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Special Edition Critical Criminology – Rural Criminology

Intersectionality, Rural Criminology and Re-imagining the Boundaries of Critical Criminology

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One of the significant shortcomings of the criminological canon, including its critical strands – feminist, cultural and green – has been its urbancentric bias (Hogg and Carrington, 2006, Barclay et al, 2007, DeKeseredy and Donnermeyer, 2013; Donnermeyer and DeKeseredy, 2014). To some extent, this is understandable given the influence of Tönnies (1887) explication of the modernisation thesis as the shift from a *gemeinschaft* to a *gesellschaft* form of sociality. In this theoretical model, rural communities are idealised as conforming to the typical *gemeinschaft* society, small-scale traditional societies based on cohesive organic forms of solidarity and close density acquaintance networks (Hogg and Carrington 2006; Donnermeyer and DeKeseredy 2014). Hence, in both criminology and many other fields of social science inquiry is the myth that rural communities are relatively crime free places of ‘moral virtue’ (Lockie, 2000, p. 21); with no need for a closer scrutiny of rural context, rural places, and rural peoples about crime and other social problems. By contrast, crime and disorder are conceptualised as the offshoots of the *gesellschaft* qualities of sociality generated within communities by modernising and urbanising processes.

The emergence and influence of the Chicago school over criminological research agendas for almost a century, which privileged the city as the ideal research laboratory has further cemented the urbancentric bias of criminology today (Bulmer 1984). The assumption that urban culture generates social conflict, disorganisation, and higher rates of

crime and violence has been an article of faith in much of criminological inquiry ever since (i.e., Shaw and McKay, 1942; Nisbet 1970; Felson, 1994; Sampson, 2012).

It is hardly surprising then that crime in rural societies has attracted little scholarly attention until recently, although there are some significant exceptions (Alston, 1997; Barclay, Donnermeyer, Scott and Hogg, 2007; Edwards and Donnermeyer, 2002; Hogg and Carrington, 2006; DeKeseredy and Schwartz, 2009; Donnermeyer and DeKeseredy 2014; Dingwall and Moody, 1999; Garriott, 2011; Mawby and Yarwood, 2011; Phillips and Hundersmarck, 2008; Websdale, 1998; Robertson, Sloboda, Boyd, Beatty and Kozel, 1997; Weisheit, Falcone and Wells, 2006). The articles in this Special Edition add to this growing body of new and theoretically innovative work in critical criminology. We explain why this is important for reinvigorating debates in critical criminology. As well, a collection including both critical and non-critical articles will be published sometime in 2015 by a journal whose focus is almost completely non-criminological, namely, the *Journal of Rural Studies*.

Criss-crossing the Borders of Critical and Rural Criminologies

The impetus for critical criminology emerged at a moment when there was a paradigm shift in the social sciences, traceable to the intellectual and political ferment of 60s and 70s radicalism. Stan Cohen observed that this shift coincided with the rise of the New Left and the counter-culture, the Vietnam war moratorium, anti-racist and anti-colonial struggles, second wave feminism, anti-institutional movements around prisons, psychiatry and other social control institutions, and the renaissance of Marxism and radical social theory in the universities (Cohen, 1998, p. 115). The original contributions to critical criminology during the 1970s roundly condemned the short-comings of a criminology that adopted an uncritical position toward state definitions of crime, silencing the undetected crimes of the rich and powerful (Schwendinger and Schwendinger, 1975), at the same time as

distancing criminology from the power effects entailed in the selective criminalisation of 'disorderly' populations, (the Indigenous, the immigrant and the poor mostly) (Carrington and Hogg, 2002). 'New', 'radical' or 'alternative' were the preferred qualifying labels announcing this break in criminology in its early days. These key shifts in criminological paradigm were no doubt inspired by the National Deviancy Conferences that commenced in the U.K. in 1968 and its seminal texts included the ground-breaking works of Taylor, Walton and Young, *The New Criminology* (1973) and *Critical Criminology* (1975).

Critical criminology in the U.K. and North America have dissimilar academic histories. Although in the late 1960s and early 1970s, some American academic sociologists were radicalized into the New Left, but unlike radical thinkers in the U.K. who managed to establish "powerbases" in various polytechnics, critical scholars in the U.S. rarely gained control over an entire academic department. Where they did achieve this goal - such as at the University of California at Berkeley - the result was more likely the disbanding of the department than the establishment of a beachhead of progressive theory, research, and praxis (DeKeseredy and Dragiewicz, 2014; Schwendinger, Schwendinger, and Lynch, 2008). Unfortunately, critical criminologists in the U.S. have often been forced to "go it alone" because of their operation within repressive political and academic contexts (DeKeseredy and Dragiewicz, 2012).

