THE PHRONESIS OF CONSERVATION CRIMINOLOGY PHRASEOLOGY: A GENEALOGICAL AND DIALECTICAL NARRATIVE

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ABSTRACT

During the last decade natural resource crime and criminality have received growing attention from criminological scholars. There remains, however, a spirited subterranean and unresolved debate regarding the most appropriate nomenclature/diction to portray this form of crime and its study. Varying views exist among criminological scholars regarding the most appropriate terminology to describe the study of crime in the natural resource arena which has, over the years, produced somewhat of a semantical farrago. It appears therefore that the time is ripe to interrogate this issue more methodically in an attempt to lobby criminological scholars and conservation protagonists alike to galvanise behind one cognate indicator that passes onomastical muster. An apposite truism attributed to Socrates, which can be related to the issue at hand, was in fact: "Η αρχή της σοφίας είναι ο καθορισμός των *όρων", literally translated as "The beginning of wisdom is the definition of terms", encapsulating the intrinsic thrust of this narrative. In order to probe this linguistic issue and ruminate on its constituents, it was deemed prudent to seek guidance from the wisdom of certain ancient Hellenic philosophers, the prominent Spinozian, Gilles Deleuze, the Cartesian and father of modern Western philosophy, René Descartes, as well as customary English language conventions. In the form of a four-pronged alliance these resources were marshalled to underscore and unravel the present-day diachronic dichotomies and, to a certain extent, resolve the ossifying impasse. An attempt is made to dispel the factoids and ersatz definitions/terminology permeating the criminological discourse in relation to the study of natural resource crime and criminality, to wit, green, environmental and ecological criminology. Moreover, a case is made for*

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the recognition and entrenchment of an unambiguous sub-field of study, namely conservation criminology.

INTRODUCTION

Various terms have, over the years, been used to denote study in the field of natural resource crime and criminality, most notably, *environmental* criminology, *green* criminology, and *ecological* criminology. This has, however, realised somewhat of a terminological quandary in so much as the ensuing lexicon or mode of communicating is, it is submitted, incapable of accurately accounting for the temporal, spatial and physical particularities of the crime phenomenon.

This article challenges the undeniably over-complicated, ambiguous and often tendentious diction currently being used to describe the study of crime in the environmental arena. It supports simplifying, or altogether eliminating, the dialectic artefacts that the study of this crime phenomenon has spawned in an attempt to promote the acceptance of a univocal definition/terminology (*conservation crime/criminology*) and understanding of crime study in the natural resource remit. In order to engage this issue comprehensively ancient Greek philosopher wisdom was, amongst others, winnowed from the literature and applied in an adjudicator type role.

With reference to the significance of said wisdom, Strathern (2012a: 81) appositely states that:

> Without philosophy, which began in ancient Greece and for centuries retained its distinctive Greek character, we would not be as we are today. We would have no science, and the attempt to arrive at truth of any sort would remain largely a matter of fantasy and whim.

In the same vein, Descartes (Cottingham & Stoothoff 2009: 177; Strathern 2012b: 19), who was influenced by Greek intellectuals such as Plato and Aristotle, is known to have proffered in his oeuvres that:

> The aim of our studies should be to direct the mind with a view to forming true and sound judgements about whatever comes before it.

Ancient Greek philosophical wisdom, partnered for the sake of tenability and espousal in this paper, by other acumen, can quite conceivably provide the innovation required to retool the circulating vexatious semantics, and bring the terminological scrimmaging and casuist linguistic aspersions, so evident in this field of study, to a head. By combining selected sagacious pronouncements and language rudiments, a well-supported argument can be offered in order to arrive at a conclusion that is buoyed by reasons and can be explained and defended. Through this process a toll-free and widely accepted diction can be vouchsafed which will, potentially at least, be beneficial to everyone (both man and beast, so to speak).

