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# Psychology, Sociology and Crime: Mapping the Historical Terrain

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## OVERVIEW

The opening chapter sets the study of crime in a historical context, arguing that the psychology of crime is context dependent and what we choose to study is as much a cultural phenomenon as it is one directed by social scientific concerns. Historical fashions direct the gaze of the psychologist, and learning historical lessons on the uses and abuses of psychology are essential requirements of contemporary psychology.

## KEY TERMS

determinism late-modernity modernity postmodernity

This opening chapter will discuss the changing fortunes of psychological and sociological accounts of crime and criminals. It will chart the emergence of different theories both in terms of how they fit together and their growth from engagement, and critique, of other theories. The chapter will not seek to reiterate the history of the subject, but to focus on how theories gained resonance and were reflected in the society and culture in which they were expressed, and how in turn they had an impact on social policy and popular images of crimes and criminals. The key theme is that there are many overlaps between sociology and psychology that need to be recognised and that drawing on the findings of each discipline can be a very powerful way to create more robust theories. This is not to say that these overlaps are in any way deliberate or that the authors were even aware of each other's arguments, although that may be the case on occasion. The point is to highlight the fruitless disciplinary boundary forming that results in academics only referring to research cited in 'their' journals, such as psychologists only citing 'psychological' research and similarly for sociological criminologists.

The sociologist Nikolas Rose, who has written extensively on the role of psychology in society, referred to this as the 'baneful disciplinization of the human sciences' (Rose 1999: xvi). This chapter is a reminder, followed through in the rest of the book, that disciplinary insularity is an outmoded position to take when the ease with which one can conduct research across academic boundaries allows, and encourages, theoretical synthesis. A criticism of this type of theory synthesis is that logical contradictions between one approach and another can become blurred. Certainly, it is accepted that an uncritical synthesis is open to this problem.

However, what is being argued here is that this critique should not close off critical theoretical synthesis and wider research beyond academic boundaries. This chapter aims to foster a historical imagination that remembers that such synthesis was once commonplace. What this book represents is a form of what the criminologist Gregg Barak terms 'integrative criminology'. He defines this as an 'interdisciplinary approach to understanding crime and crime control which incorporates at least two disciplinary (or non-disciplinary) bodies of knowledge' (Barak 2001: 153; Barak 1998). Although Barak suggests that this is a relatively new approach, this book will highlight the moments when integration has already occurred.

One example is Taylor, Walton and Young's (1973) *The New Criminology* that sought to combine Marxist and symbolic interactionist accounts of crime as well as social psychology to provide a fully social theory of crime. This book was written at a time when questioning the legitimacy of those in authority was commonplace, consequently, it will also be noted that theory reflects the concerns of the time (Danziger 1990). The chapter will conclude by noting that the textbook is critical not of psychology *per se*, but rather the way myths have developed around what criminological psychologists do. Popular representations or 'shadow criminology' to use Paul Rock's term (1978) of serious criminals as pathological monsters different from ourselves are not borne out by the evidence. The thought that serious criminals may be just like you, live next door to you, live with you, is more frightening and unsettling than believing that criminals are monsters.

It is an obvious place to start a book on psychology and crime with an overview of some of the major psychological approaches to studying human behaviour (see Table 1.1). This is not meant to be an exhaustive overview, merely a reminder for those who have already studied psychology, and an introduction for those who have not. All psychological approaches share the common focus of studying internal mental processes. Psychology can be distinguished from psychiatry through the latter's focus on the study and treatment of mental illness and emotional disturbance. Psychiatry is a branch of medicine that, for the most part, focuses on illness and derivations from 'normal'<sup>1</sup> behaviour. Psychology is interested in a broader range of human behaviour that includes mental functions such as perception (e.g. taste, colour or object sizes), the capacity and ability of memory, as well as behaviour that some might describe as 'abnormal' such as aggression. The manner of doing this varies according to the tradition.

### **The rise of the science of crime and the challenge of the 'risk society'**

This section charts the rise of a science of crime and ends with a discussion of the risk society thesis. It is possible to talk about one science of crime because until

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Table 1.1 *Perspectives in psychology*

<b>Perspectives in psychology</b>	<b>Key idea</b>	<b>Research method</b>	<b>Criticism</b>
Biological	Psychological principles derived from biological mechanisms. Evolutionary theory is also sometimes used within this approach.	Invasive techniques to monitor brain activity has given way to techniques such as Magnetic Resonance Imaging, a non-invasive brain scan.	Reductionist. Biology cannot account for all psychological principles. Evolutionary ideas are powerful. However, unlike animals, humans create meaning.
Behavioural	<i>Tabula rasa</i> : The Blank slate. Humans learn their behaviour.	Stimulus-response research.	Neglects the meaning that humans afford behaviour. Neglects the role of human agency in choosing to act in certain ways.
Cognitive	Brain a computer. Behaviour is more complex than the stimulus-response psychology that preceded it.	Experiments that seek to find out how people think about their behaviour.	Little scope for humans to make sense of the world. We are more than just an information processor.
Psychoanalytic	Unconscious impulses direct behaviour.	Psychoanalysis, combination of free association in dialogue with a therapist.	Main ideas such as the existence of an ego, superego etc. have not been proven to exist.
Social Psychology	Humans construct the world and what it means to them.	Observation and experimentation.	Different approaches, can be non-scientific where observations are carried out in a non-systematic way. Can also be scientific through the use of tools such as surveys and questionnaires.

recently there were significant overlaps in the main aims of those interested in the study of crime; namely the search for the cause of crime. All vibrant disciplines are beset by controversies and heated debates, however, criminology is somewhat different, not least because, as will be argued below, it is not a discipline at all. The tensions that exist within criminology tend to be split between the two dominant subjects that form its core ideas, sociology and psychology. Recently, these two subjects have viewed each other with suspicion and occasional contempt. Where sociology tends to place its emphasis on society and environment, psychology situates its main focus within the individual. This often leads to diametrically opposed explanations for phenomena and is sometimes referred to as the **structure/agency debate**. Taking poverty as an example, sociologists tend to see this phenomenon as having an external effect on people, it is an economic phenomena that individuals can have relatively marginal control over. For some psychologists, poverty is the result of individual failure due to low IQ, personality or lack of positive motivation such as might be caused by depression. When these two approaches are contained within criminology not only are there the usual heated discussions but there is the added frisson of distrust in another discipline's methods and theoretical foundations. Yet, fundamentally, the concern is with what causes crime.

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To a certain extent this is a stereotype of the differences between sociology and psychology, but it is one held by many academics. However, this chapter will seek to remind those who hold this opinion that a certain amount of historical amnesia (Pearson 1983, 1994) has set in that leads to forgetfulness of the significant overlaps between the two approaches. For those students not yet tainted by the animosity, the chapter merely seeks to show that there are useful theoretical and empirical overlaps between sociological and psychological approaches to crime and deviance. The following demonstrates the interconnectivity of sociology and psychology when both are brought together in criminology by looking at the way that the study of crime became increasingly 'scientific'. Moreover, the bipolarity of the structure/agency debate has developed into a more complex argument that posits an integration between the two extremes of structural **determinism** and the free choice of the agent. By way of setting out the argument early, W.I. Thomas in the first edition of the *American Journal of Sociology* in 1894 noted that sociology and social psychology were inseparable (Strauss 1964). As will be noted, social psychology is a distinct branch of psychology that perhaps more than any other fits with the sociological approach. But, none the less, such is the widening gap between the two disciplines that psychology is more likely to be seen in its own department rather than sharing one with sociology.

