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Some thoughts on Steve Hall's *Theorizing Crime and Deviance: A New Perspective*

Simon Winlow, Teesside Centre for Realist Criminology

Context

In order to assess the value of such an ambitious book as *Theorizing Crime and Deviance*, it seems necessary first of all to consider the context of its emergence. How can we evaluate criminology and what are its prospects as the twentieth century fades from view and in retrospect the political, economic and social character of the twenty-first century becomes a little clearer and more comprehensible? How is criminology faring in comparison to other cognate fields in the social sciences and humanities? Why might the author of this book feel that 'a new perspective' is necessary, and is there genuine novelty and explanatory power in the author's analysis?

I often hear that academic criminology is in robust health. Apparently our discipline is growing at a remarkable rate. Criminology is now taught across the world and students are flocking to our undergraduate programmes. I also hear that we are an increasingly diverse discipline. This is not simply a matter of women and ethnic minorities moving into academic criminology to pursue their own independent research agendas, and nor is it a simple reflection of the rapid rise of criminology in Asia and the Global South. What is startling is the breadth of our discipline and our growing tendency to identify niche areas of study that might better reflect the diversity of the postmodern multitude, their intersectional relations, their structural situations, their cultural norms, their dreams and desires, their concerns and fears, and the various disciplinary systems that attempts to control their lives. These days, criminologists often wander quite far from what was our principle object of inquiry, and this is usually regarded as a positive development suggestive of our growing disciplinary confidence and assertiveness.

I tend to take the opposite view. I believe that academic criminology has lost much of its early intellectual vitality. There is a dearth of new ideas and concepts that are sorely needed to address the current reality of twenty-first century post-crash capitalism and its manifold and rapidly mutating problems of crime and harm. While some fields in the social sciences have similarly failed to evolve and produce new ideas in keeping with these turbulent times, other disciplines external to social science – most notably

continental European philosophy, radical economics, political theory and a revived psychoanalysis – are moving forward with some rapidity and providing us with new ways of grasping our unique historical conjuncture.

We live in a world of often quite breath-taking inequality and injustice. What once seemed to be the certainties of modernity are now well behind us. We are already seeing the first indications of climate change, resource wars, state terrorism and mass migration into the chaotic, claustrophobic and unequal urban environments of the new mega-cities. In the vacuum created by the decline of traditional oppositional politics, the rise of new nationalisms, some deeply racist and hostile in both the defensive and offensive senses, can now be clearly identified on the horizon. At the same time technology – especially media and communications technology – develops at a runaway pace and new illegal markets are burgeoning amid this turbulent change. Criminology lags behind other disciplines in addressing these changes. Perhaps that is reasonable enough to expect from a discipline that has only recently learnt to crawl out of its administrative cocoon and face the world, but it still leaves us way off the pace.

For instance, the discipline has failed to come to terms with the systemic fraud and malpractice associated with corporate finance and the banking industry. It has yet to develop persuasive and theoretically nuanced accounts of the crime drop, and its empirical picture and theoretical explanations of the mutation of criminal markets as the internet opens up new avenues for illegal entrepreneurship are sparse and unconvincing to say the least. Little has been said about the criminogenic effects of consumer and household debt and what appears to be a significant rise in corrosive forms of sociosymbolic violence.

The liberal left side of criminology seems to be unable to come to terms with the dispiriting cultural sea-change over the past 50 years or so. The liberal left still cannot bring itself to admit that the vast majority of Western electorates are depoliticised, absorbed in the corporate media spectacle and more enthusiastic about competing against one another for positional consumer goods than they are about seeking solidarity and organizing opposition to the capitalist system's excesses. In the vacuum created by this glaring absence criminological theory has left itself gasping for air.

It is not that we have sought to avoid these issues, preferring instead to stick to the core themes established during the heady days of the discipline's inception. We acknowledge their presence and the difficult problems they present, but in our collective approach to them we display a lack of theoretical and disciplinary ambition, as if we do not believe ourselves capable of driving new research agendas that can be picked up by academics working in criminology and throughout the social sciences and humanities. We seem content to remain in our subordinate and eternally grateful position of an importer discipline and show a palpable reticence about actually producing concepts – and indeed doing the complex empirical work necessary to ground them in our current reality – that can explain our principle objects of crime and harm along with their underlying generative conditions. Worse, some of us cling to outmoded 20th century ideas and pretend we already know what crime and harm are, what causes them, how people experience them and what we can do about them – all we need to do is apply our ancestors' sacred knowledge with the required piety as we make people's lives better.

