

## Book Reviews/Comptes rendus

PIERS BEIRNE and NIGEL SOUTH (Eds.) *Issues in Green Criminology: Confronting Harms against Environments, Humanity and Other Animals*. Cullompton, Devon, UK: Willan Publishing, 2007, xxii + 317 p., index.

This edited collection draws together works by prominent scholars involved in what has been called “green criminology.” Green criminologists study how governments, corporations, military complexes and everyday human conduct harm the environment and non-human animals. Damage to land, air and water quality, animal testing and branding, uranium proliferation and slaughterhouses are examples of the kinds of issues green criminologists examine. The contributors to this book are concerned with the politics of how some harms against environments, humanity and other animals are characterized as crimes, yet other more destructive harms go unregulated.

The first part of *Issues in Green Criminology* deals with key theoretical issues. As Ted Benton points out in his piece on the meaning of “green,” this type of criminology requires a shift away from humanist notions of life and justice. Animals are not a resource but our kin. The environment is not to be thought of as expendable, but as having certain limits which should be respected. Benton’s major claim is that the environment and non-human animals have value in and of themselves. Violence perpetrated against them is morally wrong. Shifting away from a humanist notion of life allows for a non-anthropocentric version of justice. Benton contends that taking “green” seriously means pursuing non-capitalist modes of generating wealth.

Rob White claims that the pursuit of social and ecological justice is intertwined. Demonstrating the diversity of green thinking, White breaks down the differences between environmental justice and ecological justice. In environmental justice harm is constructed in relation to human-centered ideas of good and bad, whereas ecological justice situates humans as only one component in complex ecosystems that must be respected in ways which human-centered ideas of value cannot accommodate. White advocates for ecological citizenship, which would make the pursuit of ecological justice the key modality of politics. Piers Beirne contends that the animal rights and environmental movements share common ground with green criminology. He focuses on animal abuse, defined as “those diverse human actions that contribute to pain, suffering or death of animals or that otherwise adversely affect their welfare” (55). Beirne also states that

most of our language for discussing issues regarding animals and justice reflects an underlying speciesism which privileges human viewpoints.

The rest of *Issues in Green Criminology* tackles substantive issues. Geertrui Cazaux's paper details the branding, tattooing, tagging, collaring and toe amputation techniques used to identify and monitor animal communities. She links these surveillance systems to undue suffering and animal abuse. Tom Regan makes a compelling case for the abolition of vivisection. Regan defines vivisection as "harmful, non-therapeutic experimentation using non-human animals" (114). He believes there are probably hundreds of millions of animals worldwide currently being used for eye and brain research, as well as electric shock and radiation research. Sandra Wachholz discusses how the effects of global climate change (e.g., heat waves, hurricanes, drought and floods) tend to impact women more negatively. Reece Walters discusses illegal actions involving radioactive waste. For decades, Walters argues, US and UK corporations have dumped radioactive and toxic waste at sea and on land. Many corporations refuse to clean up such toxic residue, claiming it is not dangerous.

Hazel Croall raises questions about a whole range of food crimes, including subsidies frauds, use of mechanically recovered meat in food stuffs intended for human consumption, as well as purposeful mislabeling and false advertising. Since our food systems have become global, Croall believes food crimes should be thought of as transnational crimes. Maria Hauck examines how "illegality" is defined and by whom regarding small-scale fisheries in South Africa. Nigel South comments on examples of bio-piracy such as patenting forms of life. Michael Lynch and Paul Stretesky document the relationship between green criminology, eco-critical criminology (which is more policy oriented) and the environmental justice movement in the United States. Lynch and Stretesky argue exposure to toxicity, or "chemical victimization," is a crime.

*Issues in Green Criminology* has a coherent focus. The book introduces a number of problems most criminologists and social scientists rarely think about as connected to their own work, and shows exactly why harms against the environment and non-human animals should be taken seriously as topics of study across disciplinary boundaries. Moreover, the book is printed on 100 per cent recycled paper.

That said, one problem with *Issues in Green Criminology* is that it does not fully address ongoing forms of struggle around eco-crimes and the criminalization of that struggle. Though Roger Yates' piece on debates about animal rights describes changing green-movement and counter-movement discourses, there is no mention in this book of groups like the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) or Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC). Using a diversity of tactics, these groups raise awareness about systemic animal cruelty. The direct actions of the ALF, which sometimes intervenes in cases of animal cruelty, are depicted in the dominant discourses of the mainstream media as "extremist" and "terrorist." SHAC members are equally chastised, yet their actions never involve property

destruction. ALF and SHAC activists have been receiving long prison sentences in the UK, US, and in Canada. Intelligence agencies in the UK and US routinely gather information on people involved with these groups and comparable organizations. Similarly, anti-logging and anti-whaling activists are often targeted by criminal justice institutions. There are many intersections between green politics and the criminalization of dissent not addressed in this book. By not focusing on these kinds of struggle, *Issues in Green Criminology* leaves readers with a sense that party politics and a rights-based discourse are the only viable modality for reducing harm to the environment and non-human animals.

Overall, *Issues in Green Criminology* is an informative book which should appeal to sociologists, criminologists, environmental scientists and philosophers interested in ethics, law and regulation, animal-human relations and green social movements.

Kevin Walby, Carleton University.

© Canadian Sociological Association/La Société canadienne de sociologie