In order to logically evaluate the current semantical bugbear and address the vexing questions surrounding it, it was considered useful to model the enquiry technique around certain stratagems ascribed to Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, Descartes and Deleuze. Socrates' technique entailed the development of a method of negatively aggressively questioning the so-called dialectic, the forerunner of *logos*, (λόγος) which Socrates used in conversation to cut through the twaddle of his adversaries and arrive at the truth (Strathern 2012a: 7). Consonant herewith, and based on the context of Deleuze's reasoning, Halsey (2006: 27) volunteers that "History progresses not by negation and the negation of negation, but by deciding problems and affirming differences". Furthermore, in evoking Descartes, Cottingham and Stoothoff (2009: 31) as well as Strathern (2012b: 12) advance that by employing a method called hyperbolic/metaphysical doubt (also sometimes known as methodological scepticism) dubious ideas are rejected and then re-established in order to acquire a firm foundation for genuine knowledge. By implication, therefore, reason and sagacity are the only reliable methods of attaining knowledge, an attitude that has continued to dominate philosophy until comparatively recently. Reflection on language is really the only way to gain insight into its nature and function in humanity. Jowett (in Finlayson & Slabbert 2008:11) quotes the following extract from Plato's *Cratylus Dialogue*, the second half of which strongly supports the abovementioned assertions:

> Socrates: To say that names which we do not understand are of foreign origin - this is very likely the true answer, and some of them may be foreign words; but also the original forms may have been lost in the lapse of ages; names have been so twisted in all manner of ways, that I should not be surprised if the old language were to appear to us now to be quite like a barbarous tongue.

Semantical miscalculations have quite apparently been made with regard to inaugurating the study of natural resource crime and criminality. Fortuitously, however, they appear for the most part to have been made benevolently. These inaccuracies, with the greatest respect to their originators, cannot be allowed to perpetuate or propagate further semantical fabrications. Terms as well as words, and by implication definitions (as will be shown in this paper), are of cardinal importance generally, but even more so in the criminal justice community where a high degree of precision and perspicacity can be regarded as a prerequisite.

DO TERMS OR WORDS MATTER –WHAT'S IN A NAME?

It is quite ironic that words, which are normally used to communicate, can also be used to deceive and fool people or to convey subtle, sometimes inexact, messages. In this regard a discussion of the natural resource lexicon should not be viewed as a mere linguistic exchange, but as an issue that cuts to the very heart of the semantical debate. Naming is far from being a neutral or simple process. Instead naming really does matter, not least because names levy effects (and identities). Names either preclude or invite particular kinds of potentials, capacities and juxtapositions of bodies (Halsey 2006: 2).

In concert herewith and based on the context of Socrates' reasoning, Roberts (1924: 1508) opines that one term may describe a thing more truly than another, may be more like it and set it more intimately before our eyes. Besides, two different words will represent a thing in two different lights; so on this ground also one term must be held more valid than fairer or fouler than another.

According to Bremer (1987: 248) for Socrates, for Plato, and indeed for Aristotle, language (and by implication words) is the realm between sensible things and ideas, the connecting kingdom between particulars and universals − to understand go first to the words used to name and describe and discuss what you seek to understand. Hear what is commonly said, for somewhere in what is commonly said, in the received opinions, what is sought is to be found (Bremer 1987: 248). In Plato's *Cratylus* he in fact agrees with Socrates' statement that "the correctness of a name consists in displaying the nature of the thing it names" (Plato's *Cratylus* 2006: 1). Taylor (1966: 78), in support of this sentiment, avers that the main subject of the *Cratylus Dialogue* is the use and function of language, with less emphasis on natural appropriateness and more on functional appropriateness − precisely what is being argued for in this paper.

Emphasising, and to some extent consolidating what has been stated above, is Descartes' ontological or *a priori* argument, the essence of which is that a truth can be arrived at without any observations of the world - it is the logical connection between ideas. If you understand the words involved, you know the claim is true (Descartes' ontological argument 2011: 1). Perhaps somewhat precipitately to the actual discussion of the terms being used to designate the study of crime and criminality in the natural resource remit below, the following serves as a case in point. The traditional idea/ understanding of environmental criminology is that it relates specifically to the study of the spatial distribution of crime and allied issues. Within criminological circles the term environmental criminology is a logical and venerable referral to the study of such zoning and distribution of crime, not to the study of crime involving natural resources per se. Environmental criminology, as a concept incorporating crime zoning, spatial distribution and geographies of crime within the criminological vocabulary, can thus be regarded as *a priori* knowledge.

Cognisant of the foregoing sentiments, the question now arises how to determine which terms or words are most appropriate to define and describe the study of crime in the natural resource arena. The common lexicon used to describe the study of natural resource crime has over time developed many strands and permutations. These dichotomies have, it is submitted, arisen due to the lack of scientific register in this arena. They need to be imploded if we are to unite behind a criminology that genuinely means to interrogate natural resource and allied issues and not burden this unique concept with anecdotal semantical tangents.

