

Whither criminology: its global future(s)?

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An ordinary story

Saturday April 4th, 2015. I am meeting my youngest daughter in Chester for lunch. (This is a city, in the North West of England, popular with tourists because of its historical heritage and about 25 miles away from where I live). I park the car and start to walk the short distance to the city centre. My attention is distracted by a vehicle sounding its horn at another vehicle that has cut across its path at a road junction. Within seconds the male driver of the 'offending' vehicle is out of his car, swearing loudly, and ready to accost the other male driver who has stayed in his vehicle. The rest of the traffic is momentarily brought to a standstill. When satisfied with the verbal assault meted out, the driver of the 'offending' vehicle returns to his car: traffic and pedestrians return to their own pre-occupations.

One place to begin?

- ▶ The 'bogus' of positivism (Young 2011)
- ▶ Examples: violence against women and violent extremism co-exist on a continuum. Young's (2007) 'paradigm of violence' in which we are all implicated.
- ▶ Questions posed for criminology, in general, and Asian criminology, in particular when we examine these issues in this way.

Thinking differently?

- ▶ For instance, a continuum of scale of force: so many pounds per square inch when a fist hits a jaw; so many more when a bomb hits a military target. A continuum on a social scale: violence in a couple, in a street riot, violence between nations. And place: a bedroom, a street, a police cell, a continent. Time: during a long peace, pre-war, in armed conflict, in periods we call 'postconflict'. And then type of weapon: hand, boot, machete, gun, missile.' (Cockburn 2013)

But how to begin?

- ▶ Young (2011), Connell (2007), Aas (2012) pose fundamental questions for social science/criminology
- ▶ Fetishism with number (Young)
- ▶ Northern theorising (Connell)
- ▶ Geography and voice (Aas)

Lend weight to de Sousa Santos' (2014) call for a sociology of absences in which:
'The future can thus be found at the crossroads of different knowledges and different technologies' (ibid. p. 200).

Violence Against Women

Following Latour (1987), I recently endeavoured to unpack the absences/black box of victimology's engagement with violence against women. Result in asking 4 questions:

What to count

How to count

Who to count

What to do having counted

Ordinary lives

- ▶ Ordinary violence: ‘folded into everyday life’: an ‘intertwining of the descent into the ordinary’ in which ‘ordinary people become scarred’ (Das 2007: 14). The ordinary violence of everyday life.
- ▶ This violence that is silenced (Jordan 2011): in the bedroom, on the street, in a children’s home; in a prison, on a continent.
- ▶ Smoothing out of culture (Machado et al 2010)
- ▶ The ‘ordinary’ denial of the evidence (Walby 2015)

Taken together these constitute the elephant in the room.

How do 'ordinary' people do 'extraordinary' things?

- ▶ 9/11 and the 'violence of the metropole' (Connell 2007)
- ▶ Criminological biases (Cottee 2014)

Main approaches:

- ▶ 1) lone wolf
- ▶ 2) strain theory
- ▶ 3) subcultural
- ▶ 4) cultural

Ordinary denials?

- ▶ the denial of religion as a crime inducing motivator
- ▶ the denial of the role of belief in projecting violent extremism
- ▶ the search for generalizable explanations for such violent extremism,
- ▶ The denial of situated life experiences and biographies of those driven towards violent extremism.

These denials reflect another the elephant in the room: the liberal bias of criminology.

Different beginnings?

Following de Sousa Santos (2014)

A different epistemological imagination?

A democratic imagination?

- ▶ A different starting place, affording space to different voices (see Carrington 2015)
- ▶ By definition, this implies a resistance to the implicit Occidental (and colonial) heritage which taints much of contemporary criminological work.

By way of a conclusion

- ▶ Body– Gendrot (2011) asks, how different might the social sciences look and feel if writers and researchers in Africa, Asia and South America were afforded an equal platform to speak about world affairs in Anglophone books, websites and journals.
- ▶ Asian criminology, in being neither here nor there (Carrington 2015), stands at the positive intersection of the north–south and east–west in terms of geography and culture is well placed to think differently both conceptually and methodological about the criminological enterprise, from which the discipline as a whole may benefit (Braithwaite 2015)
- ▶ At a minimum, echoing Cottee (2014) and the story with which this paper began: surely we can talk about this?

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