Those who admit that we don't know nearly enough about our central issues as they shift and mutate in today's unique conjuncture expect philosophers, literary theorists and political economists to take on issues of monumental importance; our ambitions are smaller and less baroque. Whereas these other disciplines speak outwards towards the broad sweep of academia, government and the public, criminologists, in most instances, focus on criminology's internal discourses, and when we do speak to government and the public we tell them what they want to hear. Even when we do have something critical to say it is apologetic and remains well within the acceptable parameters that mark out today's truncated post-political centre ground. We tend to speak to our peers – it's safer that way. I'm generalising of course, and constructing a caricature, but I believe it's a caricature that possesses a hard kernel of truth; it often seems that both our natural inquisitiveness and our political voices have become buried under an avalanche of dour policy analysis.

There is little doubt that we have moved away from attempts to explain offender motivation and the forces that propel the individual towards harmful anti-social activities. We often immediately dismiss attempts to explain motivation as reductive and deterministic. Whilst we do our duty to protect the sacred individual we never tire of criticising the corporate-capitalist state and its oppressive practices, yet we cannot present a clear, coherent alternative way of doing politics and nor do we seem to have any firm connection to other disciplines that have something to say about this recurrent issue. We seem to think that omnipotent neoliberal capitalists will dismantle or at least humanise their oppressive apparatus and mend their ways if we keep telling them off. Of course, liberal criminologists, who constitute the bulk of our discipline, remain determinedly incredulous towards metanarratives. They assume our culture to be endlessly pluralistic, malleable and diverse and, as a result, they tend to conclude that motivations are specific to individuals in their inordinately complex and diverse situations and that generalised accounts are ultimately useless. Instead of addressing the complexities of subjectivity and motivation we focus more and more on events that occur after a crime has taken place. With great diligence we examine the nooks

and crannies of criminal justice systems and their failings. We painstakingly investigate media and public reactions to crime and harm in great detail. In doing so, we allow ourselves to embrace our secret lover, our own conveniently disavowed metanarrative of the inevitably oppressive state, or even its overarching abstract ideal, the collective spirit. We are most of the time social reaction theorists, 'controllogists' rather than criminologists.

On the left of our discipline the idealism and left libertarianism of the 1960s appear to have triumphed over the left realism that grew in popularity as the neoliberal restructuring of the nineteen seventies and eighties really began to take hold. Left idealists continue to decry moral panics and labelling processes, and, in a rather tense and heavily disavowed alliance with their libertarian cousins on the political right, they continue to argue against the oppressive state and its overbearing institutions. The liberal left certainly has fled from the field of aetiological analysis and left the door open for the conservative right. This is the beginning of Hall's analysis, the first question he asks in the opening paragraph. Rather than arguing that criminology is in robust health, it makes far more sense to acknowledge, he argues, that theoretical criminology is beset by an undiagnosed terminal illness. We carry on as normal, unaware that we need emergency assistance to overcome our predicament. How did we arrive in this perilous situation? A hefty proportion of the book is devoted to answering that question.

Before I delve into the details of how Hall answers that question, let me set the context a little further. He does not, it must be said, investigate criminology's institutional context. Given the book's focus this is perfectly reasonable but, if we are to begin by addressing criminology's failure to come to terms with the present, it's worth briefly touching upon the institutional pressures that many criminologists work under. The impact of the market upon our occupational culture has been huge, and it could be said that other academic fields in the social sciences and humanities have fared little better in their attempts to maintain their intellectual quality, autonomy and critical stances. The great bulk of us are constantly subjected to the 'publish or perish' ethos and this is hardly conducive to good scholarship. We are all pressured into turning ourselves into academic entrepreneurs capable of generating income and achieving publication targets for our employers. We must all adjust our teaching material and presentational style in order to encourage our students to look favourably upon our performances, therefore there is a tendency to simplify analyses and ideas just to maintain popularity and get high scores on student surveys or Pickaprof.com. We are constantly cajoled into becoming a mixture of government advisors, income generators, summarisers and entertainers. Refusal to conform to these demands can have serious implications for one's career. The commodification of higher learning is transforming our intellectual life, and the scope and ambition of criminology has been noticeably affected.

