

Avi Brisman and Nigel South: Green Cultural Criminology: Constructions of Environmental Harm, Consumerism, and Resistance to Ecocide

London: Routledge, 2014, 162 pp.

In the 21st century, based on the critical criminological conviction to defend environment as one of fundamental human rights, green criminology developed and became recognized as a new branch of criminology. Its research agenda is based on its assignment to study the known forms of deviant behaviour against the natural environment. It is interested in the human as the perpetrator of environmental crime, in humans as victims of environmental crime, and in possible prevention methods. On the other hand, cultural criminology deals with the study of convergence of cultural and criminal processes in contemporary social life. It focuses on popular culture constructions of crime and crime control and analyses the dynamics of (mass) media and popular culture. Furthermore, cultural criminology devotes its attention to *“how the lives and activities of criminals and their subcultures, the operations of social control and criminal justice converge in everyday life”* (Brisman & South, 2014: 10). The question, therefore, is whether or not these two criminological directions are related and interested in similar issues.

Green criminology is much more than just a debate on environmental issues: it shares some of its characteristics with critical criminology, “modern” criminology, public criminology, and news-making criminology. Nevertheless, it is important that green criminology has an impact on the creation of politics on environmental issues both within the framework of its work and through its findings and proposals. Thus, criminology of the 21st century should have an intellectual base and a legal space to include all elements of the environment as an inseparable and connected field of expertise. Due to these reasons, South and Brisman believe that cultural criminology shares various common interests with green criminology: therefore, in the present book they emphasize the importance of merging of the two most innovative and developed (critical) criminological studies into *green cultural criminology*.

The book *Green Cultural Criminology* is divided into eight chapters. The first one introduces green criminology as a new direction in criminology, describes its fields of interests in detail, and discusses possible correlations

with cultural criminology. The authors believe the aim of green criminology to defend the environment as one of the fundamental human rights from a critical criminological conviction and to create environmental politics intertwines with cultural criminology from the theoretical and empirical points of view. The goal of the authors is to present green cultural criminology as a new direction in (critical) criminology.

The second chapter, Overview of cultural criminology, very closely presents this branch of criminology to the reader. Brisman and South review the past definitions of cultural criminology (Ferrell, 1999; Ferrell, 2013; Ferrell & Sanders, 1995; Greer, 2009; Hayward & Morrison, 2009; Hayward & Young, 2007; Mooney, 2012; etc.) and summarize that cultural criminology is widespread, dynamic, but sometimes an elusive orientation and perspective focused on (Brisman & South, 2014: 15): *"1) contestation of space; 2) concern for the way(s) in which crime is constructed and represented; 3) interest in transgression and resistance; and 4) consideration of patterns of constructed consumerism."*

In the third chapter, the authors argue that cultural criminologists are already 'practicing' green criminology and present different green fields of cultural criminology (e.g. Broken Windows Theory, graffiti, crime, marginalized groups and urban space, poor and polluted neighbourhoods of ethnic minorities). Furthermore, the fourth chapter focuses on environmental harm as a phenomenon and its construction. Brisman and South emphasize the need that green criminology dedicate a third of its attention to the construction of the environment (i.e., environmental harm and environmental crime). The authors believe that media presentation of the environmental phenomena should receive special attention, especially: 1) the news on true environmental crimes and harms, which are often still not taken seriously enough; and 2) (science)-fictional movie documentaries, which tell a deformed picture about human – environment relationship and can result in fear of environmental crime.

The fifth and sixth chapters talk about contemporary issues of the modern marketing society: consumption, marketing, and consuming nature and the natural as something very essential for human health and happiness. Brisman and South discuss connections between green and cultural criminology from the perspective of the modern capitalist society where the cycle of consumption often includes addiction, cathexis, and enormous amounts of waste. Consequently, we are facing the increase in water deficiency, on one side, and the danger of bottled water sold as a private-owned commodity, on the other. They stress the corporate manipulation of ethical marketing and intentional misleading in order to gain profit. At this point, big companies try to "wrap up" their products in "environmental friendly" labels by using different cultural techniques of neutralization and marketing approaches in order to persuade consumers that they act in accordance with "corporate social responsibility", thus attempting to neutralize consumers' criticism.

The seventh chapter entitled Resistance to environmental harm opens a discussion on possible ways of responding to the damage caused to the environment. The authors try to emphasize the connection between cultural "actions", such as Reclaim the Streets celebrations, Critical Mass riders, Reverend

Billy's "guerrilla theatre", etc., and green criminology. In addition to monitoring corporate and state environmental domination, green criminology should focus on cultural influence and the often-overlooked ongoing forms and rhythms of globalized modern society that often attract the people (i.e., consumers) that are not aware of it. The authors believe that cultural criminology prepared important forays that can even be used as a basic model for green criminology.

The last chapter presents a conclusion and a discussion of possible future directions in the field of this new criminology, green cultural criminology. The authors conclude that it is actually the same if we try to integrate cultural criminology into green criminology or vice versa, because these are already related: cultural criminology is already engaged in environmental issues and concerns, while green criminology has already devoted its attention to the media and the political forces related to presentation of environmental phenomena and informing of the public. They hope that the connection between the two criminological directions will continue and result in a new branch of criminology, green cultural criminology, 'perceptive of and responsive to' emerging cultural environmental issues.

The book *Green Cultural Criminology* represents an excellent contribution to the field of green criminology due to the following reasons: 1) it opens a new possible direction for green (cultural) criminology after a decade of void due to the issues concerning the name and definition of green criminology in the 21st century together with its field of study; and 2) it introduces a new point of view on environmental harm and responses to it. The book is a step forward in the field of (green and cultural) criminology that will bring essential environmental issues closer to society. What is specific in this book is that the authors have invited both sides to participate: the green criminologists to focus more on culture and its impact on the environment, and the cultural criminologists to include studies of cultural dimensions of environmental harm.

At first glance, it may seem to the reader that they have to deal with professional and demanding literature. The examples are so vivid and the discussion so detailed that it is very easy to follow the thoughts of the authors. What is more, this book opens criminologists a new perspective on environmental harm. It is a novelty for criminologists, representing a new direction in criminology concerning environmental issues and opening a new perspective on the culture of the modern society and its behaviour towards the environment. Furthermore, the book can be interesting for those sociologists studying the relation(s) between (human) society and environment, including cultural patterns. Talking about specific (new) criminological direction, the book is, thereby, much easier to read to the people interested in environmental issues and cultural patterns related to nature and contemporary environmental problems and responses. Nevertheless, it can also be very useful to students: as it presents specific perspectives on environmental harm and thereto related issues and criminological directions, we would recommend it for the postgraduate level.

Undoubtedly, a book connecting the most exciting new areas in criminology, green criminology and cultural criminology at this precise moment raises hopes and desires that criminology would be more successful in responding to

environmental harm and solving environmental issues all over the globe. Brisman and South clearly show us that micro and macro levels of human life need to be analysed and included in environmental protection efforts and politics. In the past, (green) criminology put enormous efforts into addressing everything, from individual-level environmental crimes and victimization to business/corporate violations and state transgressions, but at that point success was unfeasible. In *Green Cultural Criminology*, they discovered that green criminology failed to include culture and social habits that can, and do, have an enormous impact on the environment. Therefore, any changes in culture and the behaviours of people towards the environment, also known as raising awareness, present a solution to the protection of our environment. Definitely, this goal will be easier to achieve with the support of green cultural criminological research and the recommended responses.

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