Since considerable semantical disparity exists, and is being perpetuated, it could well be argued that this state of affairs is reflective of the disconnectedness among criminological scholars' ontology in relation to this particular semantical issue and/or

field of study. According to Roberts (1924: 160), Socrates, in pointing out the difference between obscurity and goal in style in a sentence, asserted that "one should call things by their own special names and not by vague general ones and avoid ambiguities, unless, you definitely desire to be ambiguous".

Socrates (Guthrie 1971: 429-30) proclaims further in this regard that "the meaning of a common name is whatever all things to which the name is applied have in common. The name is defined by the things to which it is applied and then examining them to discover what it is they have in common, and which distinguishes them from all things bearing other names". Names/terms/words can, therefore, be regarded as instruments that bring certain objects or concepts to the fore whilst repositioning (sometimes erroneously) the prominence of others. Deleuze (1990: 284) echoes the above sentiments by stating the following:

> As soon as we name or designate something or someone, on the condition that this is done with the necessary precision and above all the necessary style, we denounce as well: we remove the name or rather cause the multiplicity of the denominated to rise up under the same name, we divide, we reflect the thing, we give under the same name, many objects to see, just as seeing gives, in a glance, so much to speak about.

Crystallising from the foregoing passages is the fact that there needs to be congruity between words and actions, between words and ideas, and also between ideas and deeds. The vernacular, and sometimes interchangeable, use of the term *environmental, green* or *ecological* criminology seems very much to be *de rigueur* among criminological cognoscenti, but regrettably does not auger well for the future. These over-coded signifiers erroneously project a very particular series of (skewed) imaginings and serve to partition and enervate the criminological discourse. To define environmental, ecological or green criminology as the criminological study of natural resource and/or allied Gaia issues, is hence fundamentally flawed and imprudent. In saying this, considerable credence is afforded to Socrates' dictum regarding wisdom and definitions mentioned at the commencement of this article.

ANCIENT HELLENIC PHILOSOPHER PRONOUNCEMENTS

Having already alluded to some truly thought-provoking maxims by ancient Greek philosophers, the following rendition is regarded as pivotal in probing, and arriving at a potential solution, to the semantical issue at hand. Strathern (2012a: 224) relates how Socrates' dialect proved decisive:

> [t]hat his controversial method almost certainly dictated the literary form of Plato's great dialogues, but its effect on philosophy is difficult to exaggerate. Socrates' method of analyzing a subject was the first significant use of reason for its own sake in philosophy. He would begin by asking his adversary to define the subject under discussion - which might be anything from the nature of justice to the method of becoming a general. Whether sublime or ridiculous, the subject was given the same treatment. This was the great innovation of the dialectic; it was a tool

> that could be applied to anything. Having elicited a definition of the subject, Socrates would then proceed to pick holes in it, and in the process a better definition would be achieved. In this way he advanced from particular examples to those with more general application, finally arriving at the universal truth.

In a somewhat similar vein Roberts (1924: 625), quoting an example of word choice by Aristotle, enunciates that:

> [I]n accordance with the rule of coordinate terms and inflexions of the same stem, what is true of one such related word is true of all. Thus if the action qualified by the term 'brave' is more noble and desirable than the action qualified by the term 'temperate' then 'bravery' is more desirable than 'temperate' and being 'brave' than being 'temperate'.

In relation to determining the most appropriate moniker for the study of natural resource crime and criminality, the application of Socrates' reasoning reveals a number of semantical shortcomings in the present diction and can, therefore, assist in building a case for a revitalised and apposite definition/terminology.

Further supporting the abovementioned sentiments are sections of Plato's *Cratylus*, which principally concerns itself with the correctness of names, and whether a given name (or word or phrase) is the correct one for denoting a given thing (Plato's *Cratylus* 2006: 1). Since an exhaustive discussion of the *Cratylus* would exceed the capacity of this narrative, only immediately applicable pronouncements are extracted from the work and presented here. According to Plato, "words cannot be attached in a merely arbitrary way to their objects, but are encoded descriptions of them" (Plato's *Cratylus* 2006: 2). Plato goes on to profess that "Names, if correctly made, cannot be randomly adopted, but on the contrary need to be expertly made for their specific purpose". It, therefore, becomes clear when applying these pronouncements to the issue at hand that the term environmental criminology was expertly, and initially, made and encoded, to describe the study of crime and criminality in a context other than that relating to the study of natural resource crime. The term, it appears, was then arbitrarily adopted by certain authors without regard to the meaning originally apportioned to it, removing it from the niche for which it was expertly crafted in the first place. As a closing word on the matter Plato, in his wisdom, puts the following etymological principle in the mouth of Socrates, which is particularly relevant to this paper and its inherent argument (Plato's *Cratylus* 2006: 6), namely:

> It is a familiar fact that when a name is created it is normally descriptive of what its object is, and likewise the original name-makers will have encoded in their products their own insights - some better, some worse - into the natures of the things they were naming.