There are also broader issues of cultural change. It is not too difficult to identify the base populism of mass culture and its growing distaste for intellectualism. There are a few rare exceptions, such as the recent rise of the public profiles of Thomas Picketty and Steven Pinker, but neither author questions the fundamentals of our way of life – in fact Pinker celebrates its inevitable progress – and in general what used to be celebrated as intellectualism is perceived as pompous, impractical, elitist and obsolete, an old stain on the faux democracy of consumer capitalism that could do with removal. In Britain we no longer have public intellectuals. Their place in popular culture has been taken by charismatic business leaders, entrepreneurs and media celebrities. These are the people invited to comment on the issues of the day, not men and women of deep learning and erudition. On TV and radio today we are more likely to encounter a comedian commenting on criminological issues than a criminologist. Throughout the second half of the twentieth century the state-owned British Broadcasting Corporation remained committed to public education and commissioned extravagant and learned documentary series and politically-engaged theatrical productions. For the last decade or so the BBC has been under attack from neoliberal ideologues keen to expose it to the 'invigorating' effects of market competition, and divest it of all residues of this high-minded 'elitism' so that it might better serve the needs and choices of consumers. It has been duly invigorated, and is now active every day in the energetic arrangement of its own dumbing down. Vapid consumerism and shallow hedonism now constitutes the core of mass culture, and intellectualism is not being merely marginalised but squeezed out entirely as this core expands to colonise the whole. The BBC's flagship show is now *Strictly Come Dancing*.

We can see a shadow of this popular distaste for intellectualism in the evolution of the Professoriate in Western academia. Fewer professors these days can be regarded as genuine intellectuals. Of course, some academics carry significant administrative duties and are given the title of 'professor' as recompense. Others move quickly up the scale if they develop a reputation for income generation. We can also see a tendency among the Professoriate to see themselves as subject specialists rather than intellectuals capable of talking intelligently about issues that lie outside their usual disciplinary remit. In criminology there are some professors who appear willing to spend their entire career investigating one microscopic aspect of policing or criminal justice, apparently living in fear of straying too far from the comfort of their established expertise. Perhaps more to the point, when a major crime occurs, the media rarely call upon criminologists as they hunt around in search of a willing expert to offer an explanation for

what has transpired to a worried and intrigued population. Instead pop psychologists, journalists and bloggers fill the void. We may immediately feel that this is a minor issue, but might it not be taken as evidence that our supposed disciplinary health and growing self-confidence is not all it seems? Again, changes to our culture and our growing antagonism towards intellectualism are affecting criminology, but these challenges to our disciplinary culture are not unique.

These things are impacting upon disciplines across the social sciences and humanities, but there are also matters specific to the field of academic criminology that need to be drawn out and exposed to the cold light of day. Criminology has always been a discipline orientated towards empiricism and distrustful of philosophical abstraction, but – if a quick scan of key disciplinary journals and their rankings is anything to go by – this characteristic has grown to the extent that ‘theory’ now appears almost superfluous. For decades the discipline has sailed closer and closer to the jagged rocks of ‘abstracted empiricism’ (Mills, 2000). We have now run aground, and the ship is sinking.

As a discipline we seem subsumed by pointless, atheoretical ‘so what? criminology’ (Currie, 2007; Matthews, 2009). We no longer appear concerned with the discovery of new truths about crime, harm and disorder, and we seem unwilling to take the crucial interpretative step that’s necessary to give empirical data some broader and deeper explanatory potential. Instead we tend to police ourselves into intellectual conformity and obsolescence with ethics committees as we remain fetishistically attached to the injunction to be modest, objective, value-free and focused on some issue or other that arises in the micro-management of crime and all other aspects of late modern life. Even our critical stances are micro-critiques, usually of some specific aspect of intersectional social inequality or the control system, and criminology’s remarkable lack of concern with politics suggests that it has meekly returned to its original servile position as an agent of *biopolitics* – a term I base on Žižek’s drive-based model rather than Foucault’s discursive model – or late modernity’s management of politically inert and consumer-fixated bodies. For many criminologists, political sensibilities pollute analysis and must be expunged before one can begin a credible and sensible scientific investigation of some specific aspect of crime and criminal justice.

Similarly, there is very little recognition of the economic realities that shape our lives. Thinking about the connections between capitalism and forms of crime was once quite popular in our discipline. It’s now totally out of fashion. Many on the liberal left have moved on and choose instead to focus on the field of culture and cultural innovation. For them a traditional critique of ideology or analysis of postmodern capitalism appears rather passé. Others of course continue to labour under the assumption that their work is scientific and that they can, by drawing upon new innovations in methodology, unearth remnants of truth as if they were on an archaeological dig.

Perhaps more problematic is the discipline’s dull acceptance of the canon of criminological literature. In Britain we have recently gone through a ‘benchmarking exercise’ in order to set down firm guidelines on what should and, by omission, what should not be taught on undergraduate criminology programmes. These documents have had a similar effect to most of the general textbooks that dominate publishing in the discipline: they have reified our own selective intellectual history, simplified it, and frozen it in place. One can still find interesting ideas hidden away in the better specialist theory textbooks, but in the general textbooks a combination of condensation, selection and omission has turned them into fleeting curios that have little impact on the student’s intellectual development. We used to consider criminology as an unashamed importer discipline, or a meeting place for academics from a range of disciplinary backgrounds that possessed a mutual interest in crime and its control. A case could even be made that a good importer discipline is on balance preferable to a bad producer discipline. After all, good importation and synthesis of ideas could be a stage on the path towards eventual good production. However, criminology these days often does a very poor job of importing ideas from cognate fields, even though many of these cognate fields, mentioned earlier, are experiencing a remarkable burst of energy and innovation. Instead we’ve fortified our disciplinary borders and instructed the more inquisitive criminologists to return to an increasingly outdated and rather musty canon whenever they’re in need of a theoretical framework to support their data.

