(p. 47-56): both are easily understandable and relatable concepts.

From holding this mirror up and seeing the ugliness, as well as the good, it is easy to imagine feelings of emptiness and loneliness with the daunting task of change: 'I can't do this on my own… no one cares' *Scrooge thinking'*. However, Gethin seems aware of this and shifts focus from modern mind-set strategies to practical tools. Because the rehabilitative journey may be too difficult to complete alone, readers are introduced to the 'Singing Nightingales': family, friends, support services, people who are there with honesty, compassion and empathy (p. 64). Gethin's plea is for you to accept the support that your Scrooge ignored. The 'magic of the programme' is described as disempowering the values and beliefs that feed Scrooge (p. 91).

The author's hopeful voice asks you (once you have gained and practiced this knowledge) to become a Singing Nightingale and help the vulnerable in society who he refers to as 'the hobblers'. This brings the journey full circle for one to be more forgiving and compassionate: 'life now being a blank canvas' ready to be painted colourfully (p. 84).

To conclude, this book uses modern mind-set techniques with practical advice to help one create a pro-social identity. Gethin could capture readers further by being more explicit of his own experience of overcoming his Scrooge. The thought provoking and memorable stories could have been extended with more descriptions of internal battles which Gethin faced for others to link to on their journey of change.

This book will be valuable to anyone looking for insight into ways to break free from addiction: especially current or former drug addicts, offenders and professionals who provide services for such individuals. This is an easy read that could also be useful for non-professionals whom are looking for ways to support friends and family.

***Muzzaker Mathias**, resident at HMP Grendon*

Book Review

Deserved Criminal Sentences: An Overview

by Andreas von Hirsch

Publisher: Hart Publishing (2017)
ISBN: 9781509902668 (hardback)
Price: £50.00 (hardback)

In this compact book Professor von Hirsch summarises with great clarity the fruits of a main theme in his research and in his approach to questions of criminal justice. In a long and distinguished career across three continents, since the publication of Doing Justice in 1976, he has developed and refined an account of 'desert' as the core principle for deciding what punishment should be given to a particular person for a particular offence.

By 'desert' he means that the severity of the punishment should be proportionate to the seriousness of the offence. He holds that punishment is 'a blaming institution' (p.4), and his theory of proportionality is based on seeing censure as the primary element in punishment. The person committing the offence is seen as a moral agent: 'that is, as a person capable of reflecting upon the appropriateness of [their] action' (p.12). This centrality of censure arose from pre-1976 moral philosophers, notable H.H.A. Hart and Joel Feinberg. Throughout this book Hirsch contrasts this 'desert' view with various instrumental (or consequentialist) understandings of punishment, such as deterrence, rehabilitation and treatment.

His argument is rooted in the movements of penal thinking in the last 70 years, and benefits from the fact that he has lived through the whole period. Desert thinking emerged in the 1970s as a reaction to the previous strong emphasis on sentencing for rehabilitation or treatment. 'Doing Justice' challenged this primarily on grounds of fairness: that, more or less broadly, similar offences should attract similar punishments, rather than one person being treated more harshly than another because of factors not directly inhering in the offence itself. Rehabilitative approaches to sentencing returned to some extent during the period of high optimism about psychological treatment programmes in the 1990s and beyond; but increasingly, the 'punitive turn', what Hirsch calls 'penal populism' carried the field, so that punishment simply became incrementally harsher, without reference to careful principles of proportionality and the like.

Hirsch emphasises that 'desert' is not the same as retribution, in the sense of pay-back, or making the offender suffer in order to balance up the damage they have caused to the social fabric; nor is it a return to the 'classical' understanding typified by Bentham, which was based in deterrence. Rather, it is all about scales of proportionality. Some scholars have argued that proportionality is a purely negative principle: i.e., that its only application is to limit the severity of leniency of sentences, so that

they are not grossly out of kilter with the seriousness of the offence. Hirsch does not agree: he believes that the seriousness of an offence, and the severity of a punishment, can be measured and compared by means of a calculus in terms of the impact on 'living standard', as that concept was set out by Amartya Sen. The possibility of such ranking is supported by developments in several jurisdictions, not least the evolution of sentencing guidelines in England and Wales, which are based on an explicit concept of seriousness of the offence.

The author does not claim that a comprehensive account of punishment can be given by desert. Firstly, he acknowledges that proportionality between sentences does not yield any clear guidance on what actual punishments are appropriate. He allows that different societies will 'anchor' the range of punishments at different points, some harsher and some less so; but the principle of proportionality will still govern the choice of punishment within the range that is set. Those familiar with adjudication tariffs in prisons will recognise what he is talking about.

Secondly, he allows room for many other factors as long as they are subordinate to the essential principle of desert. So rehabilitation, the personal situation of the offender, deterrence, previous offences (he argues for a systematic mitigation of punishment for first offences, for example), and 'exceptional departures' when a particular crime wave hits a society, all find their place; in this way he is not at all doctrinaire or inflexible. He also has chapters on juvenile justice and on non-custodial sentences, though the latter receive far less attention than incarceration. It is striking also that restorative justice is not mentioned once in the book; perhaps this does not fit with the centrality of desert, but that in itself may raise questions about the sufficiency of the desert principle.

This is an unapologetically rigorous philosophical statement of Hirsch's argument, proceeding through argument and rebuttal of objections with great clarity and logic, in plain non-technical language, and engaging concisely with a huge range of scholars at the same time as it sets everything in a clearly analysed historical context. It is a major tour de force which will mark an essential starting-point for anyone who wants to take the understanding of punishment forward from here, and who hopes to match both the rigour and the realism of Professor von Hirsch's theory.

Martin Kettle, *Associate Inspector with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons*

Book Review

Life Beyond Crime: What do those at risk of offending, prisoners and ex-offenders need to learn?

Edited by Paul Crane
Publisher: Lemos and Crane
ISBN: 978-1-898001-77-5 (paperback)
Price: £15.00 (Paperback)

As I stop to pick up this book, the front cover briefly gives away the style of text: criminological, reflective and experiential of the criminal justice system. A *Life Beyond Crime* as titled in this book refers to a phenomenon that has sparked much debate across the decades; that is whether offenders can be rehabilitated. Remarkably, Paul Crane has created a book that is compelling and well suited for these developments, looking at what those at risk of offending, prisoners and ex-prisoners can *learn* before, during and after incarceration. Commentaries of experience contest the view 'a leopard cannot change its spots' with accounts of real prison circumstances and scenarios. This book digs deep into a range of experience but also pushes beyond what is already in scholarship conceptually and qualitatively, through careful selection of special contributors. *Life Beyond Crime* makes an important note for readers of the *Prison Service Journal:*

'Failure is pain but also natural, universal and stimulating.' (p.68)

A niche feature of this book is the emphasis of co-formation. Paul Crane, a practitioner and policy-maker, promotes the collaboration of multi-disciplines and external influences for the ongoing development and achievement of behaviour change within prisons. This specific exploration of co-formation offers an exciting uncapped limit to plasticity of the mind and self, even in adult life. A notable example is Norman Anderson's passage about his personal drug addiction and subsequent 18-year prison sentence aged fifty-four. His life turned around after he received a letter from a loved one that began with, 'we forgive you daddy'. Stressing the importance of support systems, this contributor sought to bring forth one of many reasons why education and self-reflection before going to complete a degree was critical for a transformation. In doing so, this book sets a scene for future extension on case studies.

There are fifty-seven named contributors, each individually tailored to one of three parts that