According to Garland (2002) criminology as a 'science of crime' has been in existence for about 120 years. The term 'criminology' was created in the 1890s as a broader term than others such as criminal sociology or criminal psychology. The latter two terms are too specific and separately based within disciplinary boundaries peculiar to their own traditions. Consequently, the discipline of criminology from the outset subsumed the concerns of other, more established traditions within its intellectual remit. As Lea has noted (1998), criminology can be seen not as a subject in its own right, but as a field that academics from other disciplines can enter, such as economists, historians, geographers, psychologists and sociologists. The only thing distinct about this field is that those who enter it study crime first and foremost, and the focus tends to be on the question of what causes crime. How academics from different subjects do that is, to a large degree, based upon the traditions of their 'master' disciplines. Hence, Garland has argued that '[i]ts **epistemological** threshold is a low one, making it susceptible to pressures and interests generated elsewhere' (2002: 17). Garland also criticises the argument that criminological questions were being asked by many people before the term itself became widespread from the 1890s. Eighteenth-century philosophers such as Jeremy Bentham and Cesare Beccaria may have discussed crime, but they were not asking distinctive 'criminological' questions that were concerned with what makes the criminal different from the non-criminal and what causes this differentiation. Instead, their concerns were with the nature of the responses to crime by society. Criminals were, by and large, rational actors choosing to commit crime and therefore should be punished in proportion to the seriousness of the offence.

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Punishment should take the form of attempting to change the moral failures of the offender in prisons. The discipline of psychology, as a science of human behaviour distinct from philosophy or medicine, can be traced to the later nineteenth century. No precise dates are possible, but certainly from about 1875 a new series of questions were asked that may be called psychological with the creation of the first psychology laboratory by Wilhelm Wundt in 1879 being a major factor in psychology's further development (Rose 1985; Janz 2004).

The early history of psychology in Britain shows only a slow growth with about 30 lecturing staff in English universities and six chairs in psychology (which means there were only six professors of psychology) up until the Second World War. At this time, the main task of psychology was to measure the mental attributes of humans. This process of categorisation, measurement and comparison lead to the creation of the 'normal' range of attributes that a human should have against which people could be compared. However, it was not the psychologists who sought out the problems to which this new science could be directed. Instead, it was those for whom effective and controllable humans were useful. Early psychology was directed towards industry, education, the military and the courts. These institutions, when run efficiently, maintained and reproduced a set of practices that, by their very efficiency, would reveal someone who deviated from these norms. Thus, the norms of the institution were what psychologists had to use as the yardstick with which to measure deviations. As Rose has argued (1985), psychology is a science that aims to regulate social life, it is a science that evolved to maintain the functional efficiency of the social world. One could add a Marxist analysis to this and argue that such functional efficiency is an integral feature of a capitalist world where to question too much the way things are is to potentially cause anarchy and rebellion. Behaviour that does not follow the functional efficiency necessary for the smooth running of business needs to be held in check and psychology is best placed to do that. However, psychology has recently been confronted by a new challenge that some see as indicative of a move to a late or postmodern society. It has been argued that there has been a shift away from individual causes of crime towards the statistical analysis of a group's risk factors. This has impacted on the way that crime and justice research is carried out.

It has been argued that the search for individual causes of crime fell out of fashion between the 1970s and 2000 (Garland 2001; Hudson 2003). David Garland argued that the:

new policy advice is to concentrate on substituting prevention for cure, reducing the supply of opportunities, increasing situational and social controls, and modifying everyday routines. The welfare of deprived social groups, or the needs of maladjusted individuals, are much less central to this way of thinking. (2001: 16)

Criminologists have drawn on the risk society thesis in literature by sociologists such as Anthony Giddens (1990) and Ulrich Beck (1992), to analyse changes in the way that the apparatus of social control and justice has changed. Rather than focus on the risk factors of an individual, criminal justice has increasingly moved towards making judgements that are collective in focus and based on prediction (O'Malley 2001). This is a form of actuarialism, the kind of risk assessment undertaken by insurance companies to determine how likely it is that a car might be stolen. For example, rather than looking at the risk posed by an individual sex offender, statistical judgements based on all sex offenders are applied to the individual to categorise their potential risk, such as after release from prison (Feeley and Simon 1994). This is based on the belief that treating sex offenders is impossible, too difficult or too expensive (Hudson 2003). Moreover, in the risk society we are increasingly challenging the expertise of experts, such as psychologists or criminologists (Giddens 1990). Essentially experts cannot offer what society wants, security. This has clearly impacted on the work of psychologists, but how profoundly it has undermined the core philosophy of the focus on individual differences is unclear. In many ways, there is a contradiction within psychology anyway, since many theories attempt to categorise individuals into groups. Moreover, there are many criticisms of the risk society thesis, some point out that the perceived shift to a focus on risk is nothing new. Fears over terrorism, as Chapter 6 will show, are not exclusive to those living after '9/11'. Moreover, since New Labour were elected in the UK in 1997 the much quoted phrase 'tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime' has had a tentative, patchy but nevertheless significant effect. After the credit crunch and world-wide recession, the part-nationalisation of the banks and other parts of industry and the election of the Democrat Barack Obama as American President, we may yet see a return to welfarism and away from the sense of risk so pervasive under President George Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair.

### Historical developments in the theory of crime

Historians have tended to split the history of western development into various eras, although academics disagree on the terminology. For the purposes of this discussion they will be referred to as the pre-modern, the modern, the late-modern and the postmodern. Each era overlaps in significant ways, and there are many arguments as to when one era ends and another begins. The short answer is that there is no agreed moment, and neither can there be. Even use of the term postmodernism, for example, does not signify the start

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of this era, because naming something does not mean that prior thinking was not postmodern, it merely provides a term that may be better than one that went before. Moreover, it equally does not mean that the previous era has come to a definitive conclusion. Many ideas that could be regarded as belonging to a previous era are still evident long after that era has come to an end. For example, putting faith in the supernatural or the spiritual tend to be seen as belonging to the pre-modern era, yet anyone who reads their horoscopes, crosses their fingers or touches wood for luck are engaging in activities that are not 'scientifically' proven to work, and could, therefore, be regarded as belonging to the pre-modern era. Consequently, readers will need to be aware that this is only meant to serve as an initial guide to help comprehension of historical trends in the understanding of crime and criminals. For example, some of the theories of crime presented in Table 1.2 overlap with previous or later eras. Not only that, but the choice of which theories to place within each section is a highly subjective enterprise. Readers can use it as a resource, but as suggested in the study questions at the end of this chapter, it can be critically analysed and readers are encouraged to do so. Three key thinkers can be associated with the modern, late-modern and postmodern eras, yet despite each of these eras taking us from the middle eighteenth century to contemporary theories their major contributions were all written by the early twentieth century. Karl Marx (1818–83), Emile Durkheim (1858–1917), and Max Weber (1864–1920) form a trinity of key thinkers about society whose influence still resonates today. The detail of their theories and ideas are not the point of this book, readers are directed in the further reading at the end of the chapter to other sources. What is important to point out is that their ideas formed the central concerns of later scholars and helped shape new ways to see the world, often long after they had died.