In Canada, on the other hand, while critical criminology may not be a core component of the broader Canadian criminology curriculum, critical criminologists are much more likely to hold tenured positions at prominent doctoral universities and to have like-minded colleagues in offices next to them. This is due, in part, to the fact that progressive ways of studying and thinking about a host of social problems are highly respected in Canadian sociology departments (DeKeseredy, 2011). Nonetheless, we are witnessing the

birth of a "new Canada," one led by a Prime Minister with sharp disdain for the arts and humanities. As well, the corporatization of universities and colleges is a major threat to critical thinking in both Canada and the U.S. (DeKeseredy, 2013).

Despite being constantly under siege around the world, critical criminology is much stronger now than when Taylor et al. (1973) published *The New Criminology*. For example, the Division on Critical Criminology (DCC) is one of the largest divisions in the American Society of Criminology (ASC). The DCC includes nearly 400 members, which is a 50 percent increase since 1997 (DeKeseredy and Dragiewicz, 2012; MacLean and Milovanovic, 1997). A number of progressive criminology journals, including *Critical Criminology*, are also thriving. Further, a series of monographs on key critical criminological issues (New Directions in Critical Criminology) was instituted by Routedge in 2013, including *Rural Criminology* (Donnermeyer and DeKeseredy, 2014). As well, critical criminologists are frequently elected as officers in major professional organizations and some have received prestigious awards for their contributions to the field. That feminist scholar Joanne Belknap was the President of the ASC at the time of writing this introduction, solid evidence that critical criminology is gaining momentum in the face of rabid right-wing attacks on progressive ideas, people, and policies.

The boundaries drawn around the critical project in criminology shifted little for decades, at the cost of imagining *other* critical criminologies which tended to develop as distinct almost stand alone projects. Chief among these were feminist criminologies, public criminology, left realism, cultural criminology, green criminology, victimology, and rural critical criminology. However, rural critical criminology is arguably the newest of these progressive intellectual enterprises. Even so, we would be remiss not to mention here that

the roots of this school of thought are found in the late William Chambliss' (1964, 1973) seminal study of the original vagrancy laws (Coventry and Palmer, 2008).

Gagne's (1992, 1996) feminist work on rural woman abuse played an important role in sparking contemporary critical interpretations of rural crime and social control. Shortly after came Websdale's (1998) *Rural Woman Battering and the Criminal Justice System: An Ethnography*. Still, the flames did not emerge until the latter part of the the last decade, with the publication of a spate of scholarly books, journal articles and chapters, many of which continued along the feminist path broken by Gagne and Websdale (Donnermeyer and DeKeseredy, 2014). Still, there is plenty of room for additional ways of thinking critically about rural crime, which is one of the key reasons for crafting this special edition of *Critical Criminology*.

This volume marks an exciting turning point in synthesising the above diverse threads of critical, deconstructive and oppositional intellectual projects, into a wider, more inclusive, expansive and empowering intellectual endeavour. The project is broadly intersectionalist in its theoretical approach, as it does not privilege any social determinant in the construction of crime problems. Intersectionality adopts a complex approach to researching how the social ordering of power operates in systems of criminal justice, and of societies in general. These include race, gender, colonisation and class (Burgess-Proctor, 2006, p. 37). While many of those at the forefront of this debate have been feminist criminologists, [i.e. Potter, 2013; Barberet, 2014; Carrington, 2014; Henne and Troshynski, 2013; and Renzetti, 2013], there is no reason why intersectionality cannot apply to research in rural and critical criminology. In this Special Editor's Introduction we sketch the framework for this ambitious intersectionalist project pointing out how the original pieces

published in this volume compliment other innovative research to re-envisioning *Critical Criminology*.

