to contain the drug problem, and ethical because of the introduction of CARAT (Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare Scheme) workers. The introduction of these staff arises from a dichotomous policy, and raises ethical questions about how prison staff can be involved both in punishment and in protection and treatment of drug misusers.

Mandatory Drug Testing (MDT) was introduced in prison establishments in the mid-1990s. In the first instance, adjudications for people found guilty of possession of both cannabis and Class A drugs carried the same penalties. This rule has changed in the light of growing evidence that inmates who had previously used only cannabis had turned to heroin because it stayed in the bloodstream for shorter periods and was therefore less likely to lead to a positive test. The Prison Service in England and Wales has been ‘in crisis’ for many years, and the UK incarcerates proportionately greater numbers than any of its European partners. Despite these acts, prison governors were forced by the MDT policy to exacerbate the crisis by increasing inmates’ sentences, adding extra days as a result of adjudication decisions on positive drug tests. Drug misuse is undoubtedly a problem in UK prisons, and Gravett’s initiative in producing this guide is to be applauded—but the prison drug misuse problem will not be eradicated by the MDT policy. Indeed, the policy aggravates the situation.

Gravett illustrates the scale of the resources being channelled into tackling prison drug misuse. What remains in doubt is whether these resources will influence the extent of the problem. Only when inmates are themselves persuaded that they wish to discontinue the use of illegal substances, is drug misuse likely to be reduced. The MDT policy and closed circuit television monitoring are aimed at prevention of one kind, but little effort is being put into true prevention in the form of education and treatment. Gravett identified this as the way forward in Chapter 7 of his book.

The reviewer’s own ethnographic research, currently under way, identifies a large number of women in prison whose families are happy that they are there, because they feel they can sleep safer in the knowledge that overdose is less likely in the prison setting.

Gravett’s book is an excellent guide for those interested in prison policy on illegal drugs, but it sets out the facts without putting them into a sociological context.

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I didn’t want to believe it, I still don’t want to believe it, because it’s horrible.
I don’t want it to be in my nightmares, in my knowledge. I don’t want it to be on the same planet as me

(Campbell, in Scott, 2001, p. 42).

Bea Campbell is quoted discussing ritual abuse on a late night television programme. Her response reflects the instinctive reactions of both lay people and professionals
to the discussion of the ritual abuse of children. Now a book has been published that requires its readers to confront and consider the in-depth accounts of survivors of ritual abuse.

As Scott illustrates, in the detailed review of literature surrounding the topic that forms the early chapters of the book, allegations of ritual abuse (sometimes labelled satanic ritual abuse) surfaced in the early 1980s and reached a height of public attention in the late 1980s and early 1990s, before almost disappearing from view a few years later. Whilst the 1991 edition of *Working Together* (Department of Health, 1991) includes a definition of ritual abuse, the term is absent from the latest edition (Department of Health, 2000). The publication of Department of Health sponsored research into the subject in 1994 (La Fontaine, 1994) concluded that many of the child and adult survivors had indeed suffered severe sexual abuse (with rare use of ritual to silence and entrap victims), but not satanic sexual abuse. This influential study gave some sense of closure to the subject, although this may not have helped the practitioners and carers attempting to make sense of the bewildering accounts of survivors (Corby, 2001).

*The Politics and Experiences of Ritual Abuse* forms an important contribution to the small pool of knowledge in this area. Scott’s qualitative research involved a small-scale survey of ritual abuse survivors, followed by life-history interviews with six women and three men. The women were all British-based and the men from the United States, following difficulties in contacting men in Britain. The interviewees were from a range of social backgrounds and their ages ranged from 19 to 55. The methodological appendix suggests a thorough approach to this doctoral research. This thoroughness is also evident in the searching way that Scott interweaves the personal with the academic throughout the book. One of the interviewees was Scott’s own foster daughter and the methodological, ethical and personal issues arising from this inclusion are astutely observed.

The empirical chapters of the book tackle a number of core themes, including the many forms of sexual abuse described by survivors; belief systems; gender roles; death and multiple personality disorder/dissociative identity disorder (MPD/DID). The accounts contained within these chapters are profoundly shocking and likely to make a strong emotional impact on any reader. However, Scott does not attempt to simply ‘lay out the evidence’ or reach any quick or glib conclusions. Instead the data are embedded within a strong theoretical and methodological context. One of the core strengths of the book is the complexity and depth of the analysis. Major debates surrounding controversial issues such as recovered memory, abuse by women, MPD/DID and the role of ritual in abuse are dissected and related to the survivors’ accounts. The narratives of the survivors are harrowing and difficult to read, but the strength and individual personalities of these individuals (and the women survivors in particular) emerge strongly throughout the text. This is ‘thick description’ indeed (Geertz, 1973).

Scott’s analysis demonstrates how a dominant discourse of disbelief has emerged around ritual abuse. She argues that there has not been enough careful listening to the full accounts of survivors. For most of them the ritual elements were one aspect of their experiences of chronic sexual and physical violence. She draws attention to
the similarity of some of their experiences to cases of multigenerational child abuse that have been successfully prosecuted in Britain in recent years. However, this book was not an investigative attempt to prove or disprove ritual abuse. As Scott comments: ‘Taking survivors’ accounts seriously is essential but it does not suggest that they have some God’s eye view of the places they have inhabited’ (p. 191).

It is a book that gives a voice to survivors whilst placing their accounts within a thorough and searching analysis of power, gender and violence. It provides a powerful and important contribution to our understanding of ritual abuse, and of violence and abuse more generally.

References


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In much of the current literature on governance, the expression ‘government’ is associated with classical, top-down forms of policy-making and/or implementation, whereas governance is generally held to refer to non-hierarchical forms of societal steering or co-governance by governmental and non-governmental actors working in partnership (Sibeon, 2001). The emergence of governance as a mechanism for the co-ordination of social life is sometimes said to indicate failure of the state and of the market in (post)modern society, and to emphasize networks rather than hierarchies or markets. It is against this background that Goss writes. Her book is, it should be noted, addressed to local governance, although much of what she has to say relates to governance in general.

Goss’s approach draws upon the disciplines of public policy/public administration, and to some extent political science, and upon her own research and consultancy experience. We are provided with a practical treatment of the problems and possibilities associated with governance. She argues, first, for increased emphasis on flexible structural arrangements and non-hierarchical interactions within organizations, and for the erosion of overly rigid departmental and professional boundaries that stand in the way of innovation; and secondly, for dialogical forms of inter-organizational interaction; not unreasonably, given the focus and purpose of her book, she tends to concen-