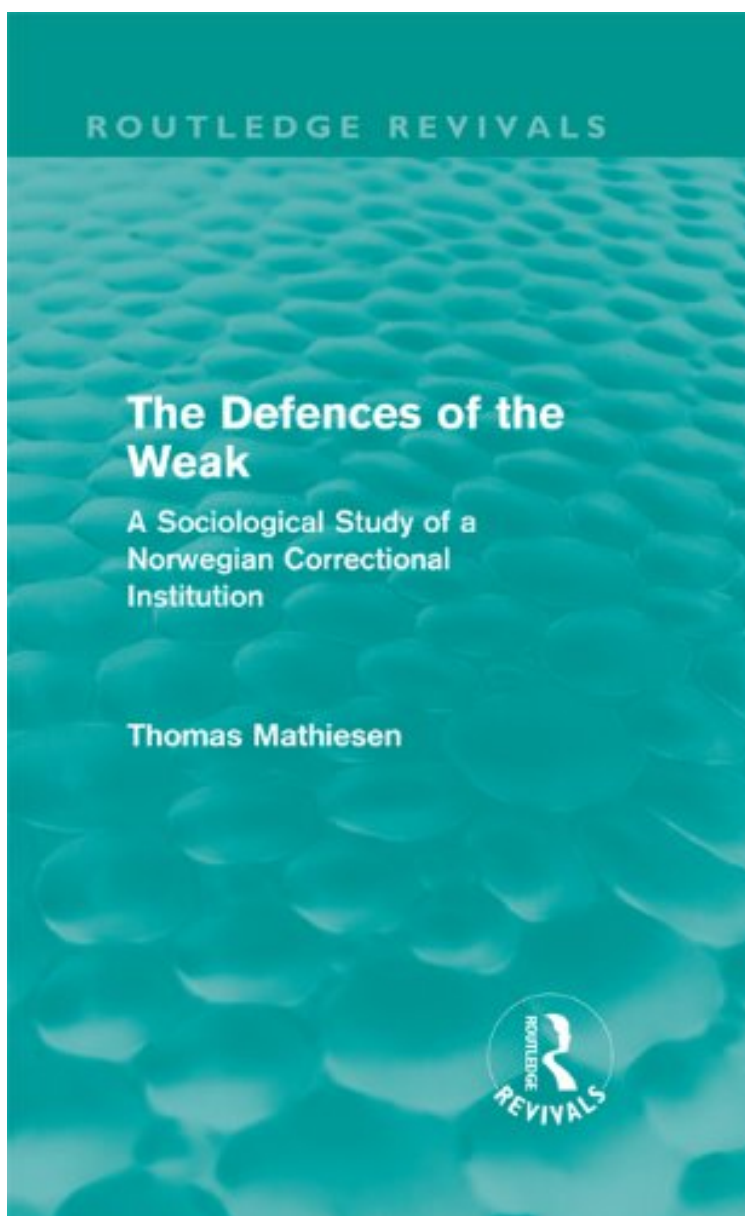


(Free) The Defences of the Weak (Routledge Revivals): A Sociological Study of a Norwegian Correctional Institution: Volume 2


The Defences of the Weak (Routledge Revivals): A Sociological Study of a Norwegian Correctional Institution: Volume 2

Thomas Mathiesen

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Thomas Mathiesen : The Defences of the Weak (Routledge Revivals): A Sociological Study of a Norwegian Correctional Institution: Volume 2 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Defences of the Weak (Routledge Revivals): A Sociological Study of a Norwegian Correctional

This is a sociological study of a Norwegian penal institution. The author spent two years in the institution, observing and interviewing inmates and staff, the target being to learn the extent to which American prisons fit with prison life in a different culture. He gives a fascinating answer to the question: Norwegian prisons were, at the time of the study, miles away from their American counterparts. The conflicts between prison officers and inmates were certainly there, but they took a very different form. Rather than engaging in deviant practices and norms, emphasising more or less solidary opposition against the staff, the Norwegian prisoners criticised the staff and the prison fiercely on the basis of their own norms; rather than engaging in deviance, they turned the common practises and norms of Norwegian society against the staff, engaging in a kind of moral surveillance of those in power. He coined the phrase of "ensoriousness" to this approach from the "bottom" of the prison. Mathiesen spells out the major causes of this different approach, from characteristics of this particular prison to broader social forces.

Mathiesen makes an extremely significant contribution to the understanding of the prison community... British Journal of Criminology Mathiesen exploits his material...with great skill and deserves to be widely read. The Guardian ... (The book) offers a great deal of relevant and valuable discussion for the development of research into penal institutions in industrial societies. Prison Service Journal The book is valuable for the light it sheds on the awkward relationship which exists between the custodial staff and the treatment experts in the prison. The Law Journal