

Worth Reading

by Russ Immarigeon*

Reform

Fortune in My Eyes: A Memoir of Broadway Glamour, Social Justice, and Political Passion

by David Rothenberg
Applause Theatre & Cinema Books
\$29.99, 316 pages (2012)

The Fortune Society, long grounded in New York City, was founded when David Rothenberg, a theater press agent, and former prisoners, such as Kenny Jackson and Mel Rivers, set up operations in Rothenberg's Times Square office. Newly released prisoners started trickling into this small office, but soon, with word of its services spreading, there were long lines waiting for assistance. The assistance offered at the Fortune Society, then and now, consisted of understanding where these men and women were coming from and helping them secure employment, housing and other basic needs.

Rothenberg's career in the theater continued during his involvement with the Fortune Society, which has stretched out for approximately 45 years. In 1966, Rothenberg promoted a play, *Fortune and Men's Eyes*, written by Canadian ex-prisoner John Herbert, about a young offender who was ill-placed in a dormitory with three other prisoners. The play, presented on a barren stage, shows how prisons produce an alienated environment that promotes personal deterioration and criminal recidivism.

Fortune and Men's Eyes was not an immediate hit, but it caught on, especially after audiences were invited to stick around after the play to ask questions of cast members and former prisoners in attendance.

The Fortune Society has grown sizably over its more than four-decade lifespan. After Rothenberg's retirement from active participation, he wrote a play, *The Castle*, in which former prisoners tell their stories of life in prison and life at the Fortune Society Academy program at "The Castle," an upper Manhattan housing complex for former prisoners. The play, which tours, is again on a barren set, where former prisoners tell their tales of struggle, survival, and triumph.

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Rothenberg's memoir, *Fortune in My Eyes*, is insightful and valuable. Not entirely about prisoner struggles or offender programming, it also reports on Rothenberg's theater life, his "coming out" at the age of 40, his brief political career, and his views on prisons and social change. Rothenberg ably weaves prisoner concerns into the rhythms and strains of everyday life. For those interested in learning more about the Fortune Society's current work, log on to the agency's website (<http://fortunesociety.org/>), which includes updates on the work

as "death at an early age." In this volume, a follow-up to earlier accounts, Kozol compellingly reports the context of children who turn to criminality. The children Kozol speaks about in this volume were originally from the South Bronx, and he met them initially at the infamous, dreadful Martinique Hotel in midtown Manhattan. Kozol is a brave advocate with ideas that merit further reflection.

In *Justice for Kids*, law professor Nancy Dowd argues that "providing (kids) with opportunities to grow, and supporting their families and communities, is rarely achieved

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of the David Rothenberg Center for Public Policy.

Copies: Applause Theatre & Cinema Books, 33 Plymouth St., Montclair, NJ 07042; website: www.applausebooks.com.

Juvenile Justice

Fire in the Ashes: Twenty-Five Years Among the Poorest Children in America

by Jonathan Kozol
Crown
\$27.00, 368 pages (2012)

Justice for Kids: Keeping Kids Out of the Juvenile Justice System

edited by Nancy E. Dowd
New York University Press
\$49.00, 314 + ix pages (2011)

Jonathan Kozol's new book, *Fire in the Ashes*, is a stirring reflection on his 25 years of reporting on the plight of urban children in public schools and shelters for the homeless. Kozol, a former Boston-area teacher, has published regularly on the troubles in our schools, and in recent years, he has focused more distinctly on the lives of school children outside the classroom. One aspect of his investigations concerns the emergence of criminal behavior among urban children. "Crime at an early age" has become as gripping

by pushing them into the juvenile justice system."

[The 13 articles in this collection focus] on preventing and reducing juvenile crime and fostering healthy child development grounded in evidence-based, effective interventions and systemic restructuring. The goal is not a Band-Aid fix or a rescue from a faulty system, but rather a complete system change. The scholars and experts featured in *Justice for Kids* focus on what is wrong upstream, rather than how to rescue kids from a malfunctioning system that fails to bring justice to children and therefore does little to aid in their development toward healthy adults.

The articles in this volume are divided into four parts, encompassing:

- System change;
- Race, gender, and sexual orientation;
- Legal socialization and policing; and
- Model programs.

The opening section delves deeply into daycare, foster care, special education, and mental health services, as well as "destructive educational and racial policies," to assess how they hinder the development of successful school communities and "juvenile justice" responses. The second and third sections cover black, female, and gay

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youth; the deterrence of serious and chronic offenders; and the role of parents in police interrogations. The final segment of this volume examines restorative justice in Denver schools, the Brotherhood/Sister Sol program in Harlem, and the Maya Angelou Academy at New Beginnings in Washington, DC.