**Pre-modern views of criminology**

In general terms, during the pre-modern era those who engaged in deviant activities were not regarded as a distinct group of people different from those who did not offend, but rather they were seen as being in some way affected by outside influences. Significantly, however, these outside influences were not of the making of humans. Superstition, religion and the supernatural were the causes of deviancy. Particular humans could act upon such forces to identify the reasons for the aberration, but humans were not the cause of the problem. For example, the search for witches in Britain where 'tests' were carried out on those suspected of witchcraft. Unlike in later modernist theories, where

Table 1.2 *Historical shifts in understanding crime*

Epoch	Social structure (following Durkheim 1893/1984)	Dominant ideology	Cause of crime	Key theories
Pre-modern. Pre-1750: Pre-Enlightenment	Mechanistic (simple division of labour).	Religion/faith.	Unearthly Forces beyond a person's control. Against God, e.g. witchcraft. 'The devil makes work for idle hands.'	Superstition and Religion; demonology.
Modern. 1750-1920 Post-Enlightenment	Organic (complex division of labour), but consensus in values.	Science will lead to continual progress in Human activities.	Individual and social forces beyond person's control.	Individual and sociological Classicism; individual and sociological positivism: Durkheim, Gall. Spurzheim's phrenology, Lombroso's <i>La Sciolia Positiva</i> .
Late-modern. 1920-1979	Organic, consensus threatened.	Science important but fallible.	Crime is meaningful, but also the result of inequalities.	Merton's SS&A, Cloward and Ohlin and A.K. Cohen, The Chicago School, Sykes and Matza, Drift, National Deviancy Conferences, The New Criminology, The Birmingham School.
Postmodern. 1979-present	Organic, plurality of values.	Loss of faith in science and progress, search for underlying causes superseded by 'what works' and risk assessment.	The practical criminology of government such as Rational Choice Theory and Routine Activities Theory is contrasted firstly with left and right realism and then in the 1990s with the boredom and search for excitement as expressed in cultural criminology.	Cornish and Clark's Rational Choice Theory. Cohen and Felson's Routine Activity Theory. Charles Murray, J.Q. Wilson, described as right realism by the left realists. Lea and Young's left realism. Jack Katz, Jeff Ferrell, Cultural Criminology. Tony Jefferson, David Gadd and Psychosocial Criminology.
The Futures of Criminology. Present: plus.	The end of history a myth, the rise of the neo-conservatives and religious fundamentalism are ideologies that were thought to be concluded. New bipolar geopolitical tensions, especially since 9/11. Postmodernity, as historical epoch, is a premature proposition.	Realisation that ideology is up for grabs. Public can still be manipulated despite widespread cynicism. Religiosity dominant in America and Middle East politics. Search for pre-crime symptoms for early intervention.	The search for cause becomes hypergenetic, Magnetic Resonance Imaging to see inside the brain as it thinks about crime. Crime prevention occurs mostly before crime has been committed. At the non-technological end, ASBOs are pre-crime sanctions; at the high end of technology DNA samples could be taken earlier.	Psychology will be at the forefront of this new direction, although the emphasis will be more on medical and risk assessment research. Psychology is here seen as being a part of a wider programme of value-for-money managerialism where any research needs to show a tangible outcome in crime reduction. Humanistic and social psychology and the greater synthesis of psychology and sociology may help to balance some of the more extreme threats to civil liberties. Similarly, the election of American President Barack Obama and the world recession that lead to many banks becoming part-nationalised may usher in a new, more liberal form of governance.

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outside forces are thought to compel people to commit crime, such as the role of Capitalism in creating inequality, poverty and hence crime, in the pre-modern era the outside influences were not the *creation* of humans. Contemporary scholars would not regard the types of activities employed to determine the cause of a problem, such as witchcraft, as scientific. Although the methods had a logic to those practising them, modern scholars would regard as pre-scientific the dunking of supposed witches in water until death proved they were innocent. Similar distinctions can be made with regard to the way medicine was practised with medieval writers such as Galen believing the body to be made of four humours, or substances, excessive quantities of one or the other corresponding to illness and changes in personality. According to Hans J. Eysenck, a psychologist whose work on personality types and crime is highly influential, Galen is thus responsible for an early form of personality typology made up of the Melancholic (sad), Choleric (aggressive), Sanguine (sociable) and Phlegmatic (calm) (Eysenck 1977/1964). As an example of the way that outdated and discredited ideas can influence later scholars, Eysenck's personality types are strongly influenced by the medieval writings of Galen, about which more later. So the pre-modern era can be said to be dominated by ideas that are pre-scientific, in that they are not based on a vigorous scientific methodology to determine if they are valid or not.

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**Crime and Modernity**

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Criminology and psychology are generally regarded as disciplines that developed out of the modern period. The major historical event that characterises this period is the move from an agricultural to an industrial economy. This economy was not based on the changing seasons that previously organised when work was done in the agricultural economy. In moving away from nature, the industrial economy required a socially constructed routine to control working patterns. With the inevitability of spring, summer, autumn and winter gone, behaviour could now be manipulated directly and the various nascent branches of science sought to find the best ways to do this from increasing the efficiency of the machines in the factories to the humans who worked alongside them. Modernism is characterised by the greater faith in objectivity, rationality and the application of the scientific method. In sociology the application of the scientific method is termed **positivism** after the term coined by one of the earliest sociologists Auguste Comte whose most influential book *Cours de philosophie positive* (written in several volumes from 1830–1842) set out the argument for a scientific form of sociology that provided a positive agenda for political change.

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Positivism can be split into two main forms, individual and sociological positivism. Individual positivism describes that form of social science that takes as its main focus the individual. Individual positivism has an assumption that behaviour is the result of individual, internal factors to the neglect of social factors. For example, individual positivists would not be concerned with issues like poverty in explaining why there is a higher rate of crime in groups who are poor. Instead, they might argue that the cause is lower intelligence based on Intelligence Quotient (IQ) scores in groups of people who are poor (see e.g. Herrnstein and Murray 1994). The research methods are wide-ranging but tend to be those which can be verified by other researchers using the same procedure so are likely to result in data that is statistical. Psychology, in general, has been regarded as being individual positivism, although there are some theories, such as some areas of social psychology, which focus to a greater extent on environmental factors. However, most approaches are still mainly interested in internal mental processes. The point that needs to be borne in mind is that, despite their difference, at this stage of social science both sociological and psychological theories sought to apply scientific principles to the study of human behaviour.

***Forms of individual positivism***

Individual positivism takes on different forms and has changed across time, although all forms share certain characteristics in common. A brief overview of some of the more widely cited studies follows beginning with a key moment that took the individual positivist tradition into a new sphere of scientific credibility.

***Darwin and the evolution of the species***

It is perhaps pertinent to start with one of the key influences on the positivist tradition in criminology: Darwin's theory of evolution. Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of the Species* (1859) was a contentious theory. Nothing really has changed here as there is still controversy over what some groups have argued is a contradiction of the Christian belief in the creation of humans by God, through the story of Adam and Eve. In the nineteenth century the debate was still based around this specific difference in viewpoint, only then there was not as much scientific evidence in support of Darwin's theory. Over time organisms adapt to their environment, with those best able to do so passing on their genetic blueprint for the next generation. Darwin's theory that humans have evolved from earlier species began some people to speculate that maybe there were different types of human, differing from each other in

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such areas as intelligence and race. It was also argued that maybe criminals were also different to non-criminals. The initial research into this idea began with phrenology.

