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**For Sociological Reason:
Crime, Criminalization, and the Poverty of Biosocial Criminology**

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The publication of our article ‘Ptolemizing Lombroso: The Pseudo-Revolution of Biosocial Criminology’ (Carrier and Walby, 2014) in the *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Criminology* has prompted a response penned by Anthony Walsh and John Paul Wright, arguably two of the most active proselytizers of biosocial criminology in the United States. Walsh and Wright are indeed important figures in contemporary struggles to stimulate and legitimize cross-fertilization between American criminology and human biology. As we have documented in ‘Ptolemizing Lombroso,’ Walsh, Wright and many other proponents of biosocial criminology see this approach as a necessary scientific revolution in criminology, and they bemoan a widespread “ideological allegiance to sociology” (Beaver, 2008, p.142) within criminology that would impede a full-blown biosocial revolution in this field of study.

Having taken notice of such revolutionary discourses in our previous engagements with biosocial criminology (Carrier and Walby, 2011; Walby and Carrier, 2010), we decided to rigorously analyze how biosocial criminologists establish the need to revolutionize criminology, and how biosocial criminology is represented as the only path for the rise of criminology to a post-ideological existence. We demonstrated that biosocial criminology espouses a narrow Lombrosian conception of criminology, and we borrowed Žižek’s (1999) notion of Ptolemization to describe the minor and pseudo-revolutionary modifications that biosocial criminology operates on it. We did not equate contemporary biosocial criminology with 19th century criminal anthropology. Walsh and Wright (2015, p.5) noted that our analysis, in contrast to many other critics, is informed by, not ignorant of, academic biosocial literature.

Having established the pseudo-revolutionary nature of biosocial criminology, ‘Ptolemizing Lombroso’ proposed an epistemologically-focused critique, turning biosocial criminologists’ attacks on ideology against themselves. We suggested that the failure of biosocial criminology to establish itself as a reigning criminological paradigm has nothing to do with the ideological stubbornness of social scientists, and is rather symptomatic of the poverty and antisociality of biosocial criminology.

In their response to ‘Ptolemizing Lombroso,’ Walsh and Wright celebrate a vision of scientific progress grounded on the possibility of scholarly scrutiny and debates. Yet, as we establish here, they fail to engage with the limitations and aporias of biosocial criminology that we identified, deciding instead to characterize our

scholarly contribution as a mere ideological lampoon. Given their declared respect for scholarly debates, and given that parts of 'Ptolemizing Lombroso' *actually documented how biosocial criminologists translate scholarly critiques into ideological manifestos*; we are astonished to see Walsh and Wright using such a stratagem once again. In 'Rage Against Reason: Addressing Critical Critics [sic] of Biosocial Research' (Walsh and Wright, 2015), we are accused, among other things, of being "moral theologians" whose "rage against reason" represents "an effort to delegitimize science [we] politically and ideologically don't approve of" (p.20). They suggest we merely offer "rhetorical moralizing discourse" and "contrived narratives founded on a bedrock of leftist moral ideology" (p.26).

We are writing this response to 'Rage Against Reason' using the same set of *a priori* that shaped the making of 'Ptolemizing Lombroso': we are convinced that we engage critically with biosocial criminology on the grounds of a sound mastery of its ontological assumptions, epistemological posture, theoretical claims and methodological practices; we believe that our analyses can be understood by social and biosocial scientists; we think that our analyses should be understood as detrimental to biosocial criminology, on grounds that are irreducible to ideology, and; we (still) think that proponents of biosocial criminology should respond directly and comprehensively to our critiques rather than avoid our engagements with their red herrings.

Our response to 'Rage Against Reason' is organized following its main themes. We first discuss biology and social sciences, describing once again how the biosocial model is ill-suited for the study of social relations and interactions. We then engage with epistemological and ontological issues, revisiting our critique of the antisocial quality of biosocial criminology, specifically how it glosses over the processes of criminalization. Thirdly, in a discussion of incommensurability in scientific operations, we correct misrepresentations of our work found in 'Rage Against Reason' (such as Walsh and Wright's claim that we portray science as an irrational activity). We also clarify arguments formulated in 'Ptolemizing Lombroso' regarding the impossibility of criminological operations to integrate, in the same time and space, aetiological positivistic concerns towards criminality and constructivist concerns towards criminalization processes. Finally, we engage with the last section of 'Rage Against Reason,' even if the diatribe against social science it consists of is stunningly unrelated to the critiques of biosocial criminology that sparked this debate. We show how Walsh and Wright's discussion and conclusion is evidence of the rhetoric and red herrings that comprise almost the entirety of their response to our critiques.