DESCARTES' CONTRIBUTIONS

Notwithstanding the wisdom of the sages cited above, Descartes makes equally thought-provoking contributions towards potentially settling the current semantical scrimmage. According to Cottingham and Stoothoff (2009: 374), Descartes is to have stated:

> If after intuiting a number of simple propositions we deduce something else from them, it is useful to run through them in a continuous and completely uninterrupted train of thought, to reflect on their relations to one another, and to form a distinct and, as far as possible, simultaneous conception of several of them. For in this way our knowledge becomes much more certain, and our intellectual capacity is enormously increased.

In applying this tenet to the semantical quandary at hand, it becomes clear that to treat the various general terminologies being pandered about (in relation to the study of natural resource crime and criminality), as if they were unqualified universals with no exceptions, would be to invest them with significance and rigour they were never intended to bear. Furthermore, by allowing these semantical artefacts to propagate, people will gradually come to have complete faith in them, indiscriminately mixing them up with those which are in fact true and evident. A further contribution by Descartes that can be considered relevant to this narrative relates to the two ways in which knowledge of things can be arrived at. According to Cottingham and Stoothoff (2009: 200), Descartes is to have proclaimed the following:

> We must note that while experiences of things are often deceptive, the deduction or pure inference of one thing from another can never be performed wrongly by an intellect which is in the least degree rational, though we may fail to make the inference if we do not see it. In fact none of the errors to which men are liable is ever due to faulty inference; they are due only to the fact that men take for granted certain poorly understood observations, or lay down rash and groundless judgements.

Here the previously mentioned case in point, in which the term environmental criminology was used, can be revisited to indicate how Descartes' assertion can be applied to the issue at hand. Since the term environmental criminology was formulated, and has traditionally been used to denote the study of crime patterns, the spatial distribution of crime and so forth, then surely the logical inference to be drawn is that the unmodified use thereof to describe another criminological concept could lead to confusion and misinterpretation. In the light of this argument it would appear that those advocating the term environmental criminology (to describe the study of natural resource crime and criminality) have failed to make the requisite inference/s that Descartes alludes to, and have seen fit to pen impetuous renderings as will be shown in the subsequent sections of this treatise.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS

In addition to the philosophical renderings of ancient Greek sages, clinical English language conventions can also assist in determining the most appropriate word/term to use in relation to a particular concept. It can, quite frankly, in many instances be pivotal in assessing and distinguishing between what is acceptable praxis and what is not. Linguistics is the scientific study of language (Collins Concise Dictionary 2001: 862), and basically entails what the source or sender expresses, communicates, or conveys in their message to the observer or receiver, and what the receiver infers from the current context. It will be shown that in the diction under scrutiny the messages being broadcasted are to say the least ambiguous, confusing and somewhat disingenuous, as no clear understanding is (or can be) shared by all.

Ambiguity means the possibility of interpreting an expression in more than one way, vagueness or uncertainty of meaning (Collins Concise Dictionary 2001: 43). Since the current context in which the terms under scrutiny are being used may lead to different interpretations and connotations, their usage cannot, it is submitted, be regarded as being effectual or pragmatic and can therefore, at most, be considered language artefacts.

Pragmatics is the study of how context affects meaning (Collins Concise Dictionary 2001: 1178). Of particular importance to the current discourse is situation context, which refers to every non-linguistic factor that affects the meaning of a phrase. An example of situation context can be seen in the phrase "it's cold in here", which can either be a simple statement of fact or a request to turn up the heat, depending on, among other things, whether or not it is believed to be in the listener's power to affect the temperature. By the same token the phrase "environmental criminology is important" can either be interpreted as referring to the importance of the study of natural resource crime, or that the study of environmental crime (spatial planning/geographies of crime) is important - two entirely different concepts. Environmental crime and crime against the natural environment are thus two fundamentally dissimilar concepts. Different individuals will interpret the statement differently, which means that it is fallacious and not being correctly and/or uniformly applied.

