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Book Reviews: Technical Books Section

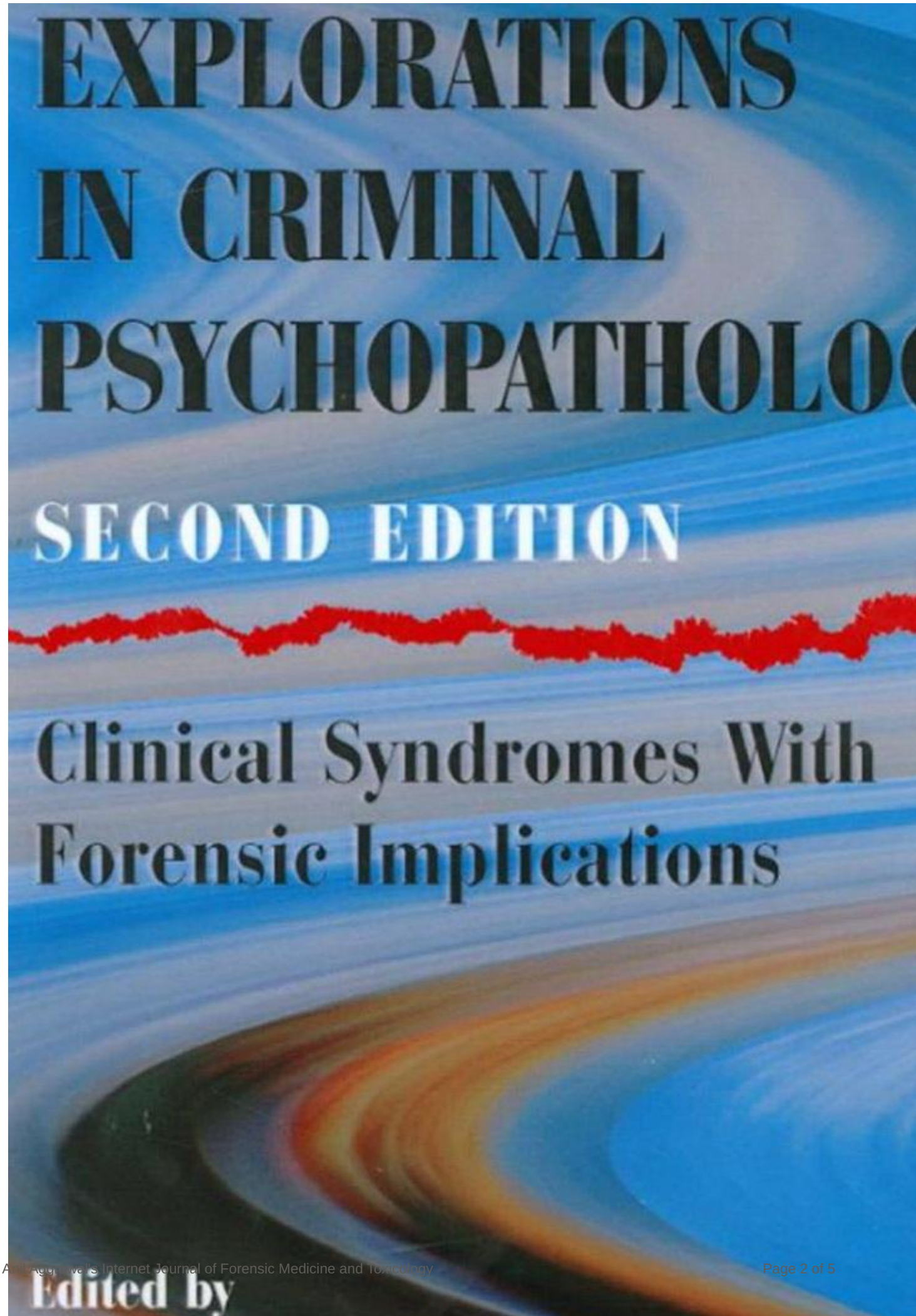
...RECOMMENDED READING ...The book under review is sure a become a classic. I certainly would refer to it, whenever a tricky forensic psychiatric issues comes to me.... Rating : 10.0...

Explorations in Criminal Psychopathology: Clinical Syndromes With Forensic Implications, 2nd Edition, edited by Louis B. Schlesinger. Paperback, 9.9" x 7" x 1.1".
Charles C. Thomas Publisher, 2600 South First Street, Springfield, Illinois 62704. Publication Date 2007. 375 pages, ISBN-10: 039807688X; ISBN-13: 978-0398076887. Price $59.95.

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EXPLORATIONS
IN CRIMINAL
PSYCHOPATHOLO
SECOND EDITION
Clinical Syndromes With
Forensic Implications
Edited by

*T*he important topic of psychopathology and its relationship to crime has traditionally been dealt with an emphasis on various legal tests, legal standards, criminal responsibility and competency. What is not generally addressed is a relationship between psychopathology and the psychodynamics of crime. The present book aims to fill up this important gap. In addition, it also informs forensic clinicians with the practicalities of forensic work such as techniques in testifying or recent court rulings regarding various mental health laws.

