Book Reviews

Law and Psychology

Psychology in the Legal Process. Papers from a meeting, Sept. 1975. BRUCE DENNIS SALES, Ed. Spectrum, New York, 1977 (distributor, Halsted [Wiley], New York). xii, 292 pp. $20.

The Criminal Justice System. Papers from a conference, Lincoln, Neb., Oct. 1975. BRUCE DENNIS SALES, Ed. Plenum, New York, 1977. xii, 258 pp. $19.50. Perspectives in Law and Psychology, vol. 1.

We are witnessing a boom of interest in the relation between psychology and the law. It takes several forms: joint degree programs in a number of universities, fellowships for established psychologists to spend a year at a law school, employment opportunities for psychologists in government agencies and not-for-profit research organizations dedicated to studying and serving the justice system, the publication of psychologically sophisticated research in law reviews and a new specialized journal, symposia at national conventions, and books—in the last three years there have been at least six authored or edited by psychologists dealing with the application of psychological understanding to legal processes and the application of legal analysis to psychological research and therapy. The 24 chapters of the two books under review provide a decent sample of the scope, depth, and quality of the work generated by this booming interest.

Psychology in the Legal Process, which began life as papers on the program of the 1975 meeting of the American Psychology-Law Society, includes treatments of the legal topics psychologists have traditionally found most fascinating: juries and trial processes (the effects of videotaped testimony on mock jurors' judgments; consequences of jury size and decision rule on mock trial outcomes; dynamics of persuasion during the voir dire examination), the definition and prediction of "dangerousness," children's development of legal notions, and the problems of the psychologist as expert witness.

Several chapters in the book are also explicitly aimed at the formulation or analysis of policy regarding psychologically interesting issues like the regulation of "psychological devices" (aversive conditioning or biofeedback equipment, for example) and the appropriate place for psychologists in child custody proceedings. There is also an attempt to apply specific psychological theory (equity theory) to the rat's nest of problems involved in the imposition of criminal sentences. Given the breadth of topics covered, it is not surprising to find, nor is it a criticism to note, that *Psychology in the Legal Process* is a sampler of psychologists' interests in legal processes rather than a systematic exposition or integration of them.

As its title indicates, the focus of *The Criminal Justice System*, which was born out of papers read at the first Law-Psychology Research Conference at the University of Nebraska, is sharper. Eight of its nine chapters address topics specific to criminal justice or the relationship between criminal and mental health sanctions. The ninth chapter, a thorough, well-documented review of the psycholinguistics of jury instructions, seems out of place in the context of the other chapters.

The quality of the research and scholarship invested in the chapters of *The Criminal Justice System* is generally high. Of particular value for readers new to the criminal justice field will be the brief chapter by Norval Morris, "Who should go to prison," which lucidly expounds the theory of incarceration that, it seems safe to say, will be regnant in the corrections establishment for some time to come. What is missing in the book, as it is missing everywhere else in print, is a thorough exposition of a general psychology or a theory of human nature that might justify the incarceration policies Morris propounds or, for that matter, any other general incarceration policies. (The chapters in both volumes under review on current problems with the identification and treatment of "dangerous" offenders make it evident that clinical psychology and psychiatry have not to date supplied a workable theory of criminal behavior.) As Hans Toch says in his chapter in *The Criminal Justice System*, "We all know—or we all presume to know—that prison is hell" (p. 161). What we don't know, and should not presume will be easy to determine, is just what kind of hell, and for how long, offenders should suffer.

Toch's chapter emphasizes the difficult realities of prisoner classification schemes. These realities, rather than the philosophical and political puzzles surrounding changing trends in acceptable rationales for incarceration, present psychologists with extraordinarily important research tasks and opportunities for useful work.

At the level of general theory, psychology and law are in a relationship of ambiguous apposition. Sometimes, because we don't know what else to do, we simply hyphenate the fields, as in the American Psychology-Law Society. And it may happen with this hyphenated area of intellectual interest, as is happening with the hyphenated Americans dear to sociological literature and the hyphenated surnames recently inspired by desire for sexual equality, that it will live uncomfortably for a while before finding a place in the establishment. What we need, at least, are theories to take us from the apposition of psychology *and* law to a useful psychology *of* law. (We thank Wallace Loh of the University of Washington for this expression.) Such theories should be grounded in the realities of the settings to which they are applicable. Conceptual roadblocks composed of obsolete distinctions between "pure" and "applied" psychology should be rapidly dismantled in this effort and all attention focused on providing conceptually clear models, hypotheses, and programs of empirical research. The work contained in many of the chapters of these two books appears to us to be aimed in the right direction.

GORDON BERMANT
E. ALLAN LIND
Research Division, Federal Judicial Center, Washington, D.C. 20005

Transient Events in Space

Study of Travelling Interplanetary Phenomena 1977. Proceedings of a symposium, Tel Aviv, Israel, June 1977. M. A. SHEA, D. F. SMART, and S. T. WU, Eds. Reidel, Boston, 1977. xii, 444 pp., illus. $38. Astrophysics and Space Library, vol. 71.

The phrase "traveling interplanetary phenomena" conjures up different notions in different people. The solar wind physicist immediately thinks of the more or less steady plasma outflow from the sun, upon which shocks, Alfvén waves, or rotational discontinuities (to name a few) may be superposed. The cosmic ray physicist, on the other hand, tends to regard the interplanetary medium as a static, or at best a slowly convecting, medi-