*Phrenology, mental insanity and the psychopath*

Phrenology is the study of the association between bumps on the skull and behaviour, with a raised area on the skull being thought to be indicative of more or less of a particular character trait. Phrenology is often seen as an unscientific precursor to more sophisticated research into the identification of criminals. Ceramic phrenology heads are often seen for sale alongside ceramic hands used in palmistry. Just such an association has rendered phrenology an unworthy topic for study in the history of criminology. However, Rafter has argued that phrenology should not be ignored because it is discredited (2005). There are many discredited scientific ideas that criminology has studied. Phrenology is important because it helped shape the scientific study of crime and influenced the work of the leading nineteenth-century positivist Cesare Lombroso. As a progenitor of positivist explanations for crime it can be credited with moving the debate in a radical direction, away from treating crime as a rational choice requiring the punishment of the offender towards seeing crime as a pathology to be treated. Phrenology's most influential exponent was Franz Joseph Gall, a physician from Vienna who outlined the basic propositions below in 1800, with the final one being proposed by Gall's main follower, the German physician Johann Gaspar Spurzheim. The main propositions were as follows:

- 1 The brain is the organ of the mind.
- 2 The brain is the aggregation of about 30 separate organs or faculties, such as Combativeness, Covetiveness and Destructiveness, that function independently.
- 3 The more active an organ, the larger its size.
- 4 The relative size of the organs can be estimated by inspecting contours of the skull.
- 5 The relative size of the organs can be increased or decreased through exercise and self-discipline (Rafter 2005: 66).

From 1800 to 1830 phrenology was developed by psychiatrists and physicians into a 'scientific' system based on measurement and observation, but within 20 years there occurred a popularising of phrenology. It is this latter development that has caused most criminologists to avoid the topic. By the 1850s the interest in phrenology was on the wane. However, the categorisation of crimes into different causes opened up an area of research into the possibility of multiple and varied causations and in the idea of desistance from crime, particularly in relation to the fifth assumption above. Rafter's argument also raises an important issue about the unwillingness of contemporary criminologists to

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study areas related to criminology but which are regarded as embarrassing. For many sociological criminologists the study of psychology is itself regarded as embarrassing and to be avoided. But, Rafter points to the need to study areas that may be outside of one's theoretical worldview because they can still add to our understanding.

Another branch of research that began during the middle of the nineteenth century was into the idea of psychopathy. It was necessary to explain why some people could commit heinous crimes, but not appear to be intellectually damaged. Before the term psychopath was coined, however, the term 'moral insanity' described someone whose behaviour lacks moral awareness of right and wrong but where their intellect had not been impaired. This term was replaced by Rush (1786, cited Rafter 1997) with *micromania* and *anomia*. This links into the sociological concept of **anomie** used most famously in the work of Emile Durkheim, to be discussed below. All of these terms are precursors to the term psychopath, familiar to contemporary readers. With the decline in phrenology, so psychiatry, particularly in prisons and asylums began to take over the study of criminals. The term psychopath first appears, according to Rafter, in 1845 in an Austrian psychiatric textbook (Rafter 1997), and was elaborated by two German psychiatrists Krafft-Ebing (1886/1965) and Kraepelin (1917), before becoming a popular concept in the American Psychiatric literature between 1915 and 1925. The definition of the term is very vague, the American authors misunderstood significant aspects of the concept from the German tradition, and the three main authors, Bernard Glueck (1917a, 1917b, 1918a, 1918b, 1919), William Healy (1915) and Edith R. Spaulding (1923/1969), each defined the term differently and sometimes contradicted each other. However, as Rafter has argued the term served a metaphorical purpose to describe almost anyone who did not fit what was then regarded as the norms to which people should be measured. Consequently, heterosexual masculinity was the norm and any man not exhibiting behaviour regarded as an instance of this was seen as inferior and a psychopath.

This set of ideas, that those who commit crime may look different, or be made differently, began the process of creating a science of the criminal. The criminal started to be seen as different to the non-criminal in biological ways. As the cities developed around the world and began to get crowded during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, so middle class fears of crime and disorder began to find their answer in the newly emerging sciences of psychiatry, psychology and now criminology.

An example of how ideas that developed in one century are developed and elaborated in another, and in consequence, cut across historical moments is the continued research into psychopathy. Contemporary definitions of psychopathy developed from the description provided by Cleckley (1941) in his book *The*

*Mask of Sanity*. He suggested 16 criteria for a diagnosis of psychopathy, which included lack of insight into the effect of one's behaviour on others, superficial charm, lack of anxiety and failure to plan ahead. Using these as a starting point Hare developed the Psychopathy Checklist (PCL) (Hare 1980), which has since been revised and developed to include a diagnostic tool for children and adolescents called the Antisocial Process Screening Device (APSD) (Frick and Hare 2001). In America the diagnostic tool for all behavioural disorders is the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (DSM IV) (APA 1994), however it has been criticised for a number of arbitrary categories that do not sufficiently delineate between behaviours. Such an example is its inability to distinguish a psychopathic disorder from conduct disorders (CD) and antisocial personality disorder (ASPD) (Blair, Mitchell and Blair 2005). Essentially, psychopathy is distinguished from CD and ASPD by an emotional dysfunction that leads to a greater use of instrumental aggression, as opposed to reactive aggression. Instrumental aggression is characterised by the use of aggression for the purpose of achieving a goal, either financial or emotional, whereas reactive aggression refers to aggression that is caused by something. Therefore, psychopathy is not adequately described in the American system of diagnosis and so its use as an explanation for why some types of crime are committed is problematic.

*Lombroso (1836–1909), the Positivist School and the inheritability of crime*

As Rafter has argued, the avoidance of engagement with phrenology has meant that its impact has been overlooked. Whereas Rafter argues that phrenology formed a radical new idea that sought to show that humans were capable of change, Lombroso's criminal anthropology was, initially, based upon an idea of the criminal being born into their behavioural pattern. Garland has noted that the ideas of Lombroso are nothing new and an extension of racial anthropology in the 1870s and the creation of categories such as genius or insane (Garland 2002). That Lombroso's approach became one of the dominant ideas set the new science of criminology on a route that was to be dominant for the best part of 80 years. Whereas phrenology was an idea that suggested that people could change, and that there were finely tuned gradations in severity of behaviour, Lombroso presented a human as a *fait accompli*, ready made and without much hope of change, except long-term policies to prevent those identified as criminal from reproducing.

Lombroso was an Italian physician who used craniometry and anthropometry to study and categorise different racial attributes of Italian soldiers. Essentially, Lombroso measured the bodies of different subjects and categorised them into types. These body types were then linked to behaviour, so that if several subjects with large earlobes had been involved in a certain crime, Lombroso noted this

down and collected such observations into his first book, *L'Uomo Delinquente* (1876). Lombroso argued that the criminal was an **atavism**, a throwback to an earlier stage of evolution. Lombroso, like many of his contemporaries such as A.M. Guerry and A. Quetelet, was interested in the emerging use of statistics. His work was about measuring the body to see if the body would give away any indication of criminality. Although there is an indebtedness to Darwin, the use of statistics was the most important element of this approach (Horn 2003), and in this there is a link to the work of Durkheim and the sociological positivists, to be discussed below.

Much research during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century is essentially a variation on the same theme: crime is a stable trait that can be measured and which is either largely inherited or conditioned in early life and remains a constant influence. Crime is caused by internal mechanisms gone wrong. Crucially, this has little effect on the underlying rationality of humans. Crime is not caused by humans acting irrationally since their underlying physiology or upbringing compels them to act in the only way they can. The legal system in the UK was set up, albeit unsystematically, to account for both those who rationally chose to commit crime and to take into account extenuating circumstances for those whose background suggested a social or psychological pathology. The originator of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud represents a conduit, or link between the constitutional<sup>2</sup> theories of Lombroso and the later approaches of psychology to social learning and upbringing. His work also marks the beginning of a questioning of this rationality, at the same time as critics suggested that psychoanalysis was not scientific (Frosh 1999). Chaos and disorder were thought to be under the control of humans, and yet humans were about to embark on a global war.