The first article, by Avi Brisman, Bill McClanahan and Nigel South 'Toward a Green-Cultural Criminology of "the Rural"' integrates the innovations of green with cultural criminology. It then sets out an agenda for how this could, and should include topics that previously had been only of interest to rural criminology. This piece builds upon other body of work where the authors have previously sought to bring a cultural dimension to bear on green criminology (Brisman and South 2013, 2014). In their contribution to this special rural edition in *Critical Criminology*, they expand this analysis through a critical reading of Franzen's novel *Freedom* (2010). Their critique highlights 'some of the environmental, political and cultural issues and conflicts with which a rurally-oriented green-cultural criminology might engage'. They argue that the way rurality is represented in this cultural text reproduces the dualistic and overly simplified representations of the rural. Without a doubt, this dichotomisation of representations of rurality has significant ramifications for the way in which crime and violence within a rural context is framed.

John Scott and Dean Biron (2010) also argue that the cultural representations of rurality are important to contest because they reproduce simplistic urbancentric constructions of the rural. Films like *Crocodile Dundee* in Australia, and *Daniel Boone in the U.S.*, romanticise the rural idyll. Rural masculinities embedded in these cultural constructions associate rural men with the enduring qualities of landscape – as tough, rugged and stoic 'sons of the soil' (Carrington and Scott, 2008). The "bush", the "wild west", and other monikers for so-called unsettled areas (by European immigrants) are today romanticised as quintessential national icons, upon which powerful nations, such as Australia, Canada, and the United States were born. The masculinisation of the rural, the

dominance of man and mankind over women and nature, is represented as natural, and unproblematic. This effectively deflects critical attention from the visibility of environmental harms, as Brisman, McClanahan and South point out, such as those encroaching on rural landscapes and communities by mining, the pornification of rural women, and the normalisation of domestic violence. These are just three, but three significant challenges posed by normalisation of the patriarchal domination of rural towns and landscapes (DeKeseredy, Muzzati and Donnermeyer, 2014). Other criminological ramifications of the gender order of rural communities are highlighted by several contributions to this volume, including Sanchez's analysis of hunting and violence against women in rural Ohio, Smith's ethnographic portrayal of female injection users in a rural village of Wales, and Beichner and Rabe-Hemp's examination of the difficulties of rural incarcerated mothers in Illinois returning to their hometown after release from prison.

In stark contrast to the idealisation of rurality, is the horrification of the rural as mysterious places where in-breds, something akin to Lombroso's typology of the born criminal, inhabit a perverted world of cults, drugs, and porn. A repertoire of horror films like *Wolf Creek*, *Deliverance*, *Fargo* (*A lot can happen in the middle of nowhere*) and *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* and Detective genres like *Justified* and *True Detective* (*Touch Darkness and Darkness Touches You Back*) reproduce these urbancentric representations of the rural (at least in Canada, the U.S., and Australia). This is what DeKeseredy, Muzzati and Donnermeyer term the 'horrification of the rural' (2014, p. 179). The rural is mythologised as a strange place where naïve city folk who adventure into rural spaces as tourists or visitors risk ending up as sausage meat (as in *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*). Instead of being idealised, these rural masculinities are represented as 'Mad men in bib overalls', (DeKeseredy, Muzzati and Donnermeyer 2014) who are sexually perverted, backward,

barbaric, grotesque and deranged. They are more dangerous, weird, and strange than the ordinary urban criminal, who in cop shows like *Minder* or *Hustle*, steal to feed a drug habit, or swindle the naïve and the rich, but nothing particularly perverted. The urban criminal calculates and searches for vulnerabilities in victims and the right time to strike without getting caught. Such is the urban milieu, and within the diversity of city life emerges some who make a living through illegal means. But, the rural criminal cannot possibly be anything other than perverse because rural places are safe, moral, crime-free and the “normal” people who grow up and lives there are wholesome and law-abiding.

Scott and Biron (2010) argue these are essentially urbancentric projections of the rural other. For them (Scott and Biron, 2010), the cultural representations of rural horror invert the rural idyll as ‘a source of fear and space of abjection’ (p. 318), and invert the mythologised ‘idyllizations of rural men’ (p, 307) as well. Yet, this horrification of the rural challenges neither the rural as an idyllic place nor social constructs of idyllized rural masculinities because without the *gemeinschaft* qualities of an idealised rural, these polar images are impossible to create. Likewise, the urbancentric myopics of criminology today, with its theoretical obsessions and methodological fixations, becomes more difficult to sustain without a rural mythology which states that such phenomena as violence, environmental harms and degradations, and substance use and trafficking (topics represented in this Special Edition), among other crimes, do not exist outside of a society’s cities and suburbs. When crime’s existence in the rural can no longer be ignored, then the reason must be the diffusion of the urban to the rural (Fischer, 1980) and not possibly anything intrinsic to the essential, idyllic characteristics of the rural.

