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.

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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

divide this text: Diversion and Young People, Adults in Prison and Returning to the Community. Whilst part one focuses on failed pre-court disposals, known as the 'first chances' before young people cross the line of desistance, it is beneficial to look at what offenders can learn during incarceration before it is truly too late. This introduces the most ambitious part, Adults in Prison. For a number of years I have contended that criminological research neglects the success of those that have turned their lives around. Nonetheless, this part fills that void. Accounts of hands on experience within prisons have come not just from prisoners, but from staff, who are notably consistent in role and objectives on a national basis. From this sample, the audience are invited to think from a range of perspectives of different identity, context and scale. Stand out chapters amongst all include 'The right to express yourself' by anonymous ex-prisoner, 'Thirty years as a probation officer' by Liz Dixon, 'The things I wanted to say but didn't' from an official prison visitor through to 'What prisoners really need to learn before returning to the community' by Parole Board member Tom Millest.

It is important to note that without acknowledgement and appreciation for part two of this book on *Adults in Prison*, we marginalize part three, *Returning to the Community*. Rehabilitation and Innovative Solutions Enterprise (RISE) Prison Leader Elaine Knibbs touches on self-harm and suicide rates in custody, 'something clearly wrong within the prison system' (p.361), giving attention to trauma and low resilience faced by prisoners upon release. What is learnt so far is that education is not enough to achieve full rehabilitation. On the one hand, it provides the basics in order to survive in a competitive world, whereas on the other, it provides only an impression of how much less invested and valued you are in society. This is a striking concept to reveal and provokes the question, how can one learn to abide by the law if they do not know why it matters? Or even, why *they matter?*

Overall, this book is enlightening, honest and hopeful as it challenges societal pessimism towards criminal behaviour change. It can be read in any order, yet still help to provide a clear and basic introduction of criminal procedure, life in prison and rehabilitation to all audiences. Moreover, moving between different chapters can also make it easy to build an important bigger picture; that is, moving beyond traditional procedural understanding with critical momentum that directly and honestly underpins individual transformation. This book achieves its aims of providing enriched data evidence within practice and experience whilst we are at a time where scholarship cannot pre-empt empirical testing in such environments due to ethical issues. Certainly, *Life Beyond Crime* maintains usefulness for a range of readers from those with an interest in criminology though to practitioners and prisoners, under all kinds of circumstances.

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