The Biological and the Social

Under the heading 'the method and science of human nature,' Walsh and Wright (2015) develop the first element of their response: we are accused of species-narcissism, setting human beings "above nature" (p.6). Here, their argument proceeds by rehearsing the characteristic discourse of biosocial criminologists that we documented: it is ridicule, ideological and unscientific to treat sociology as discontinuous from biology¹ and to study culture without using biological evolution as a starting point.² Quoting Barkow's *Missing the Revolution: Darwinism for Social Scientists* (1992), they "remind" us that biological evolution underlies psychology, which in turn underlies culture and society.

In 'Ptolemizing Lombroso,' we characterized sociological reason as an imperative of reflexivity stemming from the ontological difference between natural and social realities. Obviously, social realities (e.g. processes of criminalization) are dependent upon the autopoiesis of life, which is itself dependent upon peculiar and fragile environmental conditions. Part of our argument is the assertion that the biosocial approach is ill-suited to understand social realities because it is premised on a scientific model established in the quest to study *objects that are not the products of meaningful practices*.³ The biosocial model grasps the complex interactions between the (human) organism and its environment in multiple ways (e.g. Walsh, 2009). Yet, as we have shown, biosocial criminology depicts this complexity in a reductionist fashion, given that it is blind to the processes of symbolic mediation without which percepts of the organism, if they have biological corollaries, remain meaningless psychologically and socially. The poverty and the antisociality of the biosocial model stems principally from this inability to account for symbolic mediation. Walsh and Wright (2015) neither explain how it

¹ In 'Ptolemizing Lombroso' we notably quoted some of Walsh's previous work, in which the same idea that "there is no *scientific* reason why sociology should not be continuous with biology" (2009, p.3, italics in original) is advanced.

² Culture is interpreted as a mere set of historically contingent "facades" that are "fashion[ed] around the Darwinian framework" (Walsh and Wright, 2015, p.8).

³ It is, moreover, a model that is unable to think of itself as being, in the first place, a product of such practices. As we showed in 'Ptolemizing Lombroso,' biosocial criminology is multidisciplinary yet unreflexive.

is defensible to neglect this process of mediation nor how biosocial criminology offers an interpretive model that could possibly account for it.

Practices of criminalization (law making, the constitution of certain acts, omissions or conditions as criminal, repressive and punitive practices) exist for individuals and for society only insofar as they are meaningful objects for the consciousness of humans and the communicational operations of social systems such as politics, law, art, religion, economics, and, for what concerns us here, science. For the operations of consciousness and for the operations of communication, “meaning is an unnegatable category” (Luhmann, 1995, p.62).⁴ The conclusion of this aspect of our argument was that biosocial criminology can only integrate meaningful social practices insofar as they are “transmuted into *behaviors* that are simplistic, meaningless and predictable *within the self-referential realities of neopositivistic sciences*” (Carrier and Walby, 2014, p.26). Walsh and Wright (2015) neither explicate how the biosocial model can escape neither this aporia nor how it can fathom itself as a product of contingent socio-historical meaningful practices.

We suggested that biosocial criminologists’ neopositivism leads them to exclude social scientific schemes of analysis that are epistemologically incompatible with it. All the schemes of analysis developed as an alternative to positivistic causality, such as the dialectical, hermeneutical and functional ones (see Berthelot, 1996) are logically taken as unscientific and ideological, for it would be theoretically nonsensical to mobilize them within a logic of biopathologization, or through the model of ‘nature via nurture’. Walsh and Wright suggest that the biosocial approach can take into account the social and existential dimensions of “the biosocial whole” (p.8). Like other biosocial criminologists, they fail to show how their approach can do so. Walsh and Wright fail to engage with our critique that the biosocial synthesis consists of an exclusionary act: the privileging of the nomothetic over the idiographic and of explanation over interpretation *de facto* disable the possibility of any phenomenologically sound analysis.⁵