To put it rather bluntly and simply, our disciplinary dialectic has stalled. There is no longer a productive interchange on key issues. Despite the remarkable mutation of crime and the manifold harms inflicted on individuals, specific social groups and whole populations across the world, we are – generally speaking – failing to get to grips with our core objects and produce new ideas that reflect and explain the world as it is now. This is not to suggest that criminologists are not producing outstanding work at the margins of the discipline, but it is most certainly to suggest that they have to fight hard to do this work and push it into the public domain. This, in my view, is the political and institutional context into which Steve Hall’s *Theorizing Crime and Deviance* has emerged.

The book’s emergence is timely to say the least. If there is one book that can wrench us out of the iron grip of servitude to biopolitics and our one-dimensional ‘controlology’ critique of the criminal justice system, it is *Theorizing Crime and Deviance*. Back-cover endorsements are usually hyperbolic, but British

criminologist Simon Hallsworth's opinion that this book "rocks the foundations of the discipline" is in this case appears perfectly accurate. Hall's book is quite unlike the other great books that have shaped our discipline in the past. Firstly, one is struck by the remarkable breadth of reference the author is able to call upon. Unlike the vast majority of contemporary criminologists he is entirely comfortable utilising material well beyond the borders of contemporary criminology. He moves through multiple cognate fields with confidence and alacrity, synthesizing and applying important new ideas from disciplines across the spectrum from macroeconomics to psychoanalysis. It would be misleading to say that this book is an easy read, but, given the depth, breadth and complexity of the material under discussion, it still remains remarkably readable. The book is really a work of historical social philosophy and psychosocial history that addresses the whole field of crime, harm and control. The tone of the book, its scope and its ambition really do set it apart. It does not read like a book written in the discipline of criminology for criminologists alone, but a book written by an erudite polymath who, quite rightly in my view, wants us all to become polymaths. Hall does not insult the intelligence of readers but instead places high expectations on it, which of course is vital to intellectual revival. To help such matters he has an alluring style of writing that punctuates lengthy, complex analysis and erudition with judiciously placed needlepoints. I found myself looking forward to the numerous sentences or sub-clauses that began 'in other words....'.

The analysis is so expansive and flows over criminology's restrictive boundaries so often that they cease to matter. Sometimes one gets the impression of being taken on alternate helicopter rides and potholing expeditions that open up parallax views from above and below that have simply not been explored – or at least not for a long time – in the criminological discipline. The few complaints I have heard from colleagues about the book revolve around the fact that some readers are not familiar with the expansive multi-disciplinary references, but of course this should be seen as a challenge rather than an excuse to give up.

This cross-fertilisation is precisely what the discipline needs. Hall is particularly effective when he draws upon continental philosophy, and much of his analysis of subjectivity centres upon Slavoj Žižek's philosophical position of *transcendental materialism*. For me this is a very convincing new framework for understanding the formation of subjectivity as it is born out of the trauma of nature into culture. If embraced and carefully transposed following Hall's model in this book, this new position is brimming with explanatory concepts and should provide criminology with an exciting and productive alternative to its ailing positivist, interpretivist and post-structuralist theoretical frameworks. As part of the overall transcendental materialist package the reader is quite often exposed to the work of Hegel and Lacan. Marx features a little less in Hall's book than he does in Žižek's own work, although the discussion of dialectics and class in Chapter 7 does lie somewhere between Hegel and Marx. Instead Hall's analysis of contemporary capitalism utilises the new ideas that are being produced by a new wave of critical social theorists, political economists, philosophers and psychoanalysts who have sought to address the outcomes of neoliberal globalization, the movement of production to developing countries in the east and in the south and the west's shift into a network of predominantly consumer-service economies.