Consider also that there are class variations to the genre of rural horrification. The classic film in this respect is *Picnic at Hanging Rock* – an Australian film which portrays the

mysterious disappearance of several private school girls from Appleyard College, in Victoria in the summer of 1900. It is as if time stops in the dead heat of the middle of day and the eerie landscape entices these girls into an adventure from which they are consumed and never return. In the process they not only lose their humanity and humility, but perhaps also their virginity and certainly their innocence – one of whom is last seen climbing a rock without her skirt – a heinous violation of femininity for a private middle class school girl. Clues of missing corsets and ripped lace later appear during the scenes for the frantic search. While some of the missing party who dared to adventure to Hanging Rock were later found in states of near death from dehydration, the disappearance of several others remained a mystery, as did the subsequent death of an orphan after being bullied and beaten by an evil head mistress, herself found mysteriously dead at the foot of Hanging Rock. It is as if the landscape is all consuming. The irony is that the casual consumption of the landscape as a place of leisure (a scene reminiscent of a romantic picnic into the quaint English countryside) in Australia, turns into a horror story, where it is the European settlers who are consumed by a landscape they presumed empty.

The concept of 'terra nullius' which means empty continent was used by the British to justify their colonization of Australia. It is similar to the 19th century U.S. ideology of "manifest destiny", which at the time was used to justify both the forceful and illegal expropriation from Native Americans and the Spanish/Mexican territories (representing historically earlier settler societies) of land for territorial expansion and settlement of so-called "wilderness areas". Terra nullius and manifest destiny are convenient mythologies that dispossessed Indigenous populations on both continents of legal ownership to land and rights to citizenship. In *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, it is as if the 'empty' landscape strikes back,

to taunt and haunt the European settlers, to unsettle their confidence in the Anglocentric view of civilisation.

A distinctive feature of settler colonies like Canada, Australia and the U.S. is that the gender order is typically more pronounced at rural than it is in the urban settlements, with fewer women engaged in public office or the politics of the public sphere (Hogg and Carrington, 2006; Tickamyer and Henderson, 2003). How this gender order shapes patterns of masculinity and violence in rural contexts is addressed in this special edition. While these issues have been prominent in the research agendas of the three guest editors, they have been noticeably absent from mainstream criminology, and its critical variants, especially those which tended to romanticise the delinquencies of working class masculinity as a mode of resistance to the social order. Hence another key innovation of this edition of *Critical Criminology* is a focus on how rural masculinities and gender are very much implicated in sustaining cultures of violence in rural spaces.

Amanda Hall-Sanchez's article in this volume is a welcome addition to this innovative critical scholarship. Her article analyzes the prominence of male peer support as a determinant of woman abuse (domestic and sexual violence) in rural Ohio. This piece is confronting and important. It adds to our understanding of how cultural constructions of rural masculinity reinforce and normalise violence against women and other associated abusive behaviours. The study is based on interviews with a dozen women separated from their violent partners. The stories are harrowing. She argues that 'Male peer support in hunting subcultures coupled with the availability and access to 'legitimate' weapons creates a fertile breeding ground for woman abuse in some rural communities.' The research highlights how rituals of performing masculinity in a subculture that worships weapons, hunting, pornography, and patriarchal domination – over nature and women – are formed

centrally around drinking rituals. Other research in rural critical criminology has also pointed to the importance of male drinking practices in the shape and escalation of violence (Carrington et al 2010). At the pub, men's work and drinking performances are heavily scrutinised and open to constant evaluation (Campbell, 2006, p. 97). This is especially so for rural men where drinking practices are integral to policing the performance of masculinity in rural communities where alternative leisure venues are limited (Campbell 2000: 563; Hogg and Carrington, 2006, p. 181).

Hall-Sanchez's contribution adds to the growing body of research conducted over the years and in a variety of places showing that male peer support is one of the most powerful determinants of woman abuse. Data presented by her and others (see DeKeseredy and Schwartz, 2013) support what Lee Bowker (1983, pp. 135-136) said nearly thirty years ago about all-male subcultures of violence:

This is not a subculture that is confined to a single class, religion, occupational grouping, or race. It is spread throughout all parts of society. Men are socialized by other subculture members to accept common definitions of the situation, norms, values, and beliefs about male dominance and the necessity of keeping their wives in line. These violence-supporting relations may occur at any time and in any place.

