

Comments on Criminology Text by Donald R. Taft

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Editor's Note: Ahrens was asked by his colleague to review and comment on his Criminology text. Ahrens' commentary below is not only a response to Taft, but constitutes a unique criminological theory.

Professor Taft's "Criminology" offers an excellent summary and analysis of crime theories of present day criminal research, and of guiding ideas in penology. But it is more than a review. The author is concerned with developing a conception of crime and with laying down lines of action in regard to it that shall flow logically from that conception. Theory has implication for practice and sound procedure in dealing with crime presupposes a valid crime theory.

The question of the validity of the proposed theory we should like to investigate. There is much in the look to which an intelligent reader will give unqualified approval. He will be in sympathy with the enlightened penal policies advocated. He will agree that criminals are environmental products and that crime is not an expression of human will. With Prof. Taft, he will reject the old free-will theory. He will agree with his evaluation of competition.

Content and Organization of the Book

As to the general content and organization of the book, we shall be brief. After dealing with crime and the individual, we find a part which deals with crime and institutions, the family, neighborhood, church, etc. Play life and amusement might well merit a special chapter. Strangely enough, education, an institution of such great significance to the life of the young is not discussed at all. Likewise, no mention is made of art, nor of the prodigious institutions of property, of government, of law.

From this fact, the reader might conclude that only the institutions discussed are causes of crime, while those not mentioned are irrelevant. But he is hindered from so doing by the assertion that crime has its roots in our whole socio-culture life. That means all institutions. Since the organization of all institutions constitutes society, it means that the roots of crime lie in society itself.

The idea that crime springs from the heart of society is interesting. Popular conception always has crime coming from the outside. It is the foreigner, the low class, the individuals never socialized, that are the source of crime. Society is perfect. It is not a sinner, is only sinned against. From foes without and within its borders, it must protect itself. The notion that crime is inherent to our whole socio-culture life is far too disturbing. It gives us nothing solid to stand on. We may admit that crime does spring from some of our native institutions, as the saloon, pool hall, labor union, some business methods. Perhaps, our society isn't altogether perfect. But to claim that the church, art, property, education, government, courts, law, are agencies which actually create disorganization and crime, is sheer nonsense. Though details of our life may be wrong, the foundation is sound. Besides, the idea is altogether impractical. We might reform some minor parts of life and reduce or even eliminate crime. But to change the whole

social order is impossible. Equally preposterous is the corollary conception of the criminal. Rooting in society, he is made out a child of that society. He is pictured as incorporating its life, its aims and ideals, perhaps even made out as a purely conventional citizen. And, granting the assumption there follow a host of problems which defy solution. Who is there to say that he can judge the whole of our socio-cultural life? If he cannot, he cannot assert it produces crime.

Where does Prof. Taft stand in regard to this idea? It is obvious that he asserts it, and, to some extent, develops it. It is equally obvious that it is not the central and organizing idea of the book. That idea differs from both of the above. Instead of viewing crime as immanent to life, as rooting within, growing within, being a form of that life itself, he externalizes the source of crime in what he calls environment. From the popular view he differs by his depersonalizing crime and the criminal. The popular view is that crime roots in the bad character or will of individuals. Prof. Taft denies this through his assertion that crime is a product of causal forces. The criminal is causally determined. This is the key idea. It is the idea around which Prof. Taft seeks to build crime explanation, his crime theory and the penology.

Ambuigities in Determiner and the Determined

On the face of it, the basic idea is very simple, is, in fact, very familiar. The environment determines the individual. The expression has come to flow so glibly from our tongue that questions of its meaning never arise.

What is environment? It might be taken as synonymous with the socio-cultural life in which we have our being. In that case one part of life is made intelligible in and through its relation to other parts, ultimately to the whole organized life. In this case we do not go outside of life. The whole of human relations is the ground of explanation.

In the second sense, environment is something separate from and back of life. The reference is here usually to the physical environment. Attempts at explaining man's social and culture life by his geographic environment are familiar. Familiar, too, are attempts so to explain crime.

Prof. Taft does not use "environment" in the first nor in the second sense. He, no doubt, means to include in that term all natural and culture objects, buildings, farms, painting, songs, books, laws, i.e., all the objects taken together we ordinarily designate our outer social and culture environment. This definition, however, leads to difficulties. Such