Copies: The Crown Publishing Group, 1745 Broadway, New York, NY 10019; phone: (212) 572-2537; and New York University Press, 838 Broadway, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10003-4812; phone: (800) 996-6987.

might be possible. Sociology has long veered off this early course and is now called one of the 10 most irrelevant subjects of college study. Criminology, often separated from criminal justice, is moving in bleaker directions as well. So, can hope be found with “critical criminology” or even with more traditional pursuits?

The *Routledge Handbook of Critical Criminology* is a magisterial effort (39 articles) at capturing the heart and soul of this international movement. Opening the volume, key authors sum up the history of “critical crim” in Australia, Britain, Canada, Latin America, and the United States. The

role of “activism” within the work of criminologists, and the conflict, or cooptation, between reform- and abolitionist-oriented approaches.

The Future of Criminology is an unhelpfully titled volume that is actually an appreciation of the prolific work of British criminologist David P. Farrington, who has written extensively on topics as diverse as criminal careers correctional treatment, crime desistance, impulse control, psychopathy in children, sentencing, and violence interventions. In this volume, 35 articles written by leading researchers introduce Farrington and his work through separate parts on development and causation, criminal careers and justice, crime prevention, intervention and treatment, and public policy strategies. Farrington, himself, offers 10 priorities for the future:

1. More systematic observing of offending;
2. More field experiments on the causes of offending;
3. More longitudinal studies of the development of offending;
4. More attention to protective factors in risk assessment;
5. Quasi-experimental assessment of particular life events such as marriage on offending;
6. More work on co-offending;
7. The testing of “falsible theories that make quantitative predictions”;
8. More randomized experiments on the effectiveness of crime prevention and offender treatment;
9. Longitudinal surveys of the impact of interventions; and
10. The replication of cross-national and cross-cultural comparisons.

In conclusion, critical criminology is not new. The contemporary context dates back to English studies of the mid-1970s. Historically, it has roots even further back in time, so it is strangely clarifying to learn in these volumes that the editors are perhaps further afield from a coherent definition than those who bravely ventured forth in the 1970s. No matter. Other dimensions of contemporary criminology are also moving forward with greater evidence of acceptance and application, although the meaning and implications of this are not necessarily clear.

Copies: Routledge, c/o Taylor & Francis, Inc., 7625 Empire Dr., Florence, KY 41042-2919; phone: (800) 634-7064; University of British Columbia Press; phone: (800)

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They also discuss more practical matters, such as the examination of various criminological promises, the dilemmas of doing criminology, critical issues in community corrections, and the impact of stigma and marginality.

Critical Criminology

Routledge Handbook of Critical Criminology

edited by Walter S. DeKeredy and Molly Dragiewicz
Routledge
\$155.00, 529 + xviii pages (2012)

Critical Criminology in Canada: New Voices, New Directions

edited by Aaron Doyle and Dawn Moore
University of British Columbia Press
\$32.95, 336 pages (2011)

The Future of Criminology

edited by Rolf Loeber and Brandon C. Welch
Oxford University Press
\$27.95, 278 + xxxvi pages (2012)

Academic disciplines tend to devour their disciples with little rhyme or reason. Criminology, like sociology before it, started, in significant part, in pursuit of practical methods and means of changing communities—and the larger society—for the better. For example, *The Charities Review*, a late 19th- and early 20th-century publication subtitled *A Journal of Practical Sociology*, contained both brief and detailed descriptions of contemporary reform efforts in housing, welfare, and criminal justice. From month to month, it served as a chronicle of what was happening, what was working, and what

volume’s second section covers a variety of theoretical perspectives, including Marxist criminology, left realism, feminist perspectives, cultural criminology, postmodern criminology, convict criminology, peace-making criminology, psychoanalytic perspectives, and historical perspectives. The third section focuses on more specific topics, including: animal exploitation, white-collar crime, girls’ violence, private prisons, anti-feminist backlash, rural crime, hate crime, intimate partner violence, human trafficking, media and crime, youth gangs, women offenders, and drugs. Finally, a significant group of scholars describe various policy perspectives on campus sexual assault, violence, prisons, and state oppression.