Cultural representations of gender and rurality are absolutely central to understanding the patterns of criminalisation in rural settings, and communal responses to female offenders. Gender is performed in rural cultural settings that tend to embrace more rigid expectations and stronger delineations between men's and women's activities. Those who violate those more rigid boundaries are susceptible to censure, ostracism and isolation. They are othered and marginalised, and they tend to judge women offenders more harshly than men. This acts as a powerful informal form of social control for policing gendered

performances in rural social contexts. Two articles in this volume aptly illustrate this dynamic. The first is Catrin Smith's article on injecting drug use and the performance of femininity in North Wales. Her study highlights how socially embedded constructions of gender and place restrict the field of performances for appropriately acceptable femininity in rural contexts. Living in a rural community, female drug injecting users face a daily struggle to manage the performance of their femininity. They are 'out of place' – transgressing both gender norms and moral norms of a drug free rural way of life. Avoiding detection by others in the public sphere or community at large, as well as concealing their habit in the private sphere of family and close friends, they carefully seek out 'a space of familiarity and neutrality for themselves and their male partners.'

Dawn Beichner and Cara Rabe-Hemp's contribution to this special edition makes a similar point but with a different subject matter. Their study examined the multiple additional disadvantages faced by mothers who have been incarcerated when they return to rural communities. They note that the bulk of research on women's re-entry into community after prison focuses on housing, poverty, stigma and isolation experienced in urban settings. There has been very little research on these issues for women returning to rural communities, where they are not anonymous, and do not have the advantage of being able to slip back into an urban setting without visibility and intense moral censure. This article fills this void, drawing on interviews with 17 incarcerated women. Beichner and Rabe-Hemp examine these 'rural women's life stories and their narratives about their plans for returning home to their families and communities'. They direct particular attention on the vulnerabilities of this cohort of incarcerated mothers, and how their re-entry into resource starved rural communities is adversely affected a range of structural and

situational factors that restrict their access to work, housing, social support, and successful re-integration.

The problematic delivery of social services to support the victims and offenders in rural communities is a key theme emerging in rural critical criminology. A small body of research has highlighted how a lack of services also adversely affects the victims of domestic violence in rural communities. Findings from these studies indicate that resources and responses to domestic violence tend to be context dependent (La Nauze and Rutherford, 1997; DeKeseredy and Schwartz, 2008, 2009; Rennison, Dragiewicz and DeKeseredy, 2012; Owen and Carrington, forthcoming). Rural victims of woman abuse are faced with making a calculated risk of seeking limited support services which then increases the likelihood of exposure, ostracism and losing support from their personal networks in their local community.

Based on interviews with domestic violence (DV) service providers drawn from two regions of Australia experiencing high rates for domestic violent assault, Owen and Carrington (Forthcoming) argue that the peculiar architecture of rural life shapes domestic violence service provision in several distinctive ways. Firstly, they suggest personal shame attached to being a victim of domestic violence encourages rural women 'to be complicit in remaining silent about their abuse making it difficult for service providers to access clients'. Secondly, they argue that accentuated privacy of intimate relationships in rural communities 'leaves DV victims isolated and further acts to hide DV in rural communities, which again frustrates the objectives of DV service providers'. Thirdly, they illustrate using original case history interviews, that when women do seek external support, 'the tyranny of distance between major service centres and where they lived hampered the effectiveness of DV services'. Lastly, Owen and Carrington conclude that the cultural and structural conditions of

rural life creates distinctive 'obstacles in the implementation of integrated service provision, the model of DV provision adopted in urban settings'.

We have already described how romanticised images of rurality compresses the richness and diversity of rural life into an homogenising template, neglecting the existence of 'other rurals' (Philo, 1997, p. 22). The romanticisation of the rural diverts critical attention from 'other rurals'. Judith Ryder and Robin Robinson in their article, "'Constant violence from everywhere': Psychodynamics of power and abuse amongst rural and small-town youth" reminds us that those who inhabit these 'other rurals' are vulnerable to harassment, violence and other forms of harm. Their study of teen dating uses psychosocial theoretical constructs to explore the 'dynamic processes that underlie behaviors of what we call *youth relational violence*'. They move away from a traditional focus on prevalence to interrogate the 'dynamic processes that underlie power, tolerance of abuse, vulnerability to perpetration and victimization, and degree of attachment as it relates to abuse and power dynamics'. Their approach avoids reducing adolescent masculinity to a set of essential traits associated with risk-taking. Their analysis of otherness in a rural setting is influenced by the psychosocial turn in critical criminology, and illustrates another way that the boundaries between critical criminology and rural criminology should remain open, porous, and complementary.