#### *The First World War, psychiatry and psychoanalysis*

The First World War marked a unique moment of global reflection on the progress of humans. The seemingly inexorable rise to ever greater moments of human progress faltered at the start of the 1914–18 war. However, as the historian Eric Hobsbawm argues, there was effectively 31 years of conflict and war between 1914 and the Japanese surrender in 1945. These wars seemed to mark the end of the march to civilisation. As Hobsbawm writes: 'Mankind survived. Nevertheless, the great edifice of nineteenth century civilisation crumpled in the flames of world war, as its pillars collapsed' (1994: 22). Hobsbawm points out that in many scientific disciplines there was a sense of unease about the achievements that could be made through positing a purely rational human actor or trying to understand the world solely through the application of scientific methods (Hobsbawm 1987).

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In the field of psychology, Sigmund Freud represents this unease with the idea that human behaviour is directed not by reason but by underlying unconscious impulses and instincts. Freud (1856–1939) began his career as a surgeon, before moving into general medicine as a house physician at the main hospital in Vienna where he took a course in psychiatry which led to his role as a lecturer at the University of Vienna (Fadiman and Frager 2004). Consequently, Freud would have been aware of the Phrenology and Psychopathy literature, as well as Lombroso. Whereas phrenology posited an external manifestation of internal brain mechanisms presenting as bumps on the scalp, and Lombroso believed that criminals were manifestations of earlier stages of evolution, Freud was concerned to find causes for behaviour where no physical or chemical reason could be determined. For example, people might present with symptoms of hysteria that might manifest in loss of sensation in the hand, but where there was no sign of damage or disease from the wrist to the body. This suggested to Freud a psychological basis for the disorder. Freud argued that every mental process, every thought or emotion had a meaning, even if that meaning was not consciously intelligible to the individual. Apparently unintentional behaviour, for Freud, had a reason. The drives or impulses that propel these actions compel the individual to do things to satisfy the impulse. As we develop and grow the means of satisfying these impulses change. From our basic needs as a newborn for food, warmth and shelter, to our developing needs for sexual gratification, our means of satisfying them become more sophisticated and socially acceptable. From the baby screaming for food, to the adult feeding themselves. Most human needs are developed by the time we reach puberty. However, we can get fixated on a particular need and the means for satisfying it can become central to the needs of the individual. Early upbringing created the propensity to become 'stuck' at a particular personality type.

Psychoanalysis can be split between two main areas, the Freudian tradition posited a relatively stable individual once they had emerged from the first three years of their lives and a more flexible version advocated by followers of Erik Erikson (1902–94) where change was possible throughout the life course. (See Table 1.3 on page 23 for an outline of Freud's psychosexual stages and Erikson's psychosocial stages.) Indeed, as Stephen Frosh (1999) maintains, to speak of 'psychoanalysis' as if it were a unified approach is a misnomer since individual psychoanalysts can disagree on the same point. Nevertheless, psychoanalysis begins to challenge the positivistic quest of psychology to identify single causes for crime and in their place presents a more complex theory of humans. We can see in this, arguably, the first signs of the retreat from the aetiology of crime towards the more pragmatic attempts of contemporary psychology, and all other forms of governance, to attend to the risk and not cause of crime.

### ***Forms of sociological positivism***

Just as there are a variety of different forms of individual positivism characterised by psychological and biological research, so there are also a variety of sociological forms of positivism that seek to apply a scientific method to studying the social influence of crime and deviance.

#### *Durkheim and sociological positivism*

The main focus of Durkheim's work is the structure of society and its institutions such as religion, education and the division of labour. They are deemed to have structural properties, to be long lasting, and to pre-date, and post-date the individuals who live within them. As already noted, beginning with the work of Comte, and then the French sociologist Emile Durkheim, sociological positivism has a long tradition in sociology. Two books by Durkheim stand out as examples of this form of social science: *Suicide* (1897/1951) and *Rules of Sociological Method* (1895/1938). Durkheim's argument is that the social world can be studied in the same way as the natural world, utilising similar methods to study it. Social facts, Durkheim argued, should be treated as things, they are external to the individual and shape them. That is, the individual is born into a society that is already created and this shapes the individual. An example is language that is already in existence when we are born and which we must learn to use if we wish to function in society. When changes occur in the social environment they impact upon human behaviour. Behaviour is moulded by the environment. For example, a key idea in Durkheim's work is **anomie**. This literally means without norms. Anomie develops when social systems go through major changes. A norm is the usual way of behaving. Durkheim termed this the *conscience collective*, or collective consciousness. For example, it is assumed we all share certain beliefs as to what constitutes a crime. But, when the social environment goes through significant changes, such as an economic boom or depression, then our connection to the norms of society start to break down, a state of anomie. In other words, the relationships we have with other people normally keep our behaviour in check. But, significant social change disrupts those relationships.

Using scientific methods, the social world can be studied, catalogued and classified in the same way as the natural world. Therefore, when there is a state of anomie, a situation external to the individual, it should be possible to measure changes in behaviour. Durkheim's famous study of suicide demonstrates this. Taking one's own life is often seen as the most personal behaviour that an individual can take. However, Durkheim argued that rates of suicide, how many there were per population, varied between different countries, but remained fairly stable within a country across time. Because different people were involved

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in each year's statistics this suggested that the rate of suicide was not related to an individual predisposition but was related to the social environment in each country. Durkheim argued that the important factor was the different religions that dominated in the countries he studied. Protestant countries had a higher rate of suicide than Catholic countries because the conventions of the Catholic belief system encouraged a more cohesive support network. There were more people to comfort, protect and deter those wishing to commit suicide. So, for Durkheim, the difference was social, not individual as the psychologists were suggesting:

There is between psychology and sociology the same break in continuity as between biology and the physiochemical sciences. Consequently, every time a social phenomenon is directly explained by a psychological phenomenon, we may be sure that the explanation is false. (Durkheim 1895/1938: 104)

However, it is often forgotten that Durkheim was aware of the emerging research in psychology and the way that it was quickly developing into a respected science (Giddens 1978). Psychology was valuable to the sociologist and complimented their training, even if for Durkheim it was inferior. In *Suicide*, the sociologist was concerned with the collective nature of the subject, the trends and consistencies across time, not with the specific aspects of individual cases; this was the task of psychology. In an interview the sociologist Robert K. Merton noted why there was an animosity towards psychology in the work of Durkheim, and the way that the two disciplines tend to be in opposition:

I have ... never taken ... the polar position that if you're a sociologist, you dare not slip into considering questions of psychological process ... Now there is a great tendency, of course, in the Durkheimian tradition to do just that, because Durkheim ... was fighting entrenched groups of psychologists and social psychologists who were questioning the intellectual legitimacy of sociology. (Cullen and Messner 2007: 21)

Both the individual and sociological positivist approaches share certain issues in common. Both assume that there is a consensus in society as to what are agreed norms and values. Emphasis tends to be placed on the official statistics as a useful guide to the rate of crime in society. Research tends to be quantitative and experimental. Crime is deemed to be a deviation from the norm. There is an altruistic, welfare-oriented element to these approaches in that deviations from the norm are not held to be in the control of the individual, but instead outside their rational control. This is either as a consequence of internal mental deficits of some kind in individual positivism, or else the consequence of social structural factors such as the economy, religion or poverty in the sociological variant. Since the causes are not in the control of the individual, or group, and that crime is therefore not seen as being a rational choice, then punishment is not deemed to

be appropriate. After all, you would not punish someone for having the flu when there is little they can do about it. Indeed, this medical model is one that tends to be associated with positivism. Crime tends to be regarded as **pathological**, as an illness to be treated rather than a moral failure to be punished. Moreover, such approaches tend to posit causes which are regarded as necessary for the activity to take place. Without the cause, the activity would not occur.