Underneath Hall's account of transcendental materialism and his own concept of the *pseudo-pacification process*, which I will comment upon later, lays a detailed and critical account of political economy that problematizes the social and cultural outcomes of capitalism and its attendant cultural forms from the twelfth century to the present day. This unique and searching critique of capitalism's complex psychosocial machinations means that Hall's work can be confidently positioned on the political left, but it is quite unlike the majority of work that is produced by critical and radical criminologists. Reading between the lines one can detect a deep commitment to equality. For Hall, the negative effects of capitalism are so considerable that we cannot and should not rely on state regulation alone to protect civil society from the predation of the profit motive. In political terms and in a similar way to both Žižek and Badiou – another contemporary continental philosopher cited throughout the text – Hall clearly wants humanity to transcend capitalism at some point in the future. But the book is certainly not politically naïve, and there is precious little idealism or utopianism to be found in its pages. He is a consummate story-teller and very good on the details, and it is the details that provide us with a realistic notion of what we must do to make progress possible. There's no political posturing here, there are no manifestos and no sweeping ideological statements about the horrors of capitalism. Rather, there is a searching critique of what we as humans do to reproduce the system, no matter how 'radical' we like to think we are. It is this unique and very honest philosophical framework that allows him to construct a genuine parallax view of some forms of criminality as very specific yet very central types of hyper-conformity to the economic and cultural demands the capitalist system places upon us all. In this analysis crime is not resistance to power and authority. This is the genuine break Hall places before us, and in my opinion we should grab it and go with it.

However, what might hamper and delay acceptance of this new framework is that Hall's work might appear slightly out of place on the contemporary left. The problem is that it contains a measured dose of what we used to call traditional 'conservatism' in the days before neoliberalism crushed conservatism and socialism alike in our political institutions and popular imagination. I should qualify this

statement slightly. He is 'conservative' but only in the same way that the Freud of *Civilization and its Discontents* and many post-Freudians and Lacanians are viewed as 'conservative'. Without drifting too close to sentimental communitarianism, he problematizes the disintegration of social institutions and the corrosive effects of consumerism upon our traditional cultures, some aspects of which – such as the nurturing aspects of family, productive work, community, political solidarity, efficiency in symbolism and language, and the canon of high culture – were worth preserving.

Hall is highly critical of the cultural turn in philosophy and social science, the romantic distractions of much 60s-vintage cultural Marxism, interactionism and post-structuralism, and the weak liberalism and libertarianism that appear to dominate what now passes for post-socialist and post-social-democratic 'leftist' politics. All of this is expressed most clearly in his account, in the first few chapters, of the disintegration of the symbolic order and the downfall of the Lacanian Big Other, the set of customs, rules, prohibitions and permissions that provide a symbolic framework for subjectivity's struggles to become itself, and thus move subjectivity from a barbaric state of nature to a liveable state of culture. The immobilising nihilism, cynicism and depressive hedonism of our times clearly troubles him, although it must be said that occasionally he does lapse just a little too close to absolutist moral judgement. The way he prioritises solidarity and symbolic efficiency over liberty might disturb many liberals, but unbiased readers will find that he advocates these values in a way that never loses sight of basic human rights and freedoms.

Hall's real target is not 'the left' in general or its idea of a more equal and nurturing society. In fact he is keen to expose the intellectual and political impediments to the project of creating such societies as they are reproduced by both the liberal-left and the liberal-right, both of which he sharply distinguishes from the traditional left *and* its possible future incarnations. Central to this critique is the sort of unbridled hedonism, personal ambition and unleashing of expressive and instrumental drives and desires that, as we shall see in more detail a little later, he calls *special liberty*. One of the great strengths of this work is that in the idea of *special liberty* Hall draws out of a critique of modernity and capitalism a clear conception of one of the system's most destructive and criminogenic forces. Readers might label Hall a crypto-conservative as they try to get to grips with this concept, but it would be a wrong move because, although he is resolutely on the side of civilization, it is obvious that there is too much about liberal-capitalism he would like to transcend to make a convincing case that he wants to 'conserve' any whole traditional way of life or indeed any of its major institutions in their traditional forms. He is against pure libertinism and the injunction to 'abolish everything' that turned countercultural radicalism into the spent force we see today, fit only for nostalgic lampooning. For Hall, the libertine extremism of the counterculture helped to create the ethico-political vacuum into which neoliberalism flowed to establish itself so firmly. Although he deals *with* extremes – violence, drive and disorder opposing pacification, symbolism and order – he doesn't deal *in* extremes, but analyses their interaction to produce a thesis that has more balance, maturity and sophistication than I have seen in any other in the canon of criminological theory. There is a genuine paradigm-busting break with the past in here for anyone who cares to open her mind to it.

The Pseudo-Pacification Process

Although *special liberty* is a powerful idea, it is not the main one in this work. Instead of toeing the now exhausted left-liberal line – a mixture of humanist Marxism, cultural studies and ontologically impoverished frameworks such as symbolic interactionism and post-structuralism – that has dominated social thought since the 1960s, Hall sticks relentlessly throughout the book to a detailed account of what is probably his pivotal concept, what he calls the *pseudo-pacification process*. His analysis of this foundational dynamic process in the history of capitalism/modernity makes a major contribution to criminological and general social scientific knowledge and understanding, and it deserves to be widely read and reflected upon. It makes little sense to describe the pseudo-pacification process in fine detail here; I assume that Hall has done so in his own contribution to this collection. In any case, it is better to read *Theorizing Crime and Deviance* and some of his earlier work in full to capture the richness of detail and depth of thought.