Semantics is the study of how meaning is conveyed through signs and language (Collins Concise Dictionary 2001: 1367). Linguistic semantics focuses on the history of how words have been used in the past. This is particularly important to the issue under scrutiny as it will be argued that the historical use of the words *environmental/ green/ecological* criminology denotes something entirely different to that which they are currently being used to portray.

It is, therefore, clear that language allows information to be conveyed even when the specific words used are not known by the reader or listener. People connect words with meaning and use words to refer to concepts. A person's intentions clearly affect what is meant. In the ensuing sections the various semantical derivatives currently being used to refer to the study of crime and criminality in the natural resource realm will, permeated by various wisdoms elaborated on above, be critiqued.

TOWARDS A VIABLE AND INTUITIVE DICTION

The ensuing section unpacks the minutiae of the semantical dilemma currently being scrutinised. The pursuit is infused with the wisdoms articulated previously and should be regarded as seamlessly informing them as a whole. Although this dialectical issue is contemporary, it is in dire need of resolution before it no longer has the freshness to conjure up vivid images or becomes jaded and moribund. Only when conservationists, criminologists and the criminal justice system acknowledge the inimitability of terminology and entrench an unambiguous conservation criminology vocabulary, can they together embrace a new and more effective paradigm for the study of natural resource crime and criminality.

ENVIRONMENTAL CRIMINOLOGY

One of the most common terms currently used to describe criminological enquiry into the field of natural resources is *environmental criminology*. The word environmental as used here is chiefly flaunted as meaning the study of environmental (natural resource) crime/damage and ecological justice as well as indiscretions against the natural environment, humans, eco-systems and animals. This particular concept and its understanding have, however, disgorged a stream of rhetorical and titular derivatives, such as, ecological criminology, green criminology and even heritage crime and wildlife crime, all ostensibly directed at studying roughly the same thing. This clearly indicates that there are considerable semantical vicissitudes surrounding the crime phenomenon and that this milieu is very much in flux.

At first glance use of the term environmental criminology − to describe the study of crime and criminality in respect of natural resources and allied environmental issues − does not seem to be out of the ordinary. Upon deeper investigation, however, a totally different picture emerges. The term environmental criminology is ironically one that has customarily been used to describe an entirely different form of crime study. A number of definitions exposing the original meaning of the term environmental criminology by several authors, serve as a proof positive hereof.

Wortley and Mazerolle (2011: 1) state that environmental criminology is in fact a generic label that covers a wide range of overlapping perspectives, at the core of which its various strands are bound by a common focus on the role that the immediate environment plays in the performance of crime, and a conviction that careful analyses of these environmental influences are the key to the effective investigation, control and prevention of crime. Wortley and Mazerolle (2011: 14) state further that terrorism, internet fraud, internet child pornography, organised crime and smuggling of immigrants are just some of the problems to which environmental criminology and crime analysis have been applied in recent years.

Environmental criminologists examine the place and the time when the crime happened. They are interested in land usage, traffic patterns and street design, and the

daily activities and movements of victims and offenders. Environmental criminologists often use maps to look for crime patterns, for example, using metric topology (Verma & Lodha 2002: 9).

The Sage Dictionary of Criminology directs readers seeking clarity about environmental criminologies to sections dealing with the Chicago School of Sociology, Geographies of Crime and Social Ecology (Herbig & Joubert 2006: 93).

Burke goes on to record that the contemporary field of environmental criminology includes studies of the spatial patterning of crime at different levels of aggregation; the journey to crime, or the processes by which the potential offenders recognise prospective crime sites and specific opportunities; and the creation and maintenance of areas of criminal residence (2009: 234; 2014: 281). Moreover, environmental criminology has significantly informed crime mapping and analysis, which have become increasingly central to the work of the police service and analogous agencies during the last 30 years (Burke 2014: 284).

Environmental criminology, proclaims Wang (2005: 7), is a field of study interested in the interactions between criminals and the physical environment that surrounds them, focusing specifically on the places where crime occurs and the characteristics of those places.

According to South (in Herbig 2008: 29), the term "environmental" within criminology is still principally employed in studies of "place" and the spatial patterning of crime. The focus is, therefore, on understanding the criminal event and how it relates to individual motivation, to victims and targets, and to the legal, social, psychological, and social milieu. Cohen and Felson (1979: 587) moreover maintain that geographical profiling has its scientific basis in environmental criminology and, more specifically, in routine activity theory and crime pattern theory.