Crime, Criminality, Criminalization

The second and third elements of Walsh and Wright’s response concern ontology and epistemology (pp. 9-14). They correctly point out that our work, like most contemporary critical criminology, is premised on a constructivist epistemology that does not take the existence of crime as ontologically given or unproblematic. Then they proceed to equate this posture with a “nihilistic skepticism” that biosocial criminologists abhor (p.9). Using the Hacking’s (1999) formula, they condemn our “rage against reason.” Citing Akers’ textbook (1997, pp.176-177), they submit that we believe “that there is no such thing as crime as an objective behavioral reality.” If they accept the socio-historically contingent quality of criminal law, they refuse the idea that the “act forbidden” is also socially constructed, for it “is as ontologically real as the knife in the chest or the house denuded of its contents” (p.11). Referring to “intrinsically evil (*mala in se*) crimes,” they imply that constructivism might negate the real suffering of victims (p.10). They propose that the object of biosocial criminology is “criminality crime,” where criminality is a continuously distributed trait. On the same page, criminality is contradictorily defined as both dependent and independent of law. It would be “the propensity to use and abuse others for personal gain (...) [independently] of the labeling of an act or of the person being defined as a criminal,” but also “the property of individuals that signals the willingness to commit” acts that law defines as criminal (p.11). They characterize biosocial criminology’s epistemology as critical realism, responding to our critique of its naïve realism by a negation unsupported by any evidence or argumentation. Moreover, they transform our documented critique of the naïvely realist epistemological posture of biosocial criminology as a bizarre defense of the “tad dated” distinction between noumena and phenomena (p.12).

⁴ The meaning of biological operations through which human organisms produce and reproduce their identity is not a biological product but the results of the coupling of operations of consciousness and communications (*i.e.* the result of an external mediation produced by scientific observations). We are here merely reformulating Freitag’s (2011a) distinction between the external mediation constitutive of natural objects, and the internal mediation constitutive of social objects. We mobilized Freitag’s dialectical sociology in ‘Ptolemizing Lombroso,’ but the argument could also have been formulated within the terms of different sociologies, such as that of Weber, Bourdieu, Giddens, Habermas, Luhmann, Boltanski, etc.

⁵ Indeed, the only possibility for biosocial criminology is to allocate signification (on mysterious or commonsensical grounds) and to operationalize environmental variables. That is, it is to condemn oneself to provide an explanation on the grounds of a lack of understanding – akin to the total ignorance that psychologists have of what being a rodent in a laboratory maze is like.

Walsh and Wright's response targets the sections of 'Ptolemizing Lombroso' that derided the post-ideological pretences of biosocial criminology, particularly the section in which we demonstrated that the biosocial approach is restricted by "the ideology of the immaculate data" (Carrier and Walby, 2014, pp.19-22). We found one of the most extreme and candid manifestations of such ideology in Wright's (2009) "suggestion that empirical material is available without any signifying mediating processes, that it 'speaks for itself'" (Carrier and Walby, 2014, p.20).⁶ We notably characterized this ideology as repressing the dialogical relationship between the observing subject and the observed object, as negating the constitutive dimension of scientific observations, and as presupposing the ability to grasp factuality outside language, time and space. Rather than negating factuality, we espoused a sociological reason premised on the idea "that factuality never deposits itself passively in consciousness or discourses" (p.20). Sociological reason is mobilized to propose second order observations, *i.e.* to understand how individuals (or, in our case, biosocial criminology as a specialized set of scientific communications) observe the world. In other words, sociological reason aims at understanding how reality is constructed through operations of consciousness or communications. When anchored in a constructivist epistemology, sociological reason assumes that the world as it is and the world as it is observed are *undistinguishable* (e.g. Luhmann, 2002). We assume that this part of our argument was developed either too quickly or obliquely in 'Ptolemizing Lombroso,' for it led Walsh and Wright, as we saw, to mock what they observed as an attempted revival of the foundational dualism of Kantian philosophy. We are not suggesting that biosocial criminology is engaged in the impossible quest to access a noumenal plane escaping the realm of phenomenality, nor that it is a mere distortion of the real, but that it is a way of observing (*i.e.* constructing) reality which is problematic from the perspective of sociological reason. What we particularly condemned in relation to the ideology of the immaculate data is the antisociality of biosocial criminology: its attempt "to study a social object - crime - as if it was a thing in nature, independent from spatially and historically contingent symbolic mediations" (Carrier and Walby, 2014, p.27). That is, we carefully explained why it is epistemologically problematic for criminology or any social science to study crime as if it was an "objective behavioral reality."