However, for the purposes of this short review, the essence of Hall's theory of *pseudo-pacification* is that throughout its history capitalism has drawn upon the inexhaustible reservoir of thymotic human energy to advance its circulation and establish itself as the dominant global socioeconomic system. In order for capitalism to develop in the way that it did it needed to attenuate immediate recourse to violence and cultivate 'pseudo-pacified' social relations. These relations were, on the surface of things, reasonably peaceable and civilised. Of course, in order for capitalism to get off the ground in Early Modern Europe it was necessary for theft and violence to be controlled so that property rights could be protected and commodities and money could be circulated in relative safety. Individuals moving into their new roles as accelerated traders and entrepreneurial producers for the market needed to be able to transport goods and enter into business relationships in good faith, confident that they would not be robbed or swindled. However, underneath these ostensibly civilised codes lay a foundation of aggressive instrumentalism. Hall

claims that hard-core individualism and the urge to competitive struggle were deliberately cultivated, in a pseudo-pacified form sublimated from physical violence and intimidation to the more economically functional form of sociosymbolic competition, in order to aid the circulation of commodities as the economy grew and became more complex. As capitalism developed the incredibly high levels of physical violence that characterised the Dark Ages in Europe began to fall away. In their place grew new forms of economically useful symbolic violence acted out in culture and social relations as sociosymbolic competition.

However, at the same time, the altruism that existed as the other extreme in the customs and codes of pre-capitalist Europe was abolished in business life. For Hall, using Lacan's psychodynamic theories in a broader social context, altruism and community together became the historical lost object, the unnameable *objet petit a* whose return to the centre of our social and economic lives some of us still yearn for yet most of us have learnt to regard as impossibly Utopian. So, as far as I understand it, the kernel of the theory is that the crude physical violence that ordered the Dark Ages and Middle Ages was sublimated and converted to a pseudo-pacified variant of sociosymbolic competition. This new form of competition was subsequently acted out in a new cultural sphere in which the altruism and solidarity at the core of the Big Other had been evacuated to allow competitive drives and desires to be harnessed to a burgeoning consumer-driven economy. Thus, in a nutshell, the establishment of the pseudo-pacification process allowed both the supply and circulation of commodities and consumer desire and demand to be intensified and act as potent forces in the expansion of the capitalist market economy. This paved the way for the sort of ambitious, competitive individualist subjectivity that we now see achieving success to become the norm in our culture. Underneath the complexity of Hall's thinking is a simple and very potent idea that criminology cannot afford to pass over.

Indeed, Hall's theory is far more complex than I have outlined here. It draws a great deal upon social and economic history, but his key focus is to address the cultural, psychological – or what he terms 'psychosocial' – and of course the specifically criminogenic and zemiogenic cultural forces, social outcomes and subjectivities of this pseudo-pacification process. Although his theory is deeply rooted in Western history, it can be used to explain many contemporary issues. Why did consumerism take hold after the Second World War, and what were the effects of competitive consumption upon community life and the traditional foundations of social identity? What happened to the collectivist politics, and why today are accounts of universalism treated with such disdain by liberals of both left and right? Why, despite the expansion of consumer lifestyles are many contemporary western societies beset by personality disorders, and by high levels anxiety and depression? What is the prolonged effect of social competition upon our psyche and our social being? And of course, how can Hall's theory of pseudo-pacification illuminate our understanding of crime, violence, criminal motivations, historical crime rates and social harm? It is at this point that Hall attempts the impossible: he introduces the work of Jacques Lacan to the discipline of criminology even though he must be aware of just how bogged down in crude positivism, abstracted empiricism and naïve interpretivism it actually is, clearly in the hope that a productive relationship might blossom and a new paradigm of theoretical and philosophical criminology might result.

Again, there is little sense in recapping Hall's analysis of Lacan in detail. Instead I will say that I found the intellectual ambition of his thesis hugely impressive. Many colleagues will know that I have worked alongside him for a number of years, and watching his basic thesis grow and develop has been, from the minute we first met, an exciting and eye-opening experience. This is the reason I wanted to work with him in the first place, so this review could appear rather partisan, but it comes from genuine support for his ideas rather than the personal obligations that friendship demands. I chose to work with him because I like his ideas – I don't like his ideas because I work with him. What first attracted me to his work was the rich context his early work on pseudo-pacification and the lost historical object of community provided for my own work on violence, subjectivity and trauma (see Winlow, 2001, 2012a, 2014).