The book is organized into three sections. **Part I** deals with Disorders of behavior and describes **5 different types of psychopathology** that lead to distinct overt types of behavior. **Part II** deals with disorders of thought. It provides discussions of various disorders of thought resulting in criminal conduct, but not disordered thinking indicative of a formal thought disorder per se. **Part III** describes borderline and psychotic-like conditions as well as malingering and deception. The chapters are written by more than 20 experts well-known in their respective areas.

Chapter 1 , entitled " **The Catathymic Process** " is written by Schlesinger himself, who is a well-known specialist in this field. He has written an entire book on this subject. **Catathymia** [From Gk kata, “down”; and thymos “spirits or temper”] *is an unexpected explosive outburst of impulsive often destructive behavior understandable only in terms of unconscious motivation* . The Swiss psychiatrist Hans W. Maier conceived of catathymia (Katathyme) as a psychological process that is activated by a strong and tenacious emotion attached to underlying complexes of ideas. Wertham in 1937 used the concept to explain certain otherwise inexplicable acts of violence perpetrated by an individual who has had a long-term relationship with the victim. The chapter gives differences between the characteristics of acute and chronic catathymic process. Case studies relating to each are given with comments.

...Chapter 2 deals with pathological gambling. The essential features of the disorder are a continuous or periodic loss of control over gambling; a progression in frequency and in amounts wagered and in the preoccupation with gambling and with obtaining monies with which to gamble; irrational thinking; and a continuation of the behavior despite adverse consequences. The irrationality includes the cognitive distortions, erroneous but fixed beliefs, superstitious thinking, denial, and omnipotence...
Chapter 2 deals with pathological gambling. The essential features of the disorder are a continuous or periodic loss of control over gambling; a progression in frequency and in amounts wagered and in the preoccupation with gambling and with obtaining monies with which to gamble; irrational thinking; and a continuation of the behavior despite adverse consequences. The irrationality includes the cognitive distortions, erroneous but fixed beliefs, superstitious thinking, denial, and omnipotence. It was first officially recognized as a valid medical disorder in 1980, when the American Psychiatric Association classified it as an impulse-control disorder. The chapter discusses topics such as patterns of gambling, the nature and course of pathological gambling, pathological gamblers and criminal activity and pathological gambling as a defense. Defense attorneys have raised it as a defense for stealing, but by and large it has been held that "the disorder could no longer serve as the basis of a defense to a nongambling offense". There is a section on treatment aspects also.

Chapter 3 deals with **idiosyncratic alcohol intoxication**. It was once used as a defense for many illegal acts. An essential feature of the full-blown alcohol idiosyncratic intoxication or pathological intoxication defense is that the actor can be said to be incapacitated to the extent the he or she

would be unable to act with knowledge and purpose in performing the criminal act or unable to form the request intent to perform the act.

A second essential feature of such defenses, requires that the amount of alcohol consumed be considerable less than might otherwise be expected to result in even “mild intoxication” or otherwise impair the functioning of the actor. In 1994, the revised Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM–IV) announced the elimination of “alcohol idiosyncratic intoxication” as a diagnostic entity citing lack of empirical support for the condition that had been included in DSM–III in 1980. Even DSM–IV–TR (2000) made no adjustments to alcohol-related diagnoses and continued to indicate that there was not sufficient scientific support to justify a diagnosis of “alcohol idiosyncratic intoxication.” This version of the DSM indicated that the diagnosis should be replaced by “alcohol intoxication” or “alcohol-related disorder not other wise specified.” However author Pandina suggests that the door is not yet closed on the concept and that new information could come forward that might revitalize the construct.

...Schlesinger, the editor of the book is a well-known professor of Forensic Psychology at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York, and a Diplomate in Forensic Psychology of the American Board of Professional Psychology. He has written a number of books on criminal and forensic psychology, and I am a person fan of his "Sexual Murder: Catathymic and Compulsive Homicides", "Serial Offenders: Current Thought, Recent Findings", "Sexual Dynamics of Anti-Social Behavior" and "Violence, Perspectives on Murder and Aggression" to name just a few. The book under review is sure a become a classic...
Chapter 4 deals with "organic brain dysfunctions and criminality" and chapter 5 with sadistic criminal aggression. Similarly section II (Disorders of thought) and section III (borderline and psychotic disorders) deal with a number of other interesting and relevant topics. In section II, we get to read topics such as Forensic Aspects of Delusional Misidentification Associated with Aggression and Violence, Clinical Investigation of the Obsessional Follower, Forensic Aspects of Factitious Disorder, Morbid Jealousy and Criminal Conduct and Pseudologia Fantastica and Pathological Lying. Chapter 7 on obsessional follower is written by our old friend J. Reid Meloy, whom everyone knows as one of the best forensic psychologists around.

Section III deals with Ganser's Syndrome, Prison Psychosis, and Rare Dissociative States, The Consequences of Conduct Disorder for Males Who Develop Schizophrenia, Multiple Personality Disorders, Forensic Issues Associated with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Assessment of Malingering in Criminal Settings. Overall a good mix of forensic and psychiatric issues.

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