The argument proposed in Walsh and Wright's response is that criminology can and should disregard actual processes of criminalization in its study of crime (and criminality).⁷ Contemporary biocriminology reformulates the (sociologically indefensible) idea that criminologists should study crimes that exist only as self-referential products of criminological observations, which is obviously why Walsh, Wright and many others evoke a universalized normativity (*mala in se*, intrinsically evil crimes, etc.).⁸ In contradistinction, our approach - which, to repeat, stands accused of being ideological and against reason - is not in the normative business: we articulate how biosocial criminology is unsatisfactory according to a sociological and constructivist perspective; we do not establish what is evil and what is not, what is normal or not, what and who deserves punishment or not, etc.

Biosocial criminology thus constructs crime as an "objective behavioral reality" independent of practices and discourses of criminalization. Universalizing normativity, Walsh and Wright can be blind to

⁶ Wright's (2009) "defense of science" argued that the empirical material itself can show the existence (or inexistence) of races. We never suggested that he is racist, but made the following observation:

"this project naively looks for the existence of race *outside* the realm of meaning, *i.e.* as a non-social object, *but from* the realm of meaning, *i.e.* by unreflexively mobilizing race as a social object. No wonder then that biosocial criminologists are accused of racism: their practices abide by the Eurocentric civilizational premises of the Lombrosian project (see Morrison, 2006), making it impossible to think of racialized categories as instituted realities, to analyze racialized categories in relational terms (see also Cunneen, 2011; Pálsson, 2007; Royal, 2006), or to reflect on how scientific observations participate in the cultural-symbolic and politico-juridical reproduction of racialized categories. This alone shows how biosocial criminology is not merely epistemologically simplistic, but also bluntly antisocial."

⁷ This can be observed as a mere Ptolemization of Lombroso's (1895[2004]) aim to develop an "anthropometric guillotine" through which science could ultimately rule law, powerfully illustrated in Murray's infamous political program of 'custodial democracy'.

⁸ This allows them to deparadoxify the self-referentiality of biosocial criminology's construction of crime. They attribute to an external source their own construction of crime (and criminality), using the exact same mechanism that law uses when it invokes the reasonable person standard to escape juridical tautologies, or that politics uses when it invokes the public to escape political tautologies (see Carrier, 2011; Luhmann, 2004).

biosocial criminology's constitutive role on the object criminality, and look for products of human evolution that could explain an ontologized and behaviorist conception of crime, allowing them to variously categorize human organisms. They wrote (Walsh and Wright, 2015, p.8): "Carrier and Walby might respond that there are layers of culture and individual experiences to account for, and that biosocial types ignore culture and are blind to "aetiological speculations...anchored in a constructivist epistemology, de-ontologizing 'crime'" (2014, 13)." This is a misquotation. What we wrote is that biosocial criminology is blind to criminological practices "devoid of aetiological speculations, particularly those anchored in a constructivist epistemology, de-ontologizing 'crime'." This blindness is once more illustrated in 'Rage Against Reason.' Not only are Walsh and Wright unable to provide a rejoinder on the question of how the biosocial approach can solve the problems that we identified in relation to the blind spot placed on the symbolic quality of social realities (crime, criminalization, etc.), but they fail to engage with our critique that biosocial criminology performs a complete exclusion of the study of criminalization.

As 'Ptolemizing Lombroso' demonstrated, the narrative that biosocial criminology has developed on the dire state of criminology is American-centric, but also rhetorical, since the whole field of criminology cannot be limited to empirical and theoretical activities devoted to deciphering the causes of criminality or antisocial behavior. Criminology is also concerned with understanding of how crime exists socially. It is precisely because the knife in the chest evoked by Walsh and Wright exists socially as a crime only contingently that studying processes of criminalization is essential.⁹ Biosocial criminology espouses a Lombrosian conception of criminology limited to aetiological preoccupations, and we showed how this model is defective in relation to these aetiological preoccupations.