The psychosocial approach to gender and violence, pioneered by Gadd and Jefferson, takes into account both the inner worlds of anxiety and vulnerability alongside the outer worlds of power and discourse (Gadd and Jefferson, 2007, p. 83). While the pressures of masculinity, power and excitement are present in the commission of violent crimes such as domestic violence, these elements are, according to Gadd and Jefferson, also present in lawful behaviours like football (Gadd and Jefferson, 2007, p. 87). While still a

contentious view, the unpacking of homogenising categories of rural men, bucolic images of rural life, and shifting the focus to particular frailties and vulnerabilities of context contingent violence (such as teen dating), is an innovative direction in critical criminology. This theoretical approach avoids essentialist representations of masculinity as sets of objectified characteristics. Masculinity is instead conceptualised in terms of tactics and performances played out in the context of broader strategic imperatives in particular geo-political and cultural contexts (Carrington and Scott, 2008). For example, how frontier masculinities have been played out in mining communities has become a matter of increasing interest to critical and green criminologists, and almost all of this research comes from studies conducted in rural communities and regions.

While mining has long been recognised as an agent of environmental harm and of interest to green criminologists (Ruggiero and South, 2013; White, 2013a), less recognised is its harmful effects on localised patterns of violence, work and community life in mining towns (Carrington and Hogg, Forthcoming). Australia provides an excellent case study for exploring some of these mining impacts. Carrington, Hogg and Scott undertook a large-scale study of violence in rural Australia. As part of that study they interviewed 142 informants across four case study localities. In those communities undergoing rapid socio-economic change as a result of mining development, alcohol related male-on-male violence emerged as a key theme in interviews with magistrates, police officers, victim support workers, youth workers, and community service and health providers (Carrington et al, 2010; 2011, 2013). One the most significant changes has been an increasing reliance on fly in fly out (FIFO) workers who swell the ranks of the mining workforce, outnumbering local resident male miners. FIFO is also a euphemism for 'Fit in or Fuck off' in mining towns (Carrington et al, 2010) In these frontier settings, rivalry between men who consider themselves the

authentic bearers of frontier masculinity – the quintessential ‘sons of the soil’, and men hired as transient workers for mining companies, can spontaneously erupt into violence. Rivalry over local women, the pool table, the dance floor, and minor intrusions into ‘local space’, are symbolic of the wider spatial invasion of transient mining workers. They are male imposters from the city who do not belong in the bush.

In sociological terms, these transient mining workers are the classic ‘outsiders’ (Becker, 1966; Elias and Scotson, 1994). Violence is one way of enforcing boundaries in the face of sweeping challenges to the traditional power brokers of mining towns where local men are threatened by FIFOs over-running their towns, their pubs, and flirting with their women (Carrington et al, 2010, 2011). Ironically while the conflict at a local level occurs between rival groups of men, the real power to change workforce dynamics, to hire transient FIFO workers, instead of locals, resides with globalised mining companies. The corrosive violence in mining communities is between men whose futures are in the hands of multi-national corporate giants who accept no responsibility for adverse social impacts of employment practices that divide the workforce. The recourse to violence in such contexts, is as Hautzinger (2003) argues, a reaction to sense of a loss of power, rather than an exercise of power.

The article by Tara Opsal and Tara Shelley in this Special Edition, ‘Energy Crime, Harm, and Problematic State Response in Colorado: A case of the fox guarding the hen house?’ represents a welcome addition to the growing research interest on the criminological impacts of resource extraction. This is a topic that connects the concerns of green criminology and rural criminology, with the larger political project of critical criminology that shines a spotlight on corporate harms. Their piece examines ‘the political economy of harm and crime associated with the oil and natural gas industry in rural

Colorado'. Using an innovative mixed methodology, the authors undertook a study of registered complaints about mining companies breaches in the U.S. state of Colorado. They then complimented this study with interviews of those who filed complaints and undertook ethnographic fieldwork in the same location to verify first-hand the 'milky' contaminated water and other harms being complained about. The bulk of the complaints were about environmental harms, including water pollution and adverse health effects on animals and humans. Their analysis 'illuminates how the state documents these practices, how citizens experience them, and how the state dilutes and deflects the externalities of energy extraction to produce crime and harm'. Their study directs attention back to a traditional focus of critical criminology, the power of the state to define criminality, to regulate harm, or to ignore the harms of the rich and the powerful.

