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Book Reviews

David Cohen (Ed.)(1990)
Challenging the Therapeutic State:
Critical Perspectives on Psychiatry and the Mental
Health System.
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Challenging the Therapeutic State: Critical Perspectives in Psychiatry and the Mental Health System, edited by David Cohen is yet another tome dedicated to vilifying the excesses and deficiencies of the psychiatry of yesteryear. With a few notable exceptions, the contributing authors conceptualize psychiatry and psychiatric treatment as it was 20-100 years ago. Borrowing from David Cohen's preface, psychiatry and the medical model serve to "produce intellectual confusion, iatrogenic disorders, social enfeeblement, and other difficulties" and the mentally ill are "troubled, unhappy, and poor people who break our rules, annoy us, or threaten our values and peace of mind." It is primarily from this standpoint that the contributing authors present their unbalanced treatise against psychiatry.

Highlighting a few notable chapters, R. Liefer classifies psychiatry as a mechanism for extra-legal control. In so doing he highlights injustices of commitment procedures and "pharmacological assault". His accusations are weakened by what appears to be limited understanding and frank naivete about involuntary admission and medical management laws in the United States. Similarly factual errors such as reporting that the medical model considers schizophrenia to be due to a deficiency in dopamine further weakens his case. In fact, schizophrenia is thought to be related to excesses in dopaminergic activity.

Sarbin attempts to support the claim that schizophrenics cannot be differentiated from normal con-

trols reliably on any biological or psychological marker. Not only does he review the literature selectively, but ignores evidence which has culminated in a publication subsequent to his chapter indicating that never-medicated, first break schizophrenics display hypofrontality on NMR spectroscopy (Pettigrew, et al., 1991). This finding also refutes much of what Breggin outlines in his chapter, namely that the brain damage seen in schizophrenia is secondary to neuroleptics rather than a product of the disease itself.

One particularly dangerous essay by Mark Kaplan on Aids seems to reflect the author's personal discomfort with the terms "dangerous" and "promiscuous" to describe high risk sexual behaviour associated with the transmission of HIV. The author argues that these terms are prejudicial and create false perceptions of the gay community. Frankly, it is precisely dangerous and promiscuous behaviour across all individuals not just homosexuals that increases risk of contracting HIV. In fact, the use of these terms and vigorous promotion of lifestyle change have drastically reduced the rate of transmission among homosexuals in the United States. If other afflicted groups could only hope for such a quick and effective response. It seems trivial in the face of an inevitably lethal disorder to squabble over wording.

A few important points are raised, albeit some what obscured by radical verbiage. Scull unearths the critical point that alternative treatments for the chronically mentally ill are required and that this should be reflected in mental health funding. This could hardly be argued given the number of individuals evidencing repeat visits to psychiatric emergency services and a revolving-door admission pattern. Again, hidden beneath extremist critique, Breggin underscores the need for more refined and specific psychiatric drugs—a fact that no practising psychiatrist would contest. One bright spot emerged in Chesler's essay on twenty years since *Women & Madness*. She acknowledged the benefits of psychiatric medication (a breath of fresh air in this book), but proposes making adjunct feminist support available for women in treatment. This wise approach indicates that perhaps the medical model and femi-

nists could work together for the benefit of their clients. Although intriguing, her wish for a Feminist Institute of Mental Health seems untenable given the current political climate of health and research funding in the United States.

Finally, it is difficult after having watched several patients transformed from being suicidally depressed, hopeless, and psychomotorically retarded to higher functioning and nearly euthymic states to read Frank's attempt to parallel electroshock to brainwashing. Everyone will admit to the abuses of ECT in the past; however, the approach used today is both less risky and more beneficial to the patient. ECT remains an important treatment option for individuals who remain treatment refractory to other psychotherapeutic and psychopharmacological interventions. Like so many of his colleagues, he fails to include anecdotes from individuals who have benefitted from the approach.

Overall, this volume fails to acknowledge three critical points. First, little attention is given to advances in treatment that have been made over the past two decades. No mention is given to enhanced specificity of treatment (e.g. cognitive behavioural therapy for depression or exposure-based treatments for anxiety). Second, those loyal to the anti-psychiatry movement (Szasz) and the ex-patients' movement (Chamberlain) never appear to consult those who have derived genuine benefit from psychiatric or psychological intervention. In fact, one questions whether many of the contributors have seen patients in the recent past and how they would use their theories to help someone in a psychiatric emergency room. Thirdly, in designating psychiatry a vehicle for social control, these authors ignore the pleas of those individuals who willingly seek intervention (even ECT) to help alleviate bothersome symptoms or even effect cure. Overall, this single-minded and unbalanced presentation aids in directing this volume to the fringe.