We have yet to encounter any biosocial work of use for criminological research projects aiming to understand juridical communications (criminalization, punishment, juridical reason, relations with social systems such as science, mass media and politics, etc.) and practices of prevention, surveillance, repression, and punishment. Biosocial criminology, much like non-biosocial aetiological criminology, is sociologically inept. Walsh and Wright do not respond to our critique that biosocial criminology's imperial and pathologizing ambitions suppose the exclusion of criminological preoccupations with the institutionalization of penal norms and their enforcement. For instance, how would biosocial criminology proceed if it decided to study the institutionalization, evolution and use of norms governing the conditional release of incarcerated individuals? How would it proceed if it decided to understand how Canadian carceral spaces have come to be filled more with remanded prisoners than with convicted individuals?

When informed by legal pluralism, the study of the social uses of criminalization can be decoupled from the question of their juridical validity (e.g. Carrier, 2008; Walby, 2007). A criminology that is attuned to legal pluralism can take as its object discourses of criminalization that are not necessarily the product of the social system of law. This is notably illustrated in the line of research that evolved from the initial program of research of *Constructing Social Problems* (Spector and Kitsuse, 1977), which examines the ways in which criminalization is mobilized discursively in concrete social struggles surrounding moralizing or civilizing offensives (e.g. Carrier, 2013). This approach is also illustrated by 'Ptolemizing Lombroso,' which is a study of how crime and criminals are constructed by a specific network of scientific communications. We unequivocally claim the possibility of studying these communications without implicating the qualities and idiosyncrasies of the bodies whose selves describe themselves as biosocial criminologists. A sociology of criminology has no need of the biosocial model.

It is not clear to us if biosocial criminologists' concept of culture includes or excludes science, and therefore if they would condemn our analysis of biosocial criminology as ideological for neglecting biology - their approach would logically frame biology as contingently responsible for scientific 'behavior,' and thus impossible to decouple from science. What we want to underline by noting this is that the elementary sociological theory in biosocial criminology's argument is one suggesting that societies are the products of behaviors, rehearsing the simplistic sociobiological model: biology → psychology → culture/society. Sociology has developed multiple (and conflicting) theoretical models to understand culture, interaction, law, science, politics, and so on. Most of these models, incidentally, have had only limited impacts within the field of criminology, which only a-typically ventures into the realm of sociological theory, particularly in a social

⁹ Concerning itself only with crime as it exists socially, constructivism could thus be characterized as more realist than biosocial criminology! The idea that the abolition of discourses of criminalization would lead to the disappearance of the knife maliciously penetrating one's body is advanced in a rhetorical attack on constructivism, not in criminological work mobilizing a constructivist epistemology (it is thus informative about whoever formulates the attack, not about the epistemological posture).

scientific context characterized by an open hostility not only towards any remnants of sociobiology, but also towards what Mills (1959) referred to as 'grand theory.' Any sociological theory today will favor a singular foundational unit of analysis: action, structure or communication (none is behaviorist).¹⁰

Our own theoretical posture results in an approach that does not place human beings "above nature."¹¹ We conceive of individuals as uniquely structured self-observational operations of consciousness, linked to both the communicational operations constitutive of the social and the biological operations of life. The coupling of life, consciousness and communication (biology, psychology, sociology) does not mean that we can understand selves by way of the bios, or that we can comprehend the social by way of embodied psychological singularities. In other words, we cannot understand the specific subset of scientific communications constituting the biosocial model in criminology by trying to understand what goes on in the minds and in the bodies of, for example, Walsh and Wright. And, as we shall see, Walsh and Wright did not implicate biology when trying to explain our position.

Incommensurability in Social Scientific Operations and Communications

The fourth element of Walsh and Wright's response is an attempted rebuttal of our reflections on incommensurability in science. We showed how biosocial criminologists' use of Kuhn (1962) to see their approach as the "normal science" to come was based on a flawed understanding of his sociology of science. Our contention is answered in 'Rage Against Reason' with these words: "so what" (Walsh and Wright, 2015, p.15).

