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Psychopaths and Delinquents

Psychopathy and Delinquency by William and Joan McCord

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Everything that is
 is not something other:
a ridiculous pabulum for the poet's mind
until the wind sing it, or star bring it
ringing its name through the astonishing night:

or on a March day, the selfsame crocus struggle
wildly into air, because its roots, through all winter's
 leveling,
remembered their own name.

Or the maple that shook its glory down
puzzle strollers with its identical
and lovely form, four months later assumed again
gradually as a morning.

Such things somersault the mind
backward, inward:
 I wonder who knew the stars
from flowers, before flowers were not stars:
before trees spread between one and other, a growth
by night starlike, by day a flowering, and yet itself?

In the last analysis, poetry must speak for itself. These poems do. They call doubtless for no ordinary attention, demand a "searching imagination" to match the poet's own, demand a willingness to let the poet's fine intelligence and sensibility, the disciplined richness of his language, his ingenuity with structure, the subtly-chiselled imagery yield their treasures in their own good time. In a special sense, one must bring *contemplation* to these pages to capture the deeper delight they hold.

This reviewer felt it was an imperative duty, and an honor, to introduce this slim volume to those of our readers who care for fine poetry.

C. G. AREVALO

PSYCOPATHS AND DELINQUENTS

PSYCHOPATHY AND DELINQUENCY. By William and Joan McCord. New York, London. Grune and Straton. 1956. Pages x, 230.

ASOCIAL, primitive in his uncontrollable desires, highly impulsive and constantly aggressive, the psychopath knows no love and no guilt but only trouble. His intelligence is not lower than average for he is not feeble-minded; his mind is not delirious nor confused by delusions for he is not a psychotic; inner conflicts do not stir up nor lock his emotional reactions for clinically he is not a neurotic; yet his behavior is chronically morbid, he is potentially a dangerous criminal.

Educators, psychologists, psychiatrists and criminologists often meet the psychopath. However, in the majority of cases they can do little for him but label him as an undesirable, incorrigible, incurable misfit. After futile attempts at readjustment, it seems that solitary confinement is the only safe and possible solution to the psychopathic problem. William and Joan McCord are among the few who reach an adequate understanding of the psychopath's syndrome and in this book they offer a much better solution than mere coercion and solitary confinement.

Psychopathy, the authors prove, is a fairly unitary syndrome which differs from other personality disorders. "Guiltlessness and lovelessness conspicuously mark the psychopath as different from other men" (p. 14). Having explained the personality traits of diagnostic value, the authors pass to the study of the etiology of this disorder and blending together the opinion of the few authorities in this field with the data of their own researches they conclude: "There seem to be two causes. First, severe rejection by itself can cause psychopathy. Second, mild rejection in combination with damage to the brain area (probably the hypothalamus) which normally inhibits behavior causes psychopathy" (p. 69). Rejection, therefore, is at the origin of all psychopathic syndromes.

Can psychopathy be successfully treated? The McCords face this problem with calm factual objectivity: "The treatment of the adult psychopath, while not hopeless, is far from hopeful. Therefore... our best hope lies in the successful treatment of child psychopathy" (p. 99). Experience proves that mere discipline and severe punishment do not help at all. Medical treatment and office psychotherapy are not effective either. However, combined individual and group therapy directed towards bringing the psychopath out of his social isolation can produce in him more normal sentiments of affection and guilt and induce some acceptance of authority and a moderate self control.

Very interesting is the authors' evaluation of the type of milieu therapy practiced at the New York Wiltwyck School for Boys which rests upon an action of "permissiveness and unconditional love" (p. 124). At Wiltwyck the psychopathic children were studied in comparison with other kinds of juvenile delinquents. To tap different traits of psychopathic personality the McCords have devised original testing instruments with which they have conducted their investigations and experiments. Positive data obtained by the use of such tests and by direct observation prove that children diagnosed as psychopathic respond to the Wiltwyck therapy better than neurotic or psychotic children. This book proves that psychopathy, if treated properly and early enough can be cured.

In their last chapter the authors ask whether psychopaths may be held legally responsible for their acts. This discussion remains inconclusive but sheds much light on the moral disturbance and responsibility of this group of disturbed individuals. Not only the jurist but the educator and the moral theologian will find this chapter of great interest.

The McCords have written an excellent volume. In my opinion this is the most objective and comprehensive book available in the field of psychopathy. Since the problems of psychopathy is present here in the Philippines as well as in the United States, I hope this book will come to the hands of our criminologists, psychologists and educators.

FRANCESCO PARISI

ECLECTIC PSYCHIATRY

DYNAMICS OF PSYCHOTHERAPY. By Percival M. Symonds.
Grune and Stratton. New York and London. 1956. Pp. ix,
211.

IN this volume, the first of a set of three on *Dynamics of Psychotherapy*, the approach is essentially eclectic. The author avoids subscribing to any school or theory, but selecting some objective procedures of classics like Freud, Adler, Jung, Ferenczi, Stekel and Rank, he coordinates them with contemporary contributions from