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Thomas, D. Veno, A. (Eds.) 1992
Psychology and Social Change
Palmerston North: The Dunmore Press 335pp.
\$59.95 0-86469-146-7 (paper)

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Social change is "alteration in social phenomena at various levels of human life from individual to global" (p.15). *Psychology and social change* is the first book to examine this aspect of applied psychology within an Australian and New Zealand context. Up until now the bulk of teaching literature on social change has been sourced in the United States even though methods that work in this setting may not be readily transferrable to another setting because "social change is a highly localized process occurring within specific cultural contexts" (p.7). Thus there is a great need to document social change interventions and strategies which are relevant to Australia and New Zealand and it is this gap in the literature which the present text aims to fill.

The book contains 17 chapters, divided into four sections. The contributors are mostly community psychologists and other applied psychologists working in New Zealand and Australia. The first section, perspectives and policies for social change, provides insight into the "how" of community psychology. Contrary to popular conceptions social change is not necessarily traumatic or abnormal, nor does it inevitably lead to modernisation. Change that is desired and under the control of those affected is likely to be a positive life event. Psychologists can facilitate this type of change through collaboration with community groups and organisations. The key principles in this process include empowerment, the recognition of diversity and cultural pluralism, adoption of an ecological perspective and the acknowledgement of how one's own values guide one's research and practice. In addition, Oliver and Hamberton challenge community psychology to embrace peace activism and feminism; pointing out the commonalities between the three, for example, all are founded on principles of peace.

Community psychologists have a role to play in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of social policies. For example, Thomas and Robertson describe how family violence in New Zealand can be reduced through changes in police policy regarding the handling of domestic disputes. Policy changes

with respect to policing at the Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix likewise reduced violence at this event (Veno). Police in this latter situation adopted a consensus-based, rather than a garrison, policing strategy. However, attempts at policy change do not always run smoothly. Bishop and Syme describe how psychologists' efforts to facilitate social change can become embroiled in the local social dynamics of a community although this can be seen as a validation of their participant conceptualisation approach.

When issues of, say, empowerment and community control are addressed in social change interventions the end goal of the professionals involved will often be to make themselves redundant. For example, Raeburn describes how the role of the psychologists as 'honorary project consultant' in the Birkdale-Beachhaven community project was eventually removed from the constitution and the association between this project and the psychologists ended. Similarly psychologists involved in the creation of recreation opportunities for adolescents must share power with the adolescents and provide them with meaningful roles within any organisational structure (Chalip, Thomas & Voyle).

When individuals or groups are unhappy with the services that exist for them and/or the ideology behind those services one option open to them is to begin their own, alternative organization. The goals of such an organization are to first address the immediate needs of the members, and second, to change society. The relationship between professionals and such organizations is either one of conflict and separation or cooperation and integration. Veno experienced the latter relationship with the Brisbane Community Food Cooperative and provides an interesting case study about this alternative organization.

Young's evaluation of the mutual help group (GROW), on the other hand, provides an interesting paradox—what role can a professional play in an alternative organization that is explicitly anti-professional. In this situation issues of control and empowerment are heightened and Young's account emphasizes the time and resources that must go into consultation with an organization.

The chapter by Young articulates the role of the psychologist as an evaluator of human services. Three types of evaluation are commonly used; formative, process and outcome. It is the first of these, formative evaluation, that is most relevant to social change as it can be used to improve the quality of the services delivered. Dehar, Duignan and Casswell give an excellent example of formative evaluation in their chapter on the Heartbeat New Zealand pro-

gramme. The contributors to this section of the book also add another principle to the community psychologists notebook—identify the stakeholders, that is, those who have a vested interest in the evaluation as these people may be pivotal to the successful implementation of social change. For example, the tobacco industry may seek to influence health promotion interventions.

Apart from Duignan, Casswell and Dehar's description of Maori health promotion initiatives, the concerns of the indigenous peoples of Australia and New Zealand are addressed only in the final section of the book on ethnic pluralism and social change. Thomas opens this section by examining the policies and practices of governments and institutions in both countries with respect to ethnic pluralism. He assumes "that those ethnic groups which have the most power are potentially most able to change undesirable circumstances affecting less powerful ethnic groups" (p.260). Social change interventions must therefore focus most energy on the dominant ethnic group. This makes intuitive sense but then Thomas naively assumes that these groups can be motivated to change by merely informing them of instances of oppression and racism. If this were the case we would surely be living in a race-relations utopia.

The description of Maori-Pakeha relations (Thomas & Nikora) contrasts sharply with the chapter on Australian Aborigine communities (Williams, Swan, Reser and Miller). While the latter is a powerful and angry assessment of the oppression of a country's indigenous people the former has had most of the stuffing knocked out of it.

In the final chapter of the book the editors discuss social change trends derived partly from the writings of Elias. These include pacification and social control, functional democracy, reduction of violence and globalization. These trends provide a framework for the social change interventions and strategies described by the contributors which, in turn, provides an excellent basis for uniting the contributions. This then leads to a proposal for an international agenda for social change so that the book ends on a strong note by pointing the way forward for community psychologists.

Psychology and social change is a valuable teaching and research resource for community psychologists in New Zealand and Australia. In addition, the principles of community psychology (e.g., empowerment, collaboration) also need to be acknowledged by any researcher working with people. The editors and contributors are to be commended for their efforts and also for the research work they are involved in.