In fact Hall's thesis has had something of a restorative effect upon my own personal reading of contemporary criminology. Watching his ideas develop was interesting enough, but reading them in a single work such as this one that really nails them down has been a revelation. Just when I thought criminology was heading along a path to self-destructive incorporation into *biopolitics*, in which process it discarded any consideration of motivation or the internal life of the criminal actor in its deeper social and economic context, *Theorizing Crime and Deviance* comes along to demand that I re-evaluate the current state of criminology and what the discipline is capable of. It is a work of remarkable erudition, originality and considerable bravery. Ranging effortlessly across history, anthropology, socio-legal studies, macroeconomics, continental philosophy, social and criminological theory and psychoanalysis, the scope of Hall's analysis is really something to behold. In particular he enables those of us who have begun to identify the limitations of standard liberal discourse to draw strength from his analysis and identify more productive lines of inquiry. He does not give us the last word; instead he gives us the first words on a new exploratory path towards criminology's primary object: the explanation of the human motivation to inflict harm on others. He furnishes us with a plethora of new concepts that can help us to revive our core

intellectual project. The concept of the *pseudo-pacification* is indeed central, but he brings his explanation of the idea and its outcomes to life with a number of important secondary concepts. Just briefly, I will describe those which, in my view, are the most important ones for criminology.

Special liberty

His concept of *special liberty*, for example, referred to throughout the book, addresses the individual belief that one has transcended the Big Other's ethical codes in the name of creating wealth, complying with the logic of business and, most importantly, exercising the right to freely express one's drives and desires. The individual is therefore as free as the external control system allows him to be to act with impunity, free to rob, plunder and destroy without ever acknowledging the harms their activities visit upon others. This concept allows Hall to relocate the external control system and explain it not simply as an instrument of class oppression, domination or biopower – a concept he claims as having never existed – but as consumer-capitalism's last resort. Rather than acknowledging these harms, individuals who believe that they are entitled to special liberty remain attached to an image of themselves as the most useful circulators of commodities and the most transcendent free individuals, the creators of a prosperous future and the pioneers of the free expression of the full spectrum of drives and desires. The endeavours of the elite in the market generate the tax revenues that fund the welfare state and support the profligate lifestyles of the poor. Their entrepreneurial flair enables less talented individuals to find work in the real economy. Their hard work and creativity drive new trends in culture. Even in society's lower echelons, their circulation of commodities satisfies the demands of other free transcendent individuals as they exercise the rights of the sovereign consumer. Of course, when one is producing all of these benefits for an otherwise moribund social order, why should one allow oneself to be restrained by conventional morality? Doesn't everyone profit from the special liberty granted to the Randian elite who dominate our politics and our economy in all of its nodal locations?

Hall's analysis of special liberty provides radical criminology with a genuine break from its crude social-structural past. Rather than speak simply of power and domination across intersectional lines, he locates special liberty throughout the social structure in the nodes of what he calls a 'reticular' capitalist social system. The fantasy of special liberty can be seen in the operation local drug markets in poor residential areas, in corporate boardrooms and throughout the corridors of state power. The dark side of liberal individualism is by no means limited to the ruling elite, even though they have achieved more success in its practice. For Hall, from the beginning of the capitalist project the gradual social diffusion and democratisation of the fantasy of special liberty is one of the most vital prerequisites for the dynamic operation of the pseudo-pacification process.

Objectless anxiety

There is also great utility in Hall's analysis of what he calls 'objectless anxiety'. It would take too much space to really do justice to this concept, but basically he wants to draw a distinction between 'fear', which usually has one or more identifiable objective causes, and anxiety, which, by its very nature, does not. In discussing these issues Hall responds to those social theorists who have identified the crucial role fear plays in the control of crime, the contemporary politics of the state and western culture more generally. He acknowledges the role of fear especially in European politics in the last decade or so. Of course, during these years we have seen a worrying growth in nationalism and the politics of the far right. The contemporary far right in Europe tend to identify liberal multiculturalism, immigration and Islamism as the objective causes of their fear of national disintegration but, as Walter Benjamin famously observed many years ago, the far right fundamentally misidentify the true cause of their emotional disturbance. It is the unstable and aggressively competitive system of capital itself that prompts this fear; the antagonism shown towards other ethnicities and religions is simply a displaced antagonism towards capitalism's systemic insecurities. The rise of fascism, for Benjamin and for Žižek, reflects the failure of the political left to adequately symbolise the problems faced by the working class and to objectify the true cause of their dissatisfaction. Hall's critique of the liberal-left and liberal-right alike in this book gives this thinking important criminological resonance.

