

Prologue: The Ironic Growth of a Subject

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This welcome and newest issue of the journal suggests just how much ground is surprisingly now encompassed by the expanding notion of criminology. The growth of a subject is not unique, and we readily admit there are of course other fields that remained relatively static in some periods and then grew again -- mineralogy, for example, lost out in the early twentieth century to expanding geological sciences and then bounced back by venturing into new areas such as atomic structure. It is a truism that knowledge is not fixed, and even Roman history and Greek archaeology change.

So perhaps we cannot be too surprised or startled by the new concerns that are becoming part of criminology. Cyber hacking is a good example, as it would have belonged in an H.G. Wells novel just a generation ago. Border control has become the shrillest of political issues. The internet has even brought new crimes to high school youth, as they circulate nude pictures resulting in suicides. All this promises to be just the start of what we are going to see in forthcoming offences and offenders in areas well beyond yesterday's imagination.

There is a certain irony to the idea that social deviance is growing so fast thanks to technology, but there it is. Not only do we need to study and understand all of this, but we need to include these aberrations in the academic curriculum. If we do not, we will be even more the victims than we already are, as the wily and devious bound ahead with identity theft, credit card manipulation, and ballot box tampering.

My friends, read and reflect.

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