

## Book Reviews/Comptes rendus

WERNER J. EINSTADTER and STUART HENRY, *Criminological Theory: An Analysis of its Underlying Assumptions*, 2nd Edition. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006, xi + 427 p., index.

In a market saturated with criminology textbooks, Einstadter and Henry's second edition of *Criminological Theory: An Analysis of its Underlying Assumptions* distinguishes itself for two reasons. Firstly, three of its thirteen chapters are devoted to critical criminologies. As some scholars (such as Richard Wright) have pointed out, criminology textbooks overwhelmingly neglect critical perspectives or focus on older left-wing perspectives to the neglect of contemporary movements in critical thought. Indeed, *Criminological Theory* is somewhat unique for devoting an entire chapter to postmodernism (which probably reflects a 1996 project by Stuart Henry and Dragan Milovanovic, *Constitutive Criminology: Beyond Postmodernism*). However, the authors' efforts to give significant treatment to critical perspectives is undermined by not including a chapter (or even a section) on critical race theory or anti-racist perspectives, and the conceptually flawed decision to place anarchist criminology in the same chapter as Marxist and Left Realist (conflict) theory. Placing anarchism and Marxism in the same chapter might have been an interesting device for contrasting the perspectives, but the authors waste the opportunity by only superficially discussing anarchist theory. Indeed, given the formidable development of anarchist-based peacemaking criminology in recent years, the authors' slim treatment of anarchism is unfortunate, especially in comparison to the rigorous treatment accorded other traditions.

Secondly, Einstadter and Henry's text is reflexive about criminological theory as an enterprise. This reflexivity on the practice of theorising is at its best in chapter 13 where the authors consider integrative theorising. The authors point to debates inside the discipline about the meaning of integration, demonstrate the rich tradition in integration, and provide a range of examples. They point out that criminological theory has traditionally been characterised by the integration of various constitutive theories, but that in the last 25 years theorists have been more explicit about efforts to combine concepts, propositions and methods. A table which covers four pages neatly presents recent criminological approaches that are integrations of constitutive theories. The table is an interesting heuristic, but one could contest which theories are integrated and which are constitutive. For example, peacemaking/restorative justice is oddly listed as a constitutive theory when an argument could easily be made that it is an

integrated theory which combines labelling, anarchism, and even rational choice depending on which version of peacemaking/restorative justice is under analysis.

In any case, the authors are also reflective about the discipline by exposing five sets of theoretical assumptions. In chapter 1, they provide an intelligent justification for this approach, drawing on sociological insights: theory and method are not neutral, the social world is constructed, and theories help constitute their objects. The five sets of assumptions which the authors subject to analysis are: (1) “human nature and human behaviour,” (2) “society and the social order,” (3) “the role of law, definition of crime and image of the criminal,” (4) “causal logic,” and (5) “criminal justice implications.” Certainly, the focus on “underlying assumptions” is not unique. Indeed, the authors take their inspiration from Jock Young’s famous 1981 essay “Thinking Seriously about Crime.” More recently, consider the textbook *Crime and Criminology* by Rob White and Fiona Haines, which not only delves into assumptions underpinning criminological theories, but considers the political, cultural, historical and social contexts of their emergence. Einstadter and Henry neglect such contexts. White and Haines’ book is more critical, but Einstadter and Henry’s book is more analytic and comprehensive. They also subject each cluster of theories to “evaluation.” The evaluations are extremely useful for drawing criticisms of theories directly from the literature in the discipline; however, for instructors looking for a politically potent critique of the criminological “canon,” it will not be found here.

This text is designed for advanced undergraduates or graduate students, and hits its mark in terms of accessibility and complexity. It is best suited for third- and fourth-year undergraduates with a background in criminology. This textbook, composed of 13 chapters plus a conclusion, assumes a basic familiarity with a range of criminological theories, moving quickly from general overviews to detailed explanations of various theories and how theories fit together. Although some chapters (e.g., chapter 2 on demonological theories, chapter 3 on classical criminology, chapters 4 and 5 on individual positivism, and chapter 11 on feminisms) are devoted to single traditions of thought (or, at least, traditions of thought that fit together in obvious ways), other chapters reflect the mixing and meshing of theorising in the discipline. In some chapters, the authors cluster together theories under (traditional) headings, devoting two chapters each to sociological positivism (chapters 6 and 7) and social process theories (chapters 8 and 9).

Einstadter and Henry’s text is a good book, but with weaknesses. It is, in any case, a superior text to Henry’s other recent effort (with Mark Lanier), *The Essential Criminology Reader*, which hits the “essentials,” but somewhat superficially. For Canadian instructors and students, *Criminological Theory* will need to be supplemented with Canadian readings given that Canadian critical criminology has its own culture and its own theoretical innovations and preoccupations (for example,

Foucauldian thought, risk theorising and socialist feminism) which are absent from this text or treated only thinly.

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