
CRIMINOLOGICAL THOUGHT

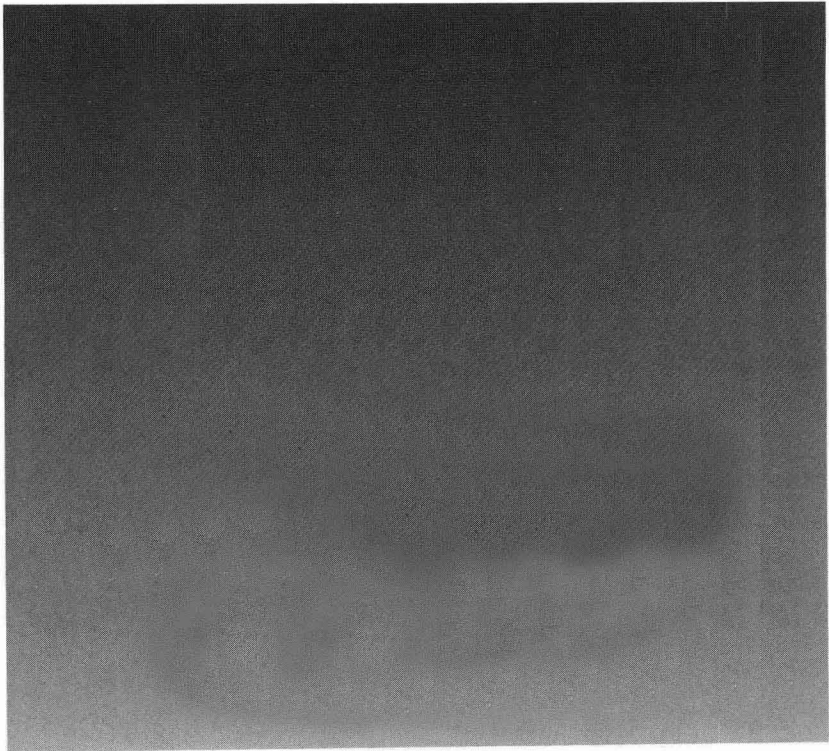
PIONEERS PAST AND PRESENT

RANDY MARTIN
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Macmillan Publishing Company
New York

Editor: Christine Cardone
Production Supervision: Publication Services, Inc.
Text Design: William F. Frost
Cover Design: Blake Logan

This book was set in Else Light by Publication Services, Inc.

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a division of Macmillan, Inc.

Printed in the United States of America

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Macmillan Publishing Company
866 Third Avenue, New York, New York 10022

Collier Macmillan Canada, Inc.

Photo credits: p. 2—public domain; p. 20—Courtesy of the Library of Congress; p. 46—Courtesy of Bettmann Archives; p. 66—Courtesy of Sigmund Freud Copyrights, Ltd.; p. 92—Courtesy of The University of Chicago Archives; p. 118—Courtesy of Holt, Rinehart & Winston; p. 138—Courtesy of Indiana University Press; p. 178—Courtesy of Mrs. Martha Reckless; p. 206—Photo by Sandra Still; p. 238—Courtesy of A. Cohen; p. 260—Courtesy of Harvard Law Art Collection; p. 298—Photo by Elliot Mishler; p. 320—Courtesy of Dryden Press; p. 348—Photo by Roslyn Banish; p. 378—Courtesy of R. Quinney.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Martin, Randy, 1956—

Criminological thought : pioneers past and present / Randy Martin,
Robert J. Mutchnick, W. Timothy Austin.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographies and index.

