

explain some of the biological theory that seems to support such claims, with reference to biochemical and neurotransmitter relationships, which allows the reader to critically engage in their explanations rather than in a didactic manner.

For this reviewer, the ability to inform the reader of the subject—for which they obviously have expertise in—in a way that encourages solid social science criticism and responsibility on the part of the audience makes this work a stimulating and exceptional reference book. It is useful in both the bare facts and presentation of conflicting arguments; but, it is more valuable because of the example it sets in applying abstract theories to people. The authors respect the people they, and others, study. One hopes that the need to understand such groups stems from the need to improve the quality of life for society as a whole, and this should be at the heart of every budding social scientist.

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Book Review

Convict Criminology: Inside and Out

By Rod Earle

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Convict criminology in the UK is a relatively new phenomenon. At the 2011 British Society of Criminology annual conference a small number of academics discussed the viability of setting up a Convict Criminology Group. In the last five years this group has

gone from strength to strength and has been largely responsible for introducing convict criminology into the UK. As the name suggests convict criminology is 'the study of criminology by those who have first-hand experience of imprisonment' (book cover). It is 'founded on the idea that people who have been through a prison sentence can themselves fashion distinctive contributions to criminology' (p.115). The book under review is the first sole-authored book on the subject and is written by Rod Earle, a Senior Lecturer in Youth Justice at The Open University. In 1982 he served a three-month prison sentence in HMP Norwich.

The book is sectioned into eight chapters, each of which start with interesting narratives which detail either the authors prison experience or the consequences of him having a criminal conviction. For example Earle explains the difficulties of attending an academic conference in the USA; how unlike his colleagues he had to apply for a visa, be interviewed at the US embassy in London and then was detained and interviewed at Atlanta airport. All went well, although the following year, despite applying for the visa in good time, his passport was returned with the visa, one month *after* the conference. Other vignettes describe prison overcrowding and prison work; relationships with other prisoners; how the author recognised one of the prisoners when years later he was researching in HMP Norwich; interaction with the police; and, the aging prison population. The final narrative in the concluding chapter details the facts relating to Earle's conviction.

The book is arguably divided into two parts. The first chronicles the early introduction and later development of convict criminology in the USA and then the origins and experiences of

convict criminology in Europe. The work and experiences of US convict criminologist such as Frank Tannenbaum, Saul Alinsky, John Irwin, George Jackson and Alan Mobley are documented. In Europe Earle traces the influence on convict criminology by academics such as Peter Kropotkin, Louk Hulsman, Michael Davitt, Terence McSweeney, Antonio Gramsci, Victor Serge and Mike Fitzgerald; although the latter never spent any time in prison. These three chapters are interesting and comment on the introduction and rise of convict criminology well.

The second part of the book then covers a number of topics, which although not directly related to the development of convict criminology, are interesting nevertheless. Chapter Five for example looks at the problems and stigma of having criminal convictions and details how the 'spent conviction' provisions in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 have largely been eroded by the Criminal Records Bureau. As Earle argues, 'a criminal record is for life' (p.86). Chapter Six looks at race, class and gender and Chapter Seven focuses on methodologies, epistemologies and ontologies. This latter chapter is important as it documents how convict criminologists with their unique experiences can 'establish a richer dialogue with broader criminological scholarship' (p. 116).

As more 'Learning Together' programmes are taking place in England and Wales, the number of convict criminologists in the UK could soon rise. Such academics are uniquely placed to contribute to criminology in ways which us 'normal' scholars are simply unable to and this book will help with the development of this important field.

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