action at a global level to challenge the continued incarceration – and abysmal support at the point of decarceration – for women. For some contributors, increased government spending and support for struggling communities was posited as the way forward. Given the powerful depictions of the limits and potential distortion of short-term reforms, this did not appear likely to address the co-option and failure of limited reforms identified throughout the book. Urgent calls for radical social change were evident however, in the contributions of anti-prison activists and advocates (Kilroy et al., *chapter 8*; Shaylor and Meiners, *chapter 9*) who clearly and powerfully presented the need for alliances across social institutions, ongoing campaigns focused on the abolition of imprisonment and the need to challenge social structures that marginalise, criminalise and punish.

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References

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STREETCRAFT: STORIES FROM THE FRONTLINE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE INNOVATION

Anton Shelupanov (2014) London: Centre for Justice Innovation. pp113 (pbk) £15.00 ISBN 9780992811808

Over the last few months, I've had the opportunity to meet and speak with a number of individuals working in the justice sector. We discussed their journey through corrections, their love and passion for social justice and the wonderful work their organization was doing. From the moment I met each of these front line workers, I was intrigued and excited. I wanted to immerse myself in the world of justice and understand their passion and drive to strengthen their communities and reduce crime. As it happens, I had the opportunity to review *Streetcraft* and found myself reading interviews with front line justice pioneers who, like others I had met, spoke about their work with passion, love and care. I was impressed with their approach to justice and their positive attitude to the work they were performing. While reading *Streetcraft*, I felt connected to the stories offered by the practitioners and found myself thinking about the struggles each practitioner and/or their organization has faced. I was impressed by their dedication and their love for justice.

Throughout this book, it is the voice of criminal justice practitioners, their hard work and dedication and their passion to make a difference that stands out from other more traditional justice books. The talented and caring individuals shared stories, memorable moments and struggles over the years they have been involved in criminal justice. The book has a positive outlook, yet the discussions of struggles and obstacles were essential and important in understanding the dedication and work that is required for justice innovation. It is often through resistance and limitations that successes follow. Indeed, this is precisely what practitioners discovered and discussed in their interviews. While reading about the struggles that some practitioners faced, I found myself rooting for them to succeed whilst also recognizing my own struggles and limitations in conducting criminological research and/or attempting to become involved with criminal justice organizations. Throughout the book, practitioners display enthusiasm, perseverance and optimism with regards to the current justice system. The strength of this book lies in its uncut perspective of the practitioners. By reading this book, the reader has a clear understanding of what it is like to work in the criminal justice system.

Streetcraft is divided into twenty nine case studies, with an introduction, a 'top lessons' list as well as an annex describing the practitioners. Each case study is approximately two to three pages in length and includes a number of interview questions. The questions presented in text have been taken from a larger interview schedule. The questions presented were interesting, captivating and provide a nice overall balance between introduction of the organization or previous work history, particular challenges or struggles faced and lessons learned throughout their work history. Each case study also includes a quote in larger print from the practitioner. This particular quote was in a bold coloured writing as to draw attention to an important aspect of the practitioner. I found these bolded quotes especially useful and interesting; they were very much in line with the spirit of enthusiasm and perseverance that was evident throughout the book. Moreover, in some cases a small black and white picture of the practitioner was provided.

The interview questions were both general and in-depth which provided the reader with a general overview of how the practitioner became involved in the criminal justice, but also focused on particular projects, programs or new developments the practitioners were involved with. Similarly, the tone of the interviews was positive focusing on lessons learned, the importance of collaboration and innovation.

Streetcraft is an interesting, provocative and empowering book. The practitioners interviewed for the book become a small group of individuals on a mission to make the world a better and safer place. The discussions of criminal justice policy, programs and youth, men and women in conflict with the law are respectful and centered on progress and success rather than failure. Moreover, I particularly enjoyed the ways in which the practitioners humanized offenders, discussing them with care and encouragement. In this way, *Streetcraft* was refreshing to read. One of the main strengths of this book was the vast array of practitioners interviewed. In fact, the authors provide an annex at the end of the book which summarizes all twenty nine practitioners, which included police officers, prison staff, probation staff, sentencers, reformers, and specialists in a number of areas including youth, domestic violence, technology and restorative justice.

Streetcraft provides a unique approach to examining the role and work of criminal justice practitioners. The range of practitioners interviewed provides a good overall view of criminal justice work and the importance of collaboration and innovation. This book creates an atmosphere of enthusiasm, perseverance, dedication and care. Simply reading the book is empowering as it allows readers to understand the balance between innovation and struggles and illustrates that lessons are learned despite failures or setbacks, I often myself becoming somewhat of a 'cheerleader' for the practitioners who were trying to make the world a better place. Despite setbacks, obstacles and resistance, the practitioners pursued their work with strength and dedication. As a social justice enthusiast, *Streetcraft* provided hope for my future justice endeavours and provided a place to retreat in order to feel connected and inspired. *Streetcraft* is fervently recommended to all criminal justice practitioners, students, those interested in justice innovation, collaboration or anyone who is passionate about making the world a better place.

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