### *Merton, Chicago and their influence*

Durkheim's concept of anomie was used in Robert K. Merton's sociology and the lessons that human behaviour can be understood at a social and structural level was central to the Chicago School of Sociology. Also influential on American sociology in the early to mid-twentieth century was psychology. The work of Merton (1938) and the many authors who formed the Chicago School of Sociology during its most fertile period from 1915 to 1935 (Bulmer 1984) drew on an exciting range of different ideas that would render more vivid the insularity of contemporary sociology, criminology and psychology. The work of the sociologist Robert K. Merton will be discussed in Chapter 4, however it is worth pointing out his use of ideas such as reference group theory that derived from his colleague Herbert Hyman at Columbia University (Runciman 1966) and which have been much discussed within psychology (Webber 2007a). However, it was at the University of Chicago where the interdisciplinary nature of the department allowed for much cross-fertilisation of ideas (Bulmer 1984). The sociologists drew from natural scientific models such as Burgess and Park's use of an ecological model to explain the way that the city of Chicago developed. Believing that the city does not grow in a random way, a theory of social ecology suggested that the city grew by a natural process where humans adapted to their environment and moved to areas most suited to their social position. As their situation changed they moved out of the area. This was compared to how plants adapt to their environment. The concentric zone model is the best known example of this where the city grows in rings around a central business district. Each ring is an area within which different people live. So the first ring outside the central zone was where the new immigrants to the city first settled since this was the cheapest accommodation. But, people moved out as their social and financial situations became better, meaning that this area was in a constant state of flux. This, in turn, meant that social networks between people were never able to become established (Park 1952). This lack of association, or social disorganisation, was thought to be a major cause of crime.

However, by way of critique of social disorganisation theory, the work of Edwin Sutherland drew on social psychological research into social learning theory to argue that rather than social disorganisation causing crime, instead many forms of crime required people to work with each other. Moreover, many

forms of crime needed to be learned in the same way as non-deviant activities. Sutherland, therefore presented a theory of differential association (1949). An example might be someone who chooses to steal a car. Before that can be carried out the person needs to learn how to hotwire a car, drive it and get away from the scene. A high level of learning needs to take place before that can be achieved. Such learning takes place within a social setting; the skills that need to be learned clearly need to be passed on by someone else.

These approaches have been characterised as sociological positivism, but it needs to be noted that this over-emphasises a certain aspect of the research. Although the Chicago sociologists drew on social psychological ideas and utilised statistical methods, they also used qualitative **ethnographic** methods and were influenced by the social psychologist George Herbert Mead (1934) whose work formed the core of symbolic interactionism. This approach influenced writers such as Howard Becker (1963) and Erving Goffman (1959). Becker and Goffman's ideas sensitised social scientists to the symbolic quality of the actions of humans and accelerated the questioning of the modernist concern with science, rationality and causation after the Second World War.

### **Late-modern approaches to the theory of crime**

The period after the Second World War initially led to a social and moral consensus as people retained the deference to authority that they had needed during the conflict. Politicians, police officers, teachers and the rule of law were rarely questioned. The world had moved from actual conflict to a tense stand-off between the capitalist 'West' and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and its socialist allies. The Cold War was as much ideological as it was territorial or military. The world was effectively split between those who pursued capitalism and those who pursued communism. The Vietnam War was a kind of proxy war between the USA and the USSR, an attempt to stop the spread of communism from the USSR-sponsored North to the American-sponsored South. The result was a 10 year conflict that America effectively lost in 1975. Yet, the pictures that came back to America were startling and deeply disturbing. More explosive was used in Vietnam than in the whole of the Second World War (Hobsbawm 1994). Around the country people started to question the legitimacy of the war and to question authority. Much of the questioning came from young people, and their culture became ever more confrontational. The post-Second World War consensus started to break down into more and more factions. It was the era of feminism, anti-racism and the civil rights movement. This anti-authoritarianism spread to the academic world and many disciplines began to be more critical.

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In criminology, the way law developed over time and reflected different moral debates lead to a contrast between those who believe there is a reality to crime that can be counted and classified, the positivist tradition discussed above, and those who believe that crime is socially constructed, changeable and not real, the labelling, symbolic interactionist or social constructivist tradition. For example, crimes that are newly created, or alternatively activities that were once illegal, can become decriminalised or regarded in law as less dangerous. The recent reclassification of marijuana in England and Wales from a class B to a class C drug, and then back again, is an example of this. Crime can be created through changes in law (Lemert 1967). Similarly, the lowering of the age of homosexual sexual intercourse, firstly from being illegal at any age, to being legal at 21, then 18, and now 16 to bring the age of consent in line with the law as applied to heterosexual sexual intercourse.

It is often thought that there are some crimes that are so serious that their enactment has always been a crime no matter when in history they were committed. Murder or rape tend to be the commonest offences mentioned. However, some sociologists such as Howard Becker (1963) argue that all crime is socially constructed. This idea is part of the symbolic interactionist perspective, where humans actively create meaning out of the world. An example would be the taking of someone's life, which can be differentially defined depending upon the circumstances. An ordinary member of the public deliberately taking a life tends to be termed murder, but that same person killing someone defined as an enemy during war is doing their patriotic duty. A car company that knowingly produces a car that may be faulty and could lead to an accident that could kill is rarely prosecuted for murder. Such arguments moved theory in a new direction during the 1960s and 1970s, into what some have termed a late-modern direction. Late-modernity is characterised by challenges to the scientific principles of rationality that was deemed to be dominant during the preceding period. It was essentially a challenge to positivism's orthodoxy during the majority of the twentieth century. Rather than seeing the criminal as different to the non-criminal and seeking an explanation for that difference, some researchers began to question the concreteness of this distinction. Were all criminals devoted to crime? All of the time? The answer according to Gresham Sykes and David Matza (1957) was that people 'drifted' between different identities and found ways to justify their behaviour, termed 'techniques of neutralization'. Again, it needs to be remembered that such ideas were not new, merely that the conditions were right for there to be a sufficiently large critical mass of academics who shared the same approach. Theory and social upheaval became fused in the later 1950s and accelerated into the 1960s as people increasingly questioned official versions of events which led to a breakdown in consensus.

