

## Book Reviews/Comptes rendus

**D. MCCALLUM, *Personality and Dangerousness: Genealogies of Antisocial Personality Disorder*. Melbourne, Australia: Cambridge University Press. 2001, x + 193p., Index, , 40.00 hardcover, , 14.95 paper.**

With violence occurring on a widely publicized level in our public schools and workplaces, among children and friends, and within families, the concept of *the dangerous individual* needs continuous and ongoing theorizing. Old tensions between the biological origins of behavior and the role of social learning occur with yet another viewpoint being that society itself structures violent behaviors through its implicit hierarchical structures. McCallum's key question in his introductory chapter asks: "A sensible person interested in community safety and good government would want to ask the questions, >what can be done to prevent this violence? Is it possible to take steps to ensure the development of more ordered personalities? Is there a program we can implement?" (2)

This book reveals a well-researched and highly refined account of the history of dangerousness both as viewed in society as well as how it is diagnosed within particular clinical professions. Clear case studies guide the reader towards a more informed perspective on the diagnostic and practical conflicts as they emerge. The book represents a full spectrum of analytic possibility considering a wide range of institutions that have all hoped to accurately define and handle the antisocial personality.

The beginning of understanding this type of personality occurs with the need "to know" the dangerous personality identifying (a) the difficulty in predicting dangerousness, (b) the problem of evaluating various levels of individual responsibility, and (c) examining the relationship between the criminal justice and mental health systems. McCallum suggests that there is still no authoritative account of the ways in which the mind creates such behavior. He reveals criticisms of empirical attempts that study available phenomenon on this subject. As he discovers, prediction becomes a theoretical process impossible to apply over time, into the future, and across cases in a credible manner—only a diagnosis of existing and previous behavior seems reliable. McCallum resolves then to look at institutions and their treatment of the subject of dangerousness.

McCallum proposes that an assessment of the criminal and mental health systems does not identify changes in violent behavior across time or across

societies and he suggests that this fact puts into serious question their effectiveness or perhaps even their stake in maintaining or at least managing deviance. It is in this area that McCallum excels in demonstrating a sharp historical awareness and a sparkling application to current diagnostic and institutional challenges without ever implying that they are unnecessary or that we would not want them to continue in their investigations and work.

He includes a discussion of those who study morality (i.e., Kohlberg) and how they examine danger and violence on the basis of moral decision-making. The author thoroughly reflects on the contributions of Pavlov and Eysenck. He analyzes the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual as a useful guideline for antisocial personalities, but wisely demonstrates the DSM's historical specificity and the discriminations it has incurred in the diagnosis of a variety of sometimes thought "dangerous" activities and behaviors (i.e., homosexuality).

Generally, McCallum undertakes a careful documentation of these three conceptual landmines highlighting specific historical references that do not simplify what otherwise appears to be a lack of progress. His ability to demonstrate the uncertainties and confusions that professionals have recorded in their work with mental instability over time makes this an engaging and useful account. For example, he tells the reader of the landmark case in Australia in 1989 that pitted the legal system against the psychiatric system in determining whether Gary Ian Patrick David (16) was a criminal or was insane. After shooting and crippling two people, Gary persisted with self-inflicted injuries while in detention that included cutting off his nipples and parts of his penis. Upon completing his sentence, a Mental Health Review Board for various reasons was unable to rule that he was mentally ill. He was put into confinement not because he was considered a criminal or because he was designated as mentally ill, but because, in an "extraordinary and unprecedented piece of legislation," the Review Board and legal system were able to confine him for what he *might* do.

This points to an intriguing discussion that should lead to another book. Categories of dangerousness shift and change over time, but *the dangerous personality* as a concept continues to exist in people's minds and thus in their professional practice. An interesting deviation might be to investigate more fully how constructions of deviant social behavior such as dangerousness have paralleled popular time-specific notions in the media, in literature, or in other social avenues of communication.

This book is well recommended to those in pursuit of further studies on the topic in sociology, social psychology, or, history as well as providing essential reading for any graduate class.

**Kerstin Stieber Roger** *University of Manitoba*