Landscapes are powerful cultural symbols. Imaginary rural landscapes are often contested and contradictory. We have already canvassed how on the one hand, these images conjure fear of the abject, mad men in bib overalls, and on the other, adoration of a bucolic countryside, a place of tranquillity and moral virtue. The grotesque, the brutal and the uncivilised violence of the Mafia, that operates its corrupting networks in part from seemingly impenetrable rural havens, is a cultural theme represented over and again in films like *The Godfather*. The article by Baris Cayli in this special edition, 'Renewing criminalized and hegemonic cultural landscapes' is a nuanced ethnographic account of the power of landscape to renew, contest, and reshape social order to bring about positive cultural change. His article provides an account of how the confiscation of lands, once used by the Mafiosi in Southern Italy, has empowered the Libera Terra, a civil organisation, to use these lands 'as a space of cultural repertoire to realize its ideals'. Volunteer labour is deployed to rekindle the landscape, to toil the land for the purposes of good – not evil, to

produce organic wholesome fruit and vegetables and by-products. The transformation of the landscape is symbolic of the wider transformation in the social relations of power and the positive effect of the Libera Terra's resistance to the Mafiosi's hegemony. Baris Cayli's poignant analysis 'sheds new light on the relationship between rural criminology and crime prevention policies in Southern Italy by demonstrating how community development practice of Libera Terra changes the meaning of landscape through iconographic symbolism and ethnographic performance'. This is a thought provoking piece that illustrates how competing images of rurality co-exist and how rescuing the rural from organised crime, such as the Mafia, can have far reaching liberating consequences.

Elsewhere in the rural criminological literature, there has recently emerged research on illegal rural enterprises, including forms of organised crime associated with fraudulent food labelling and other practices that threaten food safety (McElwee, Smith and Somerville, 2011; Smith, 2013). Just as water quality is threatened by fracking and other mining practices, as Opsal and Shelley remind us in this special rural issue, rural criminological scholarship on the role of organised crime syndicates in the production, processing, and distribution of food, as Cayli's work so vividly portrays, is another reminder that an idyllic rural is a false idol, which in the past, has helped prop up mistaken beliefs associated with nearly a century's worth of urbancentric criminology.

The Intersection of Critical and Rural Criminologies

There is an optimism in this analysis that reminds us of Elliot Currie's vision for transformative intervention that nurtures people to move beyond the individualistic, exploitative 'uncaring' cultures that infuse their lives and communities, and to relate differently to the world around them to nurture a less predatory and violent world (Currie, 2013:6). One of the effects of transformative intervention is to enhance the capacity for

critical reflexion and consciousness – or as C Wright Mills put it, to link ‘private troubles’ to with ‘public issues’. Another is to promote solidarity with others, to take responsibility, to support a non-violent world and to counter the rampant individualism that underscores so much violence, and as Currie argues, especially violence against women (Currie, 2013: 8). The third element of transformative intervention is hope. Not blind faith, but hope driven by a desire to make a difference and that joining with others in a common purpose for social change, while not certain or inevitable, is nevertheless worthwhile (Currie, 2013: 9). This ambitious project, like the one we have outlined above, is driven by a ‘criminological imagination’ to think the unthinkable, to represent the unrepresentable, to shift the boundaries and imagine a more just world (Carlen, 2010; Young, 2011).

Clearly, rurality is more than a residual category for all that is non-urban. The diverse patterns of crime and violence in rural settings is illustrative of the ways localised forms of social structure, social norms and related cultural patterns define people’s experience with crime as both offenders and victims. To this end, we wish to remind readers of lessons learned, both old and new, which a rural criminology brings to all variants of critical criminology, with the full recognition that in turn, these lessons are themselves derived from the rich scholarship that is the history of critical criminology.