Instead of engaging with our critiques, Walsh and Wright (2015) imply that we are "enamored" with "a strong interpretation of incommensurability" because we would take "it as a claim that science is irrational" (p.14). Their other argument is formulated in this way:

Carrier and Walby concede that physics and chemistry can cross-fertilize (p. 23) despite their [in fact: Kuhn's] tiff over helium, but biology and criminology cannot. We, on the other hand, aver that biology and criminology can, do, and should cross-fertilize promiscuously. Biosocial criminology is forced to cross-fertilize because of its recognition that humans are both biological and cultural creatures. One can only disagree with this in good conscience if one is a radical social constructionist who insists that humans cannot be studied the way everything else in the known universe is studied and/or that social science is about advocacy rather than sciences (Walsh and Wright, 2015, p.17).

First, we cannot understand how and where Walsh and Wright observe in our work the idea that science is irrational. This is one of Walsh and Wright's many red herrings. We did not suggest that the biosocial model is irrational, but that it is replete with aporias and limitations when used to understand social realities. We do not negate human biology but, as sociologists, our work is grounded in a conception of the social that is irreducible to the biological, because sentient representation cannot be conflated with symbolic representation, and because there is a complex and reflexive process of social objectivation of the symbolic (i.e. society) that is autonomous from the biological.¹² Stated otherwise: we cannot understand biosocial

¹⁰ As such, many of our critiques towards biosocial criminology are also valid towards non-biosocial aetiological criminology (see Carrier, 2006).

¹¹ Most of sociology, especially the tradition which insists on the manufactured quality of consciousness, tends to devote "too little attention to the non-social elements involved in the emergence of individuality (see also Žižek, 2004, esp. 106-126) [and] to maintain a mesmerizing tradition, made particularly visible and material in Gall and Spurzheim's (Spurzheim, 1815) phrenological speculations, that arranges "psychological faculties hierarchically, relegating "sensuousness" - that is, perception - to a lower position in comparison to higher, reflective functions of reason and understanding" (Luhmann, 2000:5)" (Carrier, forthcoming, note 19).

¹² This does not imply that non-human animals' existence is devoid of symbolic mediation, but with Freitag (2011b) we would use 'proto-symbolic' to grasp this mediation that is not engendered and supported by reflexive processes of social objectivation. Any sociological theory provides an interpretation of the evolution of these processes without reducing them to biological operations.

criminology by reducing it to the biology of scientists, because their organisms' relations to their environments cannot be conflated with what they communicate in academic articles and books, and because society has evolved a reflexive set of communications through which the social system of science reproduces itself autonomously of the biological. There are thus good reasons to study the social differently than "everything else in the known universe is studied."¹³ Once again we encounter the antisociality of biosocial criminology that 'Ptolemizing Lombroso' condemned.

In many ways, our discussion on incommensurability in 'Ptolemizing Lombroso' was simpler than the above crash course in the basics of sociological methods and theory. We indeed recognized the possibility that biology will cross-fertilize with criminology, but only within various "*forms of sociologically ill-informed aetiological practices*" (Carrier and Walby, 2014, p.29). Our argument was that all the elements that the biosocial model aims to take into account must be formatted in a way that enables complex computations (e.g. weighing the amount of inherited biological material responsible for 'criminality'). We discussed this formatting in terms of a "problematic empiricist unidimensionality" (Carrier and Walby, 2014, p.23) in order to open up our discussion on incommensurability. We then pointed out that the causal relationships postulated by biosocial criminology cannot be synthesized with interpretations produced mobilizing different schemes of analysis (we used the example of phenomenology, and we shall do so here again).

Biosocial criminology can claim to be social for taking into account the environment in which an organism evolves, but not in a way that is satisfactory from a sociological perspective. For instance, biosocial criminology typically suggests that heritability is higher in "good" or "positive" environments (e.g. Walsh, 2009). Yet to come to this conclusion, it must mobilize the distinctions good/bad or positive/negative environments irrespectively of the experience that social beings have of their social milieus. They thus employ a normative and simplistic conception of the environment¹⁴ (e.g. is the organism growing up a 'broken home'?), whereas many criminological projects will be interested in the complexity of the environment, as well as in the ways it is represented and experienced by social actors. Incommensurability lies in the inability of biosocial criminology's scientific operations to integrate these elements in assessing heritability, if only because one can no longer find any trace of the *lebenswelt* once we enter a quantified probabilistic realm.