Criminals number amongst many candidates for the role of ideological objects of fear, but criminology's problem is that this standard and rather tired 'demonization' thesis has no explanation for the foundation of the ideologically reproduced 'fear of crime' in objectless anxiety. In fact, by refusing to analyse capitalism's deep structures and processes, left and right criminology acts as one to put its shoulder to the wheel of deliberately failing to symbolise the roots of our problems and 'fears'. In liberal discourse we can put the blame on anything except capitalism itself (see Winlow, 2012b). In Hall's discussion of the fear/anxiety problem, his surgical demolition of 'moral panic' as a category error and his dismissal of the Foucauldian idea of 'biopower' as a bygone high-modernist fantasy are object lessons in

sharp criticism as well as important exercises in clearing away the undergrowth to create spaces for growing new ideas.

Briefly, Hall argues that the principal form of disturbance we face these days is anxiety rather than fear. As fear has an object cause – even if the identified cause is a displacement of much a deeper issue – we can at least begin to come to terms with the source of our fear and begin to take defensive action against it. Anxiety, however, references a general sense of impending doom, a sense of instability and threat, and we remain unsure of precisely what it is that causes our anxiety. We are sure that there is something out there that threatens our identities or our lifestyles in some way but we are at a loss as to what it is and what we might do about it. We cannot identify an objective cause for our anxiety and so we cannot begin to take action against it.

The criminal undertaker

I was also taken with Hall's use of Werner Sombart's work and his extension of Sombart's analysis of the *undertaker* – not one who buries the dead but who undertakes to get things done – who seeks his fortune in the business environment created by capitalism. Hall offers a prescient criminological interpretation of the criminal entrepreneur as the subject of special liberty who by-passes any sense of common fate and mutual obligations with others as he takes on entrepreneurial projects in the hope of positive material and thymotic outcomes. Like the business undertakers of the established order, the criminal undertaker takes risks, and his motivation lies in elevating his position in the asocial hierarchy of competitive individuals. He hopes to journey from the ranks of the exploited to the ranks of the exploiters as quickly as possible, by-passing ethics and productive work. The basic message here, when placed in a broader context of 'pseudo-pacification', is that the distinction between legitimate entrepreneurship and illegitimate entrepreneurship is not as clear as we tend to assume. Legitimate entrepreneurs often use underhand tactics to get ahead. They stretch ethical limits to breaking point and, as criminologists who focus on the crimes of the powerful have ably demonstrated, where necessary they often stray over legal boundaries and engage in outright illegality. Criminal undertakers are simply those who are willing to step over this boundary as a first resort if a good opportunity presents itself.

There are of course cultural issues at stake but these reflect norms rather than values. For Hall, there is no such thing as ethical capitalism, and the ethical individual who finds herself enmeshed in corporate enterprise cannot moralise the economic sphere. Capitalism is entirely dependent upon this normal everyday stretching and breaking of the rules. It diligently cultivates social competition and the desire to get ahead by fair means or foul. Interventionist governments might seek to put a leash on capitalism, but they cannot transform its nature or the primary objective of its fundamental exchange relation, which is of course, as Hall reminds us, to extract a surplus from the other in relation to what one gives.

Closing remarks

Theorizing Crime and Deviance contains many more incisive ideas that could and should be used by criminologists. His demolition of exhausted ideas such as 'moral panic' and 'biopower' are spectacularly successful, intellectually liberating and at the same time productive in clearing the way and setting up a platform for new concepts. Let me draw this rambling review to a close. Hall has produced a book of genuine historic significance for the discipline of criminology. The book's theoretical sophistication and the depth and scope of its analysis provide us with an opportunity to pull free from our downward spiral and rejuvenate leftist theoretical criminology. Like western culture more broadly, criminology appears stuck in a rut of its own making. We have become cynical and instrumental in the hope that these things might protect us from the debilitating effects of liberal postmodernism's assault upon meaning and truth. Here we have a book that outlines a rigorous and compelling new approach in the field of criminology. Will we get behind it, argue over its content and utilise its concepts and approach, or will we remain fetishistically attached to abstracted empiricism and the dead ideas of the twentieth century? Does our panoramic cynicism compel us to dismiss all new ideas as acts of petulant iconoclasm, or can we engage in an honest debate about the merits of the book and how it might contribute to a new criminology more in keeping with the challenges we face in the here and now? Delivering a book of such intellectual ambition to the empirically inclined discipline of criminology represents a real gamble. There is every chance that the liberal interpretivists, positivists and empiricists who make up the bulk of our discipline will simply avoid it or dismiss it entirely because its central argument is too complex and so radically at odds with the majority of the work produced in criminology. If that is the case it would be a huge shame and our discipline will have missed a chance to launch itself in a more productive direction.

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