Rossmo (1995: 218) is of the opinion that research in this area represents a practical application of criminological theory to the real world of police investigation. Brantingham and Brantingham (1998: 31) maintain further that the crime setting or place, the "where and when" of the criminal act, makes up the fourth dimension of crime, which is the primary concern of environmental criminology. The roots of this perspective lie in human ecology, Jeffery's bio-social learning approach and Hirschi's social control theory. By reversing the reasoning and logic of these theoretical models, it may be possible to predict the most probable location of a criminal's residence (Rossmo 1995: 219).

Braga (in Wartell & Gallagher 2012: 377) maintains that environmental criminology involves examining how opportunities for crime vary in space and time. Consonant herewith Wartell and Gallagher (2012: 384) state that environmental criminology has introduced explicit theories of criminal opportunity that can be used to explain how and why an offender identifies targets as well as how crimes can be prevented. Wellsmith (2010: 133) points out that there is often confusion surrounding the term environmental criminology as it is frequently understood to focus on the role of environments, situations

and opportunity, so much so that she often refers to this particular appreciation as "place-based criminology". Brisman and South (2013: 2) capture the essence of the issue by stating that the term environmental criminology may too easily be confused with the longer established description of crime patterns and features of the urban environment.

In sum therefore, environmental criminology focuses on criminal patterns within particular built environments and analyses the impacts of these external variables on people's cognitive behaviour. It forms a part of the Positivist School (of criminology) in that it applies the scientific method to examine the society that causes crime. It is also clear that the provenance of the term environmental criminology was within the spatial, concentric zones of crime context and not in the field of natural resources or the biodiversity arena. It has therefore accrued a copasetic identity which cannot simply be foisted onto another concept without to some degree leveraging or dislodging the orthodox rendering of the term. The term environmental criminology, in the sense that it relates to the study natural resources, is a concept that has inaccurately been woven into the putative lexicon of the criminological discipline and certain criminologists. The concept/term as historically formulated cannot simply be changed on a whim. Changing the word has brought with it ambiguity and a degree of temerity, which as such militates against much of the wisdom and conventions expounded upon elsewhere in this paper.

The term and concept environmental criminology, as originally framed, has a distinguished genealogy that traces back to the eighteenth century. The other meanings being attributed to it can subsequently be dismissed as mere artefacts of the original and authentic application. Environmental criminology as originally ensconced has a justifiable hegemony over the use and application of the phraseology and (these stochastic renderings) cannot merely be borrowed or embezzled and attributed a new meaning. The mere fact that this has been done is emblematic of the disparity presenting in this arena.

The original or traditional context in which the term has been, and still is principally being used, has, it is submitted, led to it acquiring "tenure" of the maxim, and, furthermore, that the transposable usage thereof can quite easily lead to unnecessary confusion and vagueness. The term can simply no longer be used in an obscure manner. In concluding this section a reflective pronouncement by Socrates [to Phaedras] (Bremer 1987: 320) provides considerable food for thought:

> Written words seem to talk to you as though they were intelligent, but if you ask them anything about what they say, from a desire to be instructed, they go on telling you just the same thing forever. And once a thing is put in writing, the composition, whatever it may be drifts all over the place, getting into the hands not only of those who understand it, but equally of those who have no business with it, it doesn't know how to address the right people, and not address the wrong. And when it is ill treated and unfairly abused it always needs its parent to come to its help, being unable to defend or help itself.

GREEN CRIMINOLOGY

Often referred to as green criminology, specifically in the USA (South & Beirne 1998), the use of this term to collectively describe the study of crime impacting negatively on natural resources and allied nature issues can, at least, be considered ignominious. Green crime/criminology might easily and misguidedly be associated with the so-called "greenies" or "tree/bunny huggers", expressions often used to describe the fanatical, overzealous, activist, and often dictatorial conservation fringe, and immediately conjures up images of militant environmentalist groups such as Greenpeace and Sea Sheppard (Herbig 2011: 103-4)

Brisman and South (2013: 1-2) state that green criminology is concerned with crimes and harms affecting the natural environment, the planet, and the associated impacts on human and non-human life. They suggest that it has developed into a distinctive and fertile area of study that now draws together criminologists with a wide range of research interests and theoretical orientations. They state unequivocally that criminologists most frequently employ the term "green criminology" to describe the study of ecological, environmental or green crime or harm, and related matters of speciesism and environmental (in)justice.

