

Vito Flaker

THE BIRTH OF TOTAL INSTITUTION AND THE RATIONALISATION OF CHARITY IN THE AGE OF REASON
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Although the birth of total institution is usually seen in relation to the absolutist state, some of its functions and patterns derive from two mediaeval forms of communal residence: the court and the monastery. By the end of the 16th century, they were transformed into places of seclusion and isolation for »deviant« groups from the rest of society. Specific space and specific working time of professional carers enabled town dwellers to perform charity in an indirect and rational way. The article looks into the logic and the various meanings of this rationalisation. It also tries to give an account of how this anachronistic mode of patterning human relations and experiences has survived by the help of absolutist power. As a hybrid of ancient patterns and new structures, total institution fostered dependency and domination on its inside, while on the outside, in society at large, it allowed the basic new order notions of egalitarianism and independence to remain unchallenged by the basic conditions of human existence: difference and (inter)dependence.

Tanja Lamovec

COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH THE EYES OF THE USERS

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The article is based mainly on the data presented by two British researchers, Peter Barham and Robert Hayward. They conducted a series of interviews with a group of users living in the community and recipients of community mental health services. Parts of the interviews were transcribed verbatim, as they were found to reveal some intriguing aspects of their lives. Such data are an extremely valuable source of information, as much as they are rare, because most research is still done with professionals as informers. The paper is a story of successes and failures of community services as reflected through the lives of their users. Since community mental health services in Slovenia are as yet virtually non-existent, the contents of these interviews are presented in some length. It is hoped that when community mental health eventually becomes acceptable to our democratic society, we may take it from there and develop it further instead of repeating the same mistakes all over again.

Srečo Dragoš

SOCIAL ETHICS: BETWEEN CONVICTION AND RESPONSIBILITY

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The work of machinery and organic systems is non-ethical, whereas interactive psychic and social systems are characterised by ethical actions. Their ethical mode may be questioned, but not whether they »have« or »don't have« ethics. The title of the paper already points out the two possible approaches to the subject: ethical actions can be evaluated either with regard to their regulation or from the viewpoint of motivation. In the former case, it concerns the ways of regulating ethical action (e. g., the difference between professional and non-professional ways), while in the latter case, it concerns the rationality of a given choice, considered by Weber as the dilemma of conviction and responsibility. That the dilemma maintains its importance, is illustrated on examples from Slovenian history and on the example of social work.

ABSTRACTS

Birgit Rommelspacher

RIGHT WING EXTREMISM AND RACIST VIOLENCE THE CONTROVERSY AS TO ITS CAUSES

Birgit Rommelspacher, Ph. D., is professor for work with girls and women at Alice Salomon Fachhochschule für Sozialarbeit und Sozialpädagogik, Berlin.

Since the unification of Germany, there has been an intimidating growth in racist violence and an upsurge of extreme right-wing incidents, both in the former East as well as the Western part of the country. These developments have brought forth strong and multi-faceted controversies amongst scientists in various professional fields as to the causes of such violence. Should one look for the reasons behind all this in the growing economic insecurity, in the lack of possibilities for young people? Or is it primarily xenophobia, such as we can find elsewhere in the world? Are we talking about the economic interest of a rich Western Europe, trying to isolate itself from an immigration influx of the poor? Or might the acts of violence be an expression of a freshly awakened male chauvinism, presenting us with the worst of German traditions? The discussions are indeed plentiful. It is the author's opinion that the lines of conflict, however vague they may be, always contrast the aspect of racism and violence as a symptom of the dominant society. This is a phenomenon originating in the logic and interests of the latter on one hand, and understanding the phenomenon as a sign of a passing crisis on the other, in which the specific problems of marginal groups are exposed.