First, and most obvious, rural people and rural communities have never been and will never be immune from crime. This is what a scattered literature of historical accounts about crime in pre-industrial times tells us (Erikson, 1966; McQuilton, 1993; Roth, 2012; Thompson et al, 1975), and which makes even more remarkable the shift to an urbancentric focus on crime during the 20th century. Clearly, what the accumulated scholarship in rural criminology has now demonstrated is that for certain types of crime, including those discussed in this Special Edition – such as many forms of violence, substance use and

trafficking, and environmental crimes and harms – their occurrence is likely higher in more rural, less urban settings (Hogg and Carrington, 2006; Donnermeyer and DeKeseredy, 2014). And clearly, the occurrence of crime – no matter its type and no matter what official police statistics may say about rural-urban differences in rates at the aggregate level – within the cultural, economic and social contexts of specific rural communities, certain crimes may be very high. Conversely, some types of crime within specific rural communities may be among the lowest of any place, large or small. In other words, rural communities display a kind of variance in expressions of crime which ought to attract the attention of the most committed abstracted empiricists (Young, 2011) in criminological circles. But, as Weisheit, Falcone and Wells observed (2006, p. 14), “studying central-city crime is simply easier than studying crime in rural areas”, in part because the institutions of higher learning and government where criminologists work, including those who take a critical approach to the study of crime, are mostly urban-located. Hence, the Chicago school and an urbancentric criminology!

Second, taken altogether, the seven articles for this special edition show the diversity of rural places, and by doing so, demonstrate an array of rich and deep contexts in which the application of critical criminological theories/perspectives and research can be conducted. We would argue that in many ways rural study sites are better able to reveal the dynamics of power, inequality, sexism, and discrimination – which historically have been the main concerns of critical criminology – because despite their own diversity, rural communities do share one common quality which makes them distinctive from urban centres, which is their smaller size (Donnermeyer and DeKeseredy, 2014). Hence, for many crime and criminal justice issues which represent the core concerns of critical criminologists, a rural milieu may be the better way to go.

Finally, the articles in this special edition demonstrate the growing potential to critique and re-write one of the most influential theories in mainstream criminology, namely the theory of social disorganization and its latter-day version, known as the theory of collective efficacy (Kubrin, 2009; Sampson, 2012). Rural places are contested, refuting the fundamental notion that disorganization and disorder are the roots of crime, a notion, as we mentioned at the beginning of this article, which was also used to criminalise so-called disorderly populations (Schwedinger and Schwendinger, 1975) and objections to which was one of the springboards for the emergence of critical criminology. This is what Cayli's work on hegemonic landscapes about the competing social orders of the Mafioso and and Terra Libra was about.

But rural criminology, in partnership with critical criminology, needs to do more. We contend that it is now time for a "new criminology of crime and place." To the best of our knowledge, there is no well-developed critical perspective on community and crime which provides a comprehensive, alternative to the place-based theories of crime so deeply embedded in assumptions about the urban and the rural which are associated with the Chicago school. These seven rural-located articles show how we might start this new endeavour, because they reveal how power and inequality play out locally and affect people where they live, even though the social and economic forces which underlie them are mostly global in scale.

Concepts/theories in criminology, much like statistics, can themselves become so abstracted so as to lose their connection to reality. For example, patriarchy is more than a convenient word for an endless intellectual analysis of nuanced, conceptual "hair-splitting" in the same style as the now antiquated theorising of Talcott Parsons was once debunked. Patriarchy is a real-life expression of the norms and actions which make many women the

victims of violence at the very places where they live, work, and raise their families, whether those places are a sparsely populated countryside, a sprawling suburb, or a densely packed urban neighbourhood. The same can be said for all variants of critical criminology. Without a critical perspective of place, the realities of context can be lost. A new criminology of crime and place will help keep both critical criminology and rural criminology firmly anchored in the sociological – and by extension, criminological – imagination of C.W. Mills, William Chambliss, Stan Cohen, the Schwendingers, Ian Taylor, Jock Young, and Paul Walton, and all those other great critical minds on whose proverbial shoulders we stand upon today.¹

Endnote

¹Our concluding sentence intended to recognize those pioneers in critical criminology who recently passed away and who we cited in this editors' introduction for the Special Issue on Rural Criminology in this journal. We also note the recent passing of others who built the scholarly foundations of critical criminology upon which we all benefit today, including Stuart Hall, Barbara Hudson, Geoffery Pearson, and Mike Presdee.

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