According to Eman, Mesko, Dobovsek and Sotlar (2013: 342) green criminology is still formulating its basic terminology but at the same time is expanding its field of study. White (2008: 8) supporting Brisman and South's (2013) view, goes on to define green criminology as "the study of environmental harm, environmental laws and environmental regulations by criminologists".

At face value these accounts do not seem extraordinary, and in fact appear to make perfect sense. But once again a deeper investigation reveals some interesting, if not disturbing, anomalies. Halsey (2006) in fact criticises green criminology because of its lack of a (suitable) definition and challenges criminologists to reduce ambiguity with clear definitions (Eman, Mesko & Fields 2009: 581). In stark contrast to Brisman and South's (2013) sentiments, Halsey (2006: 43) suggests that the term "green" should be jettisoned from socio-environmental discourse primarily because it does not adequately capture the inter-subjective, inter-generational or inter-ecosystemic processes which combine to produce scenarios of harm. Green criminology misunderstands the nature and extent of the task at hand, and argues Halsey (2006: 42), does not possess the lexicon to move beyond modernist conceptions of harm and reparation. In concert herewith Agnew (1998: 177-9) submits that green criminology deals only with a limited range of issues such as those traditionally and simplistically labelled "green issues", for instance, animal rights, animal abuse/cruelty, ecological spirituality, and eco-feminism.

Moreover, anecdotal evidence suggests that green criminologists, in some instances, display an antiquated outlook regarding international species preservation, revealing neo-colonial arrogance while at the same time being disdainful towards civil society. Swanepoel (1997: 48) even talks of green environmental criminology - confirming, it is submitted, the ambiguity of these terms and illustrating that a combination of already

vague and non-specific terms does nothing to promote a focused approach to the study of natural resource crime and criminality. We must realise that crime studies involving natural resources and allied issues are a specific area of interest in a dynamic setting within certain parameters, not constantly shifting paradigms - it must be universally regarded as one concept with one parlance, not to be added to or subtracted from at a whim. It should be wholly reflective of a nature conservation standpoint epistemology. Marginalising this fact, it is submitted, will invite further fractures and feral semantical quests.

Continued disagreement regarding the basic meaning of the term green criminology will impact (further) upon criminological divisions and our ability to provide appropriate legalistic definitions. This will negatively impact the criminal justice system's ability to adequately prepare and deal with challenges in this arena. Intersecting terms and definitions/meanings must be avoided at all costs. It is, therefore, necessary for the sake of perspicuity to articulate the difference between the atypical meanings of green criminology, as the problem of "changing" the meaning of the term is ever-present.

ECOLOGICAL CRIMINOLOGY

Although the term *ecological criminology* is used less frequently than the preceding expressions, it has penetrated the criminological discourse and is being encouraged by certain authors through their somewhat sententious rhetoric. As with environmental criminology, *ecological criminology* is, according to Brantingham and Brantingham (1981: 13), primarily associated with the study of spatial patterns of crime in an urban context**.** Williams and McShane (2010) confirm this sentiment by postulating that an ecological study allows researchers to transcend individuality and, through the collection of social data, gain a sense of the characteristics of large groups of people. Once again, it is submitted, that "ownership" of the term has, due to its conventional usage, been "claimed" by this denotation. Muddying the linguistic waters even further, Aas (2013: 220) talks about eco-global and green criminology as fields which have put issues of environmental crime and justice on the criminological agenda. The question that needs to be asked is why in this day and age we still cannot get simple issues such as crime caste semantics right? Surely criminologists investigating this field can see that blurred (shared) terminologies will do nothing to promote the study and management of natural resource criminality and its adjuncts.

CONSERVATION CRIMINOLOGY

Having underscored the limitations of the concepts/terms environmental, green and ecological criminology, a case will now be made for the recognition and entrenchment of an unambiguous terminology, namely *conservation criminology*. Conservation crime, as the vanguard to conservation criminology, can be defined as:

> …any intentional or negligent human activity or manipulation that impacts negatively on the earth's biotic and/or abiotic natural resources, resulting in immediately noticeable or indiscernible (only noticeable over time) natural resource trauma of any magnitude (Herbig & Joubert 2006: 96).