ISBN 0-02-376501-1

1. Criminologists—Biography. I. Mutchnick, Robert J.
II. Austin, W. Timothy. III. Title.

HV6023.M37 1990

364—dc20

89-34737
CIP

Printing: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Year: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

*Dedicated to
Debbie, Shawna, Lane
Evelyn, Kathryn, Sarah
Betty*

Introduction

To the Reader

When individuals decide to write a book, they often do so for a wide variety of reasons. Some of these are readily apparent and some are not so obvious. All of the individuals involved in the writing of this book have taught theory classes both in the field of criminology and in their degree-specific disciplines. Each has, in discussion with the others, admitted some dissatisfaction with the books currently available. In the spirit of academic discussion it was suggested, “Why don’t we write a book that would fill this void?” After further deliberation, it was agreed that an attempt would be made to bring together those ideas and people who we believed were instrumental in the understanding and development of criminological thought.

In undertaking this project, we want to provide the reader the opportunity to get to know something about the people who have helped shape the discipline and have influenced our thinking about criminal behavior. It is our belief that knowledge of these pioneers will enhance our understanding of their theories and key ideas. By placing all of this within a historical context, the interaction between the evolution of human philosophical and scientific thought and the specific content of criminology should become more clear.

This book is also somewhat unusual in that it is a complete collaboration. Each of us has contributed to the development of this work at every step of the process. What the reader will discover in the following pages represents the combined efforts of three individuals who have come to criminology via different routes. Our degrees represent the disciplines of psychology, criminology, and sociology. Each of us has brought to this book his own perspective on the developments of criminological thought. It is our expectation that through an integration of different backgrounds and orientations we can contribute to an understanding of the development of key ideas and theory in criminology. Also, through our own preferences and interests, we have taken a holistic approach that allows us to introduce several pioneers not traditionally discussed in criminology texts. In addition, we have taken a new look at some of the old standards.

In determining the contents for this book, we compiled a list of forty people whom we believed represented the majority of pioneers in criminological thought, both past and present. The process of pruning the list to only the fifteen who appear here was difficult and painful. In fact, one could argue that the names that ended up on the “cutting room floor” could also constitute a fruitful study. Nonetheless, the list of individuals included in this book, in our opinion, can be regarded as representative of the significant writers and thinkers in criminology.

Although the work of most of our subjects can be found summarized in other works, this book follows a rather specific and original format for scrutinizing the contributors. Each of the fifteen presentations is organized around five subheadings. The first subheading is the “Biographical Sketch.” We strongly believe that this aspect of these eminent writers has been glossed over in other texts. Accordingly, a careful, personal, and historical discussion enables the reader to comprehend more easily the pioneer’s individual contributions within the overall chronology of the discipline. The fact, for example, that Cesare Lombroso and Charles Darwin were contemporaries, or that Sigmund Freud’s deterministic theory was an outgrowth of the positivistic movement, become critical points in understanding the contributions of these pioneers. At times the stage setting is as important as the characters themselves.

Second, each chapter provides the reader with a synopsis of the pioneer’s “Basic Assumptions.” These assumptions refer to the fundamental concepts, or principles, that provide the foundations for how each pioneer looks at the world. For some of these pioneers, as in the case of Cesare Beccaria, such basic assumptions will be more straightforward and highly documented. For others, this particular aspect of the presentation will be more obscure and challenging, but certainly no less important.

The third subheading of each presentation pertains to the “Key Ideas” of the pioneers. It is at this juncture that a discussion will be offered of the pioneer’s major contributions to criminology. In some cases the reader will find the contributor’s lifeworks focused primarily on criminology, as exemplified by the writings of Edwin Sutherland and William Sheldon. More often, however, the major writers have not been discipline specific, and in some instances, they have been only indirectly or marginally concerned with criminology—with an impact not fully realized. This can undoubtedly be said of a pioneer such as Erving Goffman.

Fourth, a part of each presentation will be discussed under the subheading “Critique.” An important aim of this text is to offer the reader a succinct review of criticism and support directed toward the pioneers over the years. It becomes apparent that any writers who are farsighted enough to create significant breakthroughs in the discipline must by the same token be prepared to submit their key ideas to careful examination. Consequently, influential writers and their works are subjected to scrutiny by their contemporaries as well as by subsequent pioneers who have further advanced the ideas of these earlier scholars.