Critical Criminology in Canada is, naturally, country-specific and contains a more modest number (12) of articles. In being so specific, however, it enables its contributors to go forth, not with less conflict (there are considerable differences in Canada), but with something resembling a disciplinary, if not national, purpose. Although the articles in this volume cover broad topics, such as white-collar crime, genocide, and “anarcho-abolition,” they also discuss more practical matters, such as the examination of various criminological promises, the dilemmas of doing criminology, critical issues in community corrections, and the impact of stigma and marginality. Of note is that the editors highlight critical criminology’s heretofore unexamined struggles with the rise of neo-liberal governance, the news media, the

441-4115; website: www.ubcpublishing.com; Oxford University Press, 2001 Evans Rd., Cary, NC 27513; phone: (800) 445-9714.

Elderly Prisoners

Doing Harder Time? The Experiences of an Ageing Male Prison Population in England and Wales

by Natalie Mann

Ashgate

\$99.95, 141 pages (2012)

As elsewhere in this world, the elderly are becoming an increasingly large (and troublesome) portion of the British prison population. In *Doing Harder Time*, Natalie Mann reports the results of her dissertation research in an important volume for those in England and Wales, as well as beyond those shores, to assess and address the increased incarceration of older citizens.

Great Britain's road to this particular ruin involves the usual mix of longer sentences, extended periods of post-release supervision, and tighter surveillance in the community. These are all satisfying political solutions, but they have nightmarish implications for everyday criminal justice practice. Mann is among the few who actually identify the "net-widening" impact of contemporary criminal justice policies. She sagely notes:

Despite the clear legislation-guided reasons for the continued use of imprisonment as the main form of punishment, its increased use has in turn added to the dire situation which the penal system now finds itself in.

First off, she states that elderly prison populations are not homogeneous. The offenses of this population are diverse and their needs while incarcerated include "education, training programs, rehabilitation courses, and general prison activities."

Mann challenges an American view that prisons serve as a sanctuary for elderly offenders. More commonly, prisons are seen as places of "fear and seclusion" for this group of men and women. Moreover, such confinement is a waste of common sense, not to mention public funding. The apparent absence of community-based reintegration and treatment programming is a critical strike against the ability of community corrections to match clear needs.

Mann gives an insightful overview of the British crime policy scene, but the implications of this volume are readily instructive for American audiences. For this study, she contacted all the appropriate agencies and institutions, conducted in-depth interviews, and made at least fleeting observations as time allowed. Overall, she interviewed 40 male prisoners over the age of 55, as well as 10 prison officers with experience working with older prisoners.

Mann grounds her study in the structuration theory of British sociologist Anthony Giddens, which posits that prisoners, in this instance, have the capacity to affect the structure of their surroundings despite the apparent limitations on individual agency within total institutions. Within this framework, she argues, there are different outcomes and distinctions between active and passive agents:

The older prisoner who conforms to the prison routine through a fear of losing valued rights and services is not as active an agent as the younger

these men maintain agency over their lives despite existing within a structure which serves to debilitate them.

Finally, Mann investigates how the concepts of masculinity and power play out within the structured environments of prisons. She finds that:

Despite frequent challenges to their masculinity, the ageing prisoner is no less innovative when it comes to this aspect of prison life. By developing ways to protect their masculinity and by redefining its meaning for this generation, the ageing prisoner is able to resist the potentially devastating effects of loss of masculinity. The result is a population of older men who, thanks to their continued agency, have escaped relatively unscathed by the two most potentially brutal aspects of prison life.

Mann concludes that:

As the prison population has continued to rise, the situation in which we

We need to evaluate whether prison is always the right solution, particularly in the case of aging offenders, whose potential health care costs alone are enough to send the prison service's budget spiraling out of control.

prisoner who feels he has nothing to lose and who commits acts of rebellion against the system.

Mann also makes use of Erving Goffman's theory of interactionism to assess primary and secondary adjustments to prison life.

The core of *Doing Harder Time* examines elderly child sex offenders, prison subcultures, shortcomings of sex offender treatment programs, and difficulties involved with assessing the potential rehabilitation of older sex offenders, including the appropriateness of their release. Mann examines the healthcare-related and other problems confronting elderly prisoners, including their adaptation to new structures. She examines how older prisoners adapt to prison life, the strategies they use to adjust to this life, and the importance of family and friends in this adaptation (indeed, this survival):

What emerges [she notes] are the complex and innovative ways in which

currently find ourselves is somewhat at a crossroads. We can continue to imprison ever increasing numbers of older people, continue to widen the net, defining ever more behavior as "criminal" and sit back and watch the prison crisis reach an unprecedented scale. Or, alternatively, we can stop and look and learn from our current prison population, learn how best to keep them usefully occupied, how best to address their offending and how best to keep them from reoffending. We need to evaluate whether prison is always the right solution, particularly in the case of aging offenders, whose potential health care costs alone are enough to send the prison service's budget spiraling out of control.

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