'Ptolemizing Lombroso' proposed a detailed discussion showing the incommensurability of biosocial criminology with scientific analyses realized in the phenomenological, functionalist, structural, dialectical and actantial traditions. In their response, Walsh and Wright do not explain how diagnosing this incommensurability is symptomatic of a 'Rage Against Reason.' They also do not explain how biosocial criminology could overcome this incommensurability other than by presenting itself as the one and only non-ideological model (without appearing to notice the performative contradiction), thus having no need to be commensurate with what is observed as non-scientific. We can thus see how the ways in which the biosocial model has been praised as an integrated approach in criminology corresponds to an *incapacity to be commensurate with all the strategies that aim to study a society composed of meaningful interactions (microsociology) and communications (macrosociology) in its own terms.*

Another dimension of incommensurability that we did not examine at length in 'Ptolemizing Lombroso' is made visible by Walsh and Wright's (2015) interpretation of our scholarly contribution as a set of insipid, leftist moralizing tropes. For social scientists interested in processes of criminalization - those like us failing to understand how this interest manifests an intrinsic ideological dimension - the integration of an aetiological model (whether biosocial or not) has no logical grounding. Conversely, for biosocial scientists interested in 'criminality,' the integration of the perspective of social reaction also has no logical grounding. Criminality and criminalization are incommensurate, and their respective study attests of "the bi-cephalic structure of criminological practices" (Carrier and Walby, 2014, p.28). In other words, *scientific operations cannot, in the same time and space, study an object that would be a perfectly continent synthesis of criminality and criminalization*, and criminological communications have evolved into specialized topologies that cannot be amalgamated. For Walsh, Wright and many other biosocial criminologists, social scientific operations and

¹³ We have yet to encounter minerals having developed a complex system of science in which a debate is raging about whether or not their atomic structure should be implicated in explaining how they interact with each other, and there are plenty of reasonable grounds to suggest that humans appreciate a cold flute of lager on a hot patio in ways that a *drosophila melanogaster* does not.

¹⁴ The unintended yet profound legacy of the notion of social disorganization is precisely that the social sciences can no longer mobilize a model of normatively appropriate social environment without exposing the ideological underpinnings of their social scientific activities.

communications are incommensurate with science only because they are not scientific in the first place. This argument sets the stage for the last element of their response, to which we now turn.

On the Conflation of Critique with Postmodernism and Advocacy

In the last section of 'Rage Against Reason,' Walsh and Wright (2015) move away from a direct engagement with 'Ptolemizing Lombroso' to "discuss the devastating influence political ideology has in the social sciences," indicting the "overlapping views of sciences" that "critical," "radical" and "postmodern" perspectives would share despite the differences existing between them (p.18). Walsh and Wright see us as representatives of tribes, notably the tribes of radical and postmodernist criminologists, critical criminologists and "leftist academics." They characterize these tribes' work, and by extension our own, in the following ways. It is irrelevant (p.18). It is based on the sacred belief "that individuals, the sexes, and racial groups are equivalent" (p.19). It leads to critiques of science (in our case: biosocial criminology) on political and ideological grounds (p.20) - critiques that should be interpreted as the reaction of a "dominant group" (critical criminologists) to the challenges to the status quo coming from a "minority group" (biosocial criminologists) (p.19). It elevates bias as an "academic value," and believes that "advocacy is the proper role of science" (p.21). In criminology, it is a moralizing enterprise that is highly selective, focusing on scolding specific groups and individuals (they evoke corporate crimes).¹⁵ It deconstructs reality, a task "intellectually so demanding that it requires the invention of words and phrases not to be found in the dictionary, not based in science, and unknown by any reasonably intelligent person" (p.23). It denies any objective reality; it is "not bound by any empirical reality" (p.25), and "simply overlook the quantifiable improvements in human life brought about by science, including research on how best to intervene with at-risk youth and dangerous adults" (p.24). Finally, in criminology, the critical perspective is unable to appreciate the danger of its ideology, which Walsh and Wright (p.24) associate with Marx and Engels.