Gawith, G. (1991)
Power Learning
 Lower Hutt: Mills Publications, 135 pp,
 ISBN 0-908722-90-7 (paper)

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Power Learning is introduced as a student's guide to success. It aims to give the student power to control their own learning. It shows the student how to harness learning skills into an easy twelve-part power learning process. These parts include self-management, thinking skills, study skills, reading skills, presentation skills, notemaking skills, exam technique, and self evaluation. It combines these and other skills into a manageable, flexible process.

Three features stand out in this publication. Firstly, the presentation of all the material directly reflects the content, including well-chosen illustrations. This means the student is not reading a conventional book which obliges them to work out the content in practice. Rather the author presents a whole book demonstrating what she says. Secondly, she lists a large number of common student problems (p.133), and provides specific references to sections of the book which deal with these problems. Thirdly, she indicates how a student can engage in effective self-evaluation. This skill is clearly growing in importance as student-staff ratios surge upwards and teaching staff are less able to service individual students.

Compared with other books of a similar kind in the Canterbury University Bookshop, *Power Learning* is outstanding, while being one of the cheapest. Further, each chapter is written concisely and clearly, making it readily digestible. Finally, the book is pleasing to look at and read because of the quality of the design and typeset. I recommend it to all teaching staff in the tertiary sector of education as an aid for their students.

More than Psychophysics

N. A. Macmillan and C. D. Creelman (1991).
Detection Theory: A User's Guide. Cambridge:
 Cambridge University Press. Pp. 407,
 ISBN 0-521-36892-8.

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A new book on detection theory must surely send a *frisson* around the psychophysical community. However, this work is intended for a wider audience than psychophysicists. Earlier volumes on this subject by Green and Swets (1966), McNicol (1972), and Egan (1975) were written from the point of view of the sensory scientist, although in the end they attracted a much wider readership. This volume provides a variety of realistic examples from cognitive psychology and other fields, including radiology, and uses them as a tutorial vehicle for developing detection theory.

The book is written at an intermediate level between McNicol's primer and Green and Swet's monograph. As in those two earlier works, problems are set at the end of each chapter. Like McNicol, and unlike Egan and Green and Swets, there is no calculus. At places, calculus would help: for example, the authors demonstrate the identity of the slope of the operating characteristic and the likelihood ratio with a geometric approximation. Proving that identity requires knowing the fundamental theorem of calculus, but this is evidently judged too much to expect of students of detection theory.

The content of this volume differs from its forebears in several ways. For example, Luce's choice theory is given equal billing where possible with standard detection theory, although there are several detection problems to which that theory does not speak. But the logistic probability density, which forms the basis of choice theory's analysis of detection, is the only density function, apart from the normal, that the book treats more than cursorily. Readers interested in the important chi-square density functions, for example, will have to turn to Egan for that topic. (Surprisingly, the logistic distribution is omitted from Egan's review.) The book also examines a variety of indices of bias; in other treatments, discussions of bias are usually limited to reviewing the likelihood ratio. The book adopts a somewhat idiosyncratic definition of how hit rates and false-alarm rates transform to z -scores. A proportion larger than .5 is translated into a positive z -score, and one smaller than .5 into a negative z -score. As a result, d' is defined as the z transform of the hit rate minus the z transform of the false-alarm rate, instead of the more customary reverse.

In view of Creelman's pioneering work on PEST (Parametric Estimation by Sequential Testing), it is not surprising that there is a valuable chapter on adaptive methods for estimating empirical thresh-

olds (theoretical thresholds have no status in detection theory). Because of their efficiency, adaptive methods have been widely adopted in some branches of psychophysics. This chapter deals with their general properties as well as the strengths and weaknesses of particular implementations of them. In addition to the standard designs of yes-no, rating, and forced-choice, a cornucopia of other designs—including same-different, oddity, and matching-to-sample—are analyzed. When per cent correct is used as an index of performance, these designs can yield perplexedly different results, but the authors show how detection theory can provide a unified account of them.

McNicol acknowledged the continuing influence of Thurstone's *Laws of Comparative and Categorical Judgment* by devoting a separate chapter to them in his book on detection theory. This volume goes beyond Thurstone by showing why his methods usually give rise to poorer measures of sensitivity—closer scale values, in Thurstonian language—than standard measures of discrimination. Here, the authors draw on the theoretical and empirical work of Durlach and Braida and their collaborators, as well as on Macmillan's own contributions to this subject.

Among the book's appendices is a chapter on elements of probability and statistics—a remedial account that covers essential material often neglected in courses on psychological statistics, and a valuable set of tables for looking up detection-theory indices arising from a variety of designs. A diskette of software for detection theory is promised for later release.

Although, happily, Green and Swet's volume is now in print again, there have been many developments in detection theory, as this volume attests, since that seminal publication. This work provides new insights into our understanding of detection, discrimination, judgment, and choice. It is both a textbook for the student and a handbook for the practitioner, and it is going to be an influential addition to the corpus of books on detection theory.

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