***The 1960s, the social construction of crime  
and the challenge to dominant ideologies***

Although not as widespread, psychology and its related disciplines of psychiatry and psychoanalysis, also had its moment of questioning the authority of those in power, including psychologists. For example, Sykes and Matza's techniques of neutralisation has its counterpart within psychology and psychiatry. For example, Judith Herman (1992), one of the advocates of recovered memory syndrome, notes that the more powerful the person the more likely they are to want to define reality in their favour. They do this by positing:

an impressive array of arguments, from the most blatant denial to the most sophisticated and elegant rationalisation. After every atrocity one can expect to hear the same predictable apologies: it never happened; the victim lies; the victim exaggerates; the victim brought it upon herself; and in any case it is time to forget the past and move on. (1992: 8)

Despite the fact that there are such links between the psychological and the social nature of denial and manipulation of reality, which Herman herself points out (1992: 9), it is still common practice for those whose work sits more in the sociological camp to, ironically, deny the utility of the individual consciousness as studied by psychology. However, such arguments have been taken up by the sociologist Stan Cohen (2001) in his research on why people can be simultaneously aware of, and unaware of, atrocities, for example during war. Both of these writers will be discussed in more detail in later chapters.

Much of the work in this area is based on another of the key sociologists Max Weber, whose ideas on the dehumanising nature of bureaucracy and capitalism opened up debates about the nature of work and the stultifying tedium of day-to-day life in the modern world (1904, 1922). Weber's key contribution was to question the taken-for-granted acceptance of science as a rational enterprise. Science has answers to key questions, but what we do with those answers, the *meaning* we derive from them, is the key issue. In the early twentieth century science was able to show how to create products, from cars to radios, in the most efficient and profitable way possible. The industrial production line of Henry Ford's motorcar company in 1903 has become the blueprint for this phenomena and gave it a name, Fordism. However, F.W. Taylor is credited with an earlier system originating in America in the 1890s called Scientific Management, a term used interchangeably with Taylorism. A job was broken down into constituent parts, each one being performed by one person in contrast to the system of a person skilled in many or all of the techniques needed to produce the product. Over the twentieth century the skilled potter was replaced by the pottery factory, the clothes' maker by the sweatshop. Science answered the questions that

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capitalism asked of it, but the answers dehumanised society. As already noted, such ideas were modernist. The ambition was that through science, human progress could be assured. The problem was, at whose expense? Weber's contribution was to help us challenge the orthodoxy of scientific principles, not that science was flawed or that all ideas share equal importance; that would come later and characterised the view of postmodernity. What Weber sought to highlight instead was that bureaucracy, and here one might include the social sciences, was a method to control and constrain humans. Weber's ideas will be revisited in the last chapter where it will be noted that many of the advances in the psychology of crime have fulfilled Weber's warning that society was heading for rationality that was devoid of humanity. Suffice to say here that Weber's contribution has influenced many sociologists, especially those who question systems of risk management and control (Ferrell, Hayward and Young 2008). For some of these authors traditional psychological approaches are synonymous with this.

A similar movement away from scientific determinism was being made by those studying the individual. The pioneer of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud has already been briefly discussed, but his ideas certainly belonged to the modernist world of creating rigid systems of classification. On the other side of this argument stand the lifespan psychoanalysts such as Erik Erikson (1964) who in the 1960s posited a lifetime of personality growth based upon a succession of seven challenges throughout one's life. Failure to successfully complete one challenge can be compensated by success at the next (see Table 1.3). Although in reality, if one does not successfully find intimacy, later challenges might be harder. Nevertheless, the flexibility of this personality theory is certainly a challenge to the static approach of the Freudian tradition. Certainly, Erikson's work is an elaboration of Freud's and reflected the new direction in social science in the 1960s to move away from the determinism of psychological, psychiatric and biological theories towards those that developed an integration of the psychological

Table 1.3 *Freud's psychosexual stages and Erikson's psychosocial stages compared*

<b>Age</b>	<b>Freud's Psychosexual stages</b>	<b>Erikson's Psychosocial stages</b>
Infancy	Oral stage	Basic Trust versus Basic Mistrust
Early childhood	Anal stage	Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt
Play age	Phallic stage	Initiative versus Guilt
Adolescence	'Latency'	Industry versus Inferiority
Young adulthood	Genital stage	Identity versus Identity Confusion
Adulthood		Intimacy versus Isolation
Middle adulthood		Generativity versus Stagnation
Old age		Integrity versus Despair

with the social (Taylor et al. 1973). Hence, Erikson's psychosocial stages reflected not just internal conflicts, but how such conflicts were linked to wider concerns in society. As will be noted in the final chapter, such ideas have contemporary relevance since there is renewed interest in what has become known as psychosocial criminology (Jefferson 2002, 2004; Gadd and Jefferson 2007). Although Erikson is not mentioned yet in this literature, his attempt to transcend the static rigidity of Freud's personality trait theory seems an untapped source of ideas.

Another approach that drew on theories being developed in social theory and sociology was Gestalt psychology. Developed as a response and revision of Freudian psychoanalysis, Fritz and Laura Perls were the figureheads for this approach (1947/1969). Gestalt psychology draws on many different elements and so is a synthesis of intellectual ideas from different traditions. Further evidence of the way that psychology draws on the ideas of others. The basic idea is that rather than focusing on just the verbalisations of the person in therapy, one should instead look to seeing the person as a whole. Their physical behaviour, how they move, sit, walk etc., as well as what they say. This has led to the phrase, 'the whole is more than the sum of its parts'. It is a critique of the idea that the human can be studied in a purely rational way using the methods of the natural sciences. Consequently, Gestalt psychology is also a critique of **functionalism** and **structuralism**. Gestalt psychology introduced meaning into psychology, as humans perceived the world in ways that could not be explained by analysing the individual variables making up the phenomena. For example, the *phi phenomenon* describes the perception of two separate lights flashed in succession but perceived as one moving light by the subject. The subject is 'doing' something to the information and seeing something – movement – that is not there. This phenomenon is one common to anyone who has seen a film at the cinema, where single pictures are projected onto a screen sequentially at a speed that allows us to 'see' them as moving images.

### ***Eysenck as atavistic throwback***

However, as noted earlier, historical categories, such as modernism or postmodernism, are only ideal types and despite a move towards a questioning of positivism, one of the most influential theories in support of this approach also appeared at this time. Hans J. Eysenck's *Crime and Personality* (1964/1977) can be regarded as a direct descendant of the individual positivism of Lombroso. Eysenck argued that some people are biologically predetermined to be criminal due to their personality. This is determined by the physiology of their brains. Extroverted personality types had low cortical arousal, their brains 'ticked' over too slowly. To compensate such people sought out ways to energise their brains with excitement. Such excitement could be a bungee jump, or it could be

through aggression or stealing. The introvert's brain in contrast works fast and so does not need to be stimulated by more adrenaline. Such people were less likely to be involved in crime.

The problem with Eysenck's theory, as with so much psychological positivism is that the categories are wholly invented by psychologists. What it means to be an introvert is determined by a questionnaire created by Eysenck and predicated on the assumption that such categories are stable traits. If you are an introvert at 10 years old, then you are one at 50. Similarly, social structure and the context in which action takes place is also ignored, such that the description of the neurotic psychopath might just as easily describe the head of a large corporation as it does a criminal. So we see overlap and complexity, rather than just a linear movement from one set of ideas to the next. Nevertheless, the period of an unquestioning and placid population in developed democracies was coming to an end. White, male hegemony was being questioned by feminists and the various racial equality groups and this was echoed by critical and radical academics.

### ***The 1970s, the critical criminologists and the anti-psychiatry movement***

Outside of academia, with the social world changing, there was a symbiotic relationship at work whereby intellectuals were responding to, and directing, the way that society developed. Traditional positivism was criticised as a method of social control used by the powerful elite. By the time the 1970s arrived the questioning of authority was well under way. The period of consensus, that all of western society thought similarly, began to crumble as more researchers from many disciplines began to present arguments directly questioning theories they believed were in the interests of government to control the population.

