

**Rob White and Fiona Haines, *Crime and Criminology*
Oxford University Press, Melbourne (1996)**

This introductory book on crime and criminology achieves its stated aim in providing a clear and concise introduction to criminological concepts and explanations. The book is written in a way that is highly accessible and will prove a useful starting point for those interested in, yet unfamiliar with the discipline. While the book is intended primarily for criminology, sociology and law undergraduates, its highly accessible presentation may also serve to attract a lay readership.

The book deals more or less chronologically with a series of criminological approaches including biological, psychological, strain, labelling, Marxist, feminist, New Right, Left Realist, republican and critical approaches. Each chapter addresses its subject matter in the same style. An approach is first located in its social and historical context. Then its basic concepts are detailed and explained. This is followed by an account of the historical development of the approach. Contemporary examples are then offered by way of illustration followed by a critique of the approach and a conclusion.

The book is particularly good in emphasising how each approach is tied to the historical period in which it emerged and which gave it impetus. Thus, the emergence of classical theory is located in the transition from feudalism to capitalism, Merton's theory of structural strain in affluent 1950s America and feminist criminology as proceeding from the 'second wave' of feminism in the 1970s. This attention to history is one of the real strengths of the book, as the newcomer to criminology is thereby encouraged to think about particular criminological approaches — their concepts, practices and degree of institutionalism — in historical terms.

On a critical note the style of writing is very, perhaps unnecessarily, repetitive. Of course, this might prove more of a help than hindrance to the book's intended readership and perhaps serves to emphasise the book's introductory nature.

Despite this criticism the authors are to be commended for their attempt to historicise the discipline of criminology within the confines of an introductory text while the book's accessibility is likely to ensure its popularity with lay and undergraduate audiences.

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