Perhaps 'Ptolemizing Lombroso' employed an unnecessarily abrasive language in the critiques it leveled at biosocial criminology. Yet this does not explain Walsh and Wright's diatribe on critical criminology and "leftist academics," for it simply reformulates a discourse typically found in biosocial criminological texts (Carrier and Walby, 2014). Walsh and Wright do not identify which aspects of the arguments formulated in 'Ptolemizing Lombroso' are politically or ideologically motivated, nor where we suggest that social sciences' role is advocacy, nor where we suggest that human organisms are all equivalent, nor where we celebrate the academic value of bias, nor where we adopt a perspective that could be, even remotely, associated to the legacy of Marx and Engels, nor where we 'deconstruct reality,' nor where we invent a language social scientists cannot understand. Walsh and Wright, as we saw, also note that our critique is based on an informed assessment of contemporary biosocial literature, which shows that 'Ptolemizing Lombroso' is bound by an empirical reality: biosocial criminological communications. In other words: their diatribe cannot possibly be aimed at 'Ptolemizing Lombroso.' These are more of Walsh and Wright's many red herrings.

Walsh and Wright chose risk and dangerousness as two objects towards which biosocial criminology could provide a knowledge allowing for the normative orientation of social practices ('how best to intervene'). This is consistent with their focus on criminality. The paradox is obviously their claim that criminality, risk and dangerousness are objective realities existing independently of scientific (or political, legal, etc.) operations. The relevance of critical scholarship in criminology that Walsh and Wright seem unable to observe is notably located in the very study of how the scientific, legal, political and other social systems attribute meaning to facts using symbolic devices such as criminality, risk and dangerousness. These devices *are nothing more than speculative machines producing a self-referential reality* on the basis of the hypothesis of a potential or "probable relationship" between some symptoms or facts "and a certain act to come" (Castel, 1991:283). One does not need to be a postmodernist (if we must confess: we are not) to be able to see that one cannot see

¹⁵ There is no denying that some self-described critical criminology is a moralizing enterprise that mobilizes criminalization quite selectively, and what goes under the name of 'public criminology' can indeed be derided for being the latest manifestation of advocacy disguised into social sciences (Carrier, 2014). The problem is that we do not inhabit the community imagined by Walsh and Wright, and that critical criminology is not saturated with ideologues practicing "science by fiat" (Wright, 2009, p. 143). Their interpretation of the motives guiding our critiques is simplistic, speculative and unpersuasive: if there is a 'dominant group' in American criminology, it is certainly the mass of criminologists trying to find the determinants of 'crime as behavioral reality'.

risk, criminality or dangerousness without commonsensical or scientific, simplistic or complex processes of meaningful attributions, which cannot be reduced to the facts that they are signifying.

A constructivist epistemology is not a political posture: it does not entertain biosocial criminology's ambitions to *normatively orient* the ways in which society mobilizes the speculative machines of risk, criminality and dangerousness, but instead leads, in criminology, to studying how they partake in concrete and communicational processes of criminalization, prevention, surveillance, etc. Walsh and Wright fail to show the alleged ideological or political dimension of such a program of research; it is they who promote an activist criminology without recognizing it as such, slandering its critics as ideologues while claiming to be enamored of scholarly debates.

Coda

Biosocial criminology is a problematic antisocial analytical model built on a conception of criminology that performs the exclusion of the study of criminalization processes, as 'Ptolemizing Lombroso' demonstrated. Walsh and Wright (2015) have succeeded in dodging all critiques of biosocial criminology, transforming them into a politically and ideologically motivated rhetoric, said to be typical of an imagined community we certainly do not inhabit. Describing themselves as persecuted underdogs, Walsh and Wright show themselves unable to mobilize the supposedly universal biosocial model to make sense of its inability to impose itself as the one and only criminological approach. They are also unable to marshal the supposedly universal biosocial model to explain why sociological reason shall always find disreputable simplistic behaviorist models geared towards the annihilation of meaning. This alone speaks to the poverty of the biosocial model in criminology and social science more broadly.

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