If one is working from the assumption that science is a process of critical analysis, then no apology need be made if several pioneers are found to have as their primary contribution the stimulation of others to question and challenge. Therefore, the history of criminology, not unlike other sciences, may be seen as a long series of critical dissections and fault finding. We often reach a point, as in the case of Cesare Lombroso, where a most prominent pioneer is rarely lauded for his original findings but is much praised for his methodology. Likewise, William Sheldon is often scoffed at for insisting, even into the 1950s, that causal links exist between body type and temperament. Nevertheless, his work has provided a stepping-stone, frequently through peer review, which allows one to understand more clearly the continuum between biological and social determinism. Moreover, the reader will find that the pioneers are not immune to active debate, as can be seen in the presentations regarding Sigmund Freud, Cesare Beccaria, or the conflict theorist Richard Quinney.

The “Reference” and “Bibliography” sections of each presentation form the fifth and sixth subheadings and should be seen as integral parts of the text. Although the book does not pretend to be encyclopedic, it logically directs the reader to appropriate related works. Furthermore, a complete name and subject index is provided at the end of the book.

The book is organized around two separate tables of contents. The first shows fifteen main pioneers as roughly representing four historic periods,

based on the time of their greatest impact. Part I (Pre-Twentieth Century) guides the reader to contributors beginning with Cesare Beccaria in the mid-eighteenth century to Emile Durkheim, who was widely published at the turn of the twentieth century. Part II (Early Twentieth Century) takes the reader from Emile Durkheim to about 1930. Sigmund Freud, Robert Park and Ernest Burgess are representatives of this period. Part III (Middle Twentieth Century) extends through the Second World War era and is characterized by contributors such as William Sheldon, Walter Reckless, and Edwin Sutherland. Part IV (Late Twentieth Century) shows an impressive period, with a variety of pioneers making inroads during the productive post-World War era of the 1950s. This section includes discussion of such modern-day pioneers as Erving Goffman and Albert Cohen.

A second table of contents allows the reader to trace the major ideas of criminology by focusing first on a particular theoretical perspective or conceptual scheme. For example, one may follow the emergence of what has become known as the classical school of thought in criminology by exploring the development of law and justice in the midst of social contract writers of eighteenth-century Europe. Or, should the reader wish to examine the rise of scientific criminology, a variety of pioneers are appropriately outlined under the heading of positivism. Finally, specialized approaches to the study of criminology may be inspected by concentrating on such major issues as learning theory, psychocriminology, or ecological schemes.

As with every project of this nature, this one could not be accomplished without the support of a multitude of individuals. We would like to thank Howard Becker, Albert Cohen, Robert Merton, Lloyd Ohlin, Richard Quinney, and Gresham Sykes for providing us with valuable information that helped us prepare their chapters. In addition, we want to acknowledge the materials on Walter Reckless provided by Mrs. Martha Reckless and Simon Dinitz of Ohio State University. James Byrne of the University of Lowell assisted by providing materials on Richard Quinney, while Yves Winken of Université de Liege provided materials on Erving Goffman. The following reviewers should be acknowledged for their helpful comments:

Dave Camp	Georgia State University
Gray Cavender	Arizona State University
James B. Halstead	University of South Florida
AnnMarie Kazyaka	Temple University
Randall Sheldon	University of Nevada
Fred Snuffer	West Virginia State College

A special thanks to our editor at Macmillan, Chris Cardone, and her assistant Mary Sharkey for their faith in our project and their help in bringing it to fruition.

Finally, we would like to recognize Indiana University of Pennsylvania for bringing us all together as faculty in the Department of Criminology. Without this serendipitous occasion this book would most likely not have been written.

RANDY MARTIN
ROBERT J. MUTCHNICK
W. TIMOTHY AUSTIN

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