Conservation criminology, therefore, unambiguously deals with, amongst others, the dynamics and nexus between humans and (biotic/abiotic) natural resources on the receiving environment (as a casualty/victim), and the extent to which natural resource crime encroaches or impacts on the limits of acceptable change with regard to any particular natural resource, or a collection of such resources. Conservation criminology argues to be well balanced and copasetic and does definitely not favour any particular dogma within the natural resource/conservation realm. Conservation crime/criminology as developed and presented here, emphasises the significant contribution this field of criminology can make in comprehending the illegal manipulation and exploitation of natural resources and allied issues (without ambiguity), thereby expanding and enhancing its theoretical constructs and implementing justice through holistic intervention strategies.

Lending credence to the above submissions, Gibbs, Gore, McGarrell and Rivers III (2009: 2) state that:

> …given the constraints associated with the terms 'green' and 'environmental criminology', we prefer the term 'conservation criminology' to describe our framework. We use conservation criminology as our preferred terminology for several reasons. Environmental or ecological criminology typically refers to the spatial study of criminal events. Green criminology is also problematic due to its association with political perspectives (and the narrow range of associated issues) and its ambiguity. We concur with Herbig and Joubert (2006) that conservation criminology identifies the core theme of this area of study.

Gibbs et al (2009: 2-3) believe that conservation criminology can enrich the knowledge base of theories, methods and governance about environmental issues by moving towards a more generalisable theory and beyond the limits of a single discipline.

Further support for the term/definition conservation criminology is provided by Eman et al (2013: 343). These authors state that of the circulating fields/definitions, the most sophisticated was the proposal of Herbig and Joubert (2006), later broadened by Gibbs et al (2009), about a totally new branch of criminology, where the field of interest merges at least partly with the field of green criminology - conservation criminology.

Moeletsi (2009: 45-46) additionally acknowledges the value of Herbig and Joubert's term, conservation criminology, in harmonising all the intellectual contributions in this sphere. With regard to the maelstrom of definition/terminologies circulating in this sphere, Wellsmith (2011: 126) avows that mainstream criminology seems to have shown little interest in offences against non-human animals and it may well be that environmental harm remains a niche interest among criminologists.

The continued misuse of the terms environmental, ecological or green crime/criminology to depict the study of crime and criminality in the natural resource ambit can, therefore, further encourage confusion by reinforcing preconceived notions. This might well serve to inhibit and negate tolerance of attempts to rejuvenate the existing semantical template. The utility of a definition for the study of natural resources and allied issues will be the degree to which it elicits new types of existential territories, makes possible new modes of envisioning the human/earth nexus, and invites a reconceptualisation of the relationship between damage and momentum. Moreover, following Spinoza, it asks of bodies what each can do, rather than what each is (Halsey 2006: 55).

The concept and terminology conservation criminology aspirationally strives to establish equivalences between an existing heterogeneous phraseology in which there is a degree of similitude in the dissimilitude. By drilling down through the artefacts and conclusory semantics, a strong case can be made for using the terminology *conservation crime* to establish a new semantical DNA. As an *a priori* concept it should ensure that ambiguity is reduced and that not only the edges of the crime phenomenon are addressed, but the entire phenomenon holistically and sustainably.

CONCLUSION

The semantical challenges expounded upon in this paper, although byzantine in nature, should not be regarded as insuperable, because by piercing the artefacts and conclusory phraseology, a strong case emerges and seeks suffrage for the use of the term *conservation criminology*. This definition/terminology may well illuminate new discursive and extra-discursive pathways where other definitions have fallen short. As Deleuze (Halsey 2006: 251) so candidly states, "criminology needs to come to grips with the role of language in framing and dealing with environmental problems".

Until it does this − thus until criminology develops a critical understanding of how various discourses frame "harm" − it will continue to be an (unwitting) apologist for the countless microviolences levied against earth from moment to moment. Hesitancy and fractional impetus in gravitating towards an unambiguous natural resource-oriented terminology, it is submitted, whether it is conservation criminology or some other, will further contribute to the incorporeal corrosion of focus in this mercurial terrain. Continual subscription to inaccurate terminology and countervailance is to invite (more) fractures and promote the atrophy of intervention efforts. The lexical to-ing and fro-ing should ideally be resolved amicably and passé terminologies phased out as a matter of priority. In bringing to a close this narrative, the words of Socrates (Strathern 2012a: 241) provide much food for thought: "We all make mistakes, even if we are great philosophers. We just don't expect to see them perpetuated".

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