One of the most important of the critiques of traditional psychology and psychiatry was the work of the Scottish psychiatrist Ronald. D. Laing (Laing and Esterson 1964/1990). Laing argued that madness, specifically schizophrenia, was diagnosed by psychiatrists without them understanding what went on behind the obvious manifestation of seemingly disordered thinking and behaviour. Laing argued that the behaviour of those labelled as schizophrenic could be made intelligible if the behaviour was viewed in the context of the patients' everyday lives, specifically when with their families. Laing, with his colleague Aaron Esterson, observed the interactions between the person whose behaviour would have been diagnosed as schizophrenic and their family. The result was that the presentation of seemingly irrational behaviour could be seen in a wholly different way. It was argued that the diagnosed

schizophrenic was expressing method in their madness. When they said they were being persecuted by their families, they were indeed being persecuted. Pearson argues that the anti-psychiatry argument of R.D. Laing is that the mad person is driven mad by crazy families *and* the madness is a rational response to mad situations, a breaking through of the restrictive chains of rational society and the restrictive envelope of the industrial demands on time and labour. This is in one sense tautological; madness is the symptom of a mad family and also the cure to the suffocating normality of existence in the conforming world (Pearson 1975). This whole movement can only be understood by looking at the context in which this argument is first expressed. Schizophrenia is as much a social phenomena as it is an individual pathology. This argument is taken to its most extreme form in the work of Laing, but we can see that the anti-psychiatry movement was also being supported by theoretical work in sociology and social theory. Authors like the French social theorist Michel Foucault (1971, 1977) questioned seemingly altruistic ideas like the individual positivist position that criminals should not be punished but treated. He suggested that they were in fact just new ways to gain control through surveillance. Through the idea of social welfare, people like doctors and social workers were able to gain access to the home and infiltrate families. The massively expanding disciplines like psychiatry, psychology and criminology were more concerned with control than help. Consequently, radical work in psychology, psychiatry, social theory and sociology began to question the deterministic accounts of individual and sociological positivism and pointed towards a new critical perspective. This is exemplified in the book *The New Criminology* (1973) by Taylor, Walton and Young that combined a Marxist perspective with symbolic interactionism to present a critical approach to the preceding theoretical perspectives such as the individual positivism of H.J. Eysenck, Becker's approach to labelling and the Mertonian tradition. The authors suggest that for 'fully social theory of crime' there needs to be a social psychology of crime. However, it has been argued that this has not been fully embraced and that there is now a more obvious split between psychology and sociology than there was previously (Webber 2007a). The historical continuity between the Mertonian tradition and *The New Criminology* will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 4.

### Postmodern approaches to the theory of crime

Such attacks on positivism leads us to the ultimate expression of this critical approach to science, the advent of postmodern analysis. Postmodernity cannot be called a theory since the nature of postmodernity is to challenge the

very construction of theory. It is an anti-theory. Many students new to the ideas of postmodernity find them difficult at first. This is, perhaps, because the ideas are counterintuitive and in contrast to conventional ways of seeing the world. For example, postmodernity challenges the idea that there is a story to life, a narrative that unfolds with a beginning, middle and end. Major influences in sociology were writers such as Jean-François Lyotard (1984) and Jean Baudrillard (1983). Psychology's position within the positivist paradigm sets it at odds with postmodern ideas. Postmodernists argue that theory is a human construction that is too ordered to adequately capture the chaos, confusion and contradictions of the human condition. Postmodern analysis does not sit easily on a historical timeline; in sociology and social theory the late 1970s and early 1980s are often cited as the period when the ideas became accepted. Postmodernity can be seen as a critic of the rationality of technological advancement. Whereas Weber argued that science and the rational methods that characterised it was a better system than common sense, postmodernity takes the problem with science further. As psychology moves more fully into the medical sphere, with psychologists having their research funded more frequently by medical research councils, so the critique of scientific rationality at the heart of postmodernity forms a central critique of psychology itself. The final chapter will explore these issues in more detail.

### **History as collective memory**

The historian E.H. Carr wrote in *What is History?* that history is a dialogue between the past and the present (Carr 1987). One cannot understand our present situation without an awareness of the past. It is like a person who has lost their short-term memory. Everything has to be learned anew each day. So, in social policy an awareness of the past can alert us to the possible mistakes of previous methods of dealing with problems. However, there are numerous examples where this dialogue has ceased, and we forget the lessons of the past and remake policies devoid of a historical awareness of where they may go wrong (Herman 1992). Or we see a phenomena presented as if it is new and unique, and indeed uniquely troubling, when it is a phenomenon that previous generations have already confronted (Pearson 1983). Alternatively, a crime that is rare, such as serial murder, is given more media attention than it deserves and the method for preventing it given too much credence. The following chapter looks at the topic of serial murder, and discusses the way that the investigation techniques built up to tackle the crime often have very little to do with psychology and the risk of victimisation small.

## Summary

- This chapter has traced the broad historical trends in the study of crime. It has pointed out that all psychological theories developed within specific historical moments and reflected the concerns of the time. Understanding this allows us to better judge contemporary research.
- Sociology and psychology were much more closely linked than in contemporary research. It is difficult to pinpoint when the separation occurred, but the questioning of positivism after the Second World War began a trend that saw sociological criminology become more dominant, especially the form that criticised the legitimacy of authority in the late 1960s and early 1970s.
- Nevertheless, even in one of the key books of this period, Taylor et al.'s (1973) *The New Criminology*, social psychology was presented as a key aspect for a 'fully social theory of crime'. However, this has yet to be fully explored.

## STUDY QUESTIONS

- 1 Why is it important to be aware of the history of a subject?
- 2 Why might it be argued that terms like modernity, late-modernity and postmodernity are social constructions?
- 3 Is a postmodern criminology possible?
- 4 Early criminological studies attempted to show how the offender was different from the non-offender. Conduct a content analysis of newspaper stories of crime. Can you still see evidence of this? If so, why do we still wish to see the offender as distinct from the non-offender?
- 5 Go back to Table 1.2 on page 9. Photocopy the page and add a column titled 'Major historical events' either to the right or left of the table. Using newspaper archives or books from your library add into this column major political or social events that you feel had a major impact on people at the time. What methods did you use to choose the events? Were these events equally felt locally, nationally and globally? How might these events affect our understanding of the causes of crime and solutions to them? In what ways were the concerns of the time reflected in the theories that were being developed and what does this suggest about how theory is created?

### ***FURTHER READING AND USEFUL WEBSITES***

Almost all introductory textbooks have a chapter on the history of criminology. Godfrey, Lawrence and Williams (2007), *History and Crime*, London: Sage, is a good place to start. Also, the chapter by Clive Emsley (2007) 'Historical Perspectives on Crime', in M. Maguire, R. Morgan and R. Reiner (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology* (4th edn). In the same volume Clive Hollin (2007), 'Criminal Psychology', provides a good overview of the links between sociological and psychological accounts of crime.

The following is a link to *The British Crime Survey: Measuring crime for 25 years*. This is a review of how this important survey has changed over its first 25 years:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs07/bcs25.pdf>

### **Notes**

- 1 The terms 'normal' and 'abnormal' are used throughout and placed in speech marks to illustrate the contested quality of these terms. They are still terms commonly used in Psychology, but which are problematised within some areas of sociology where the contention is that there is nothing fixed about what society sees as normal or abnormal, they are socially constructed categories.
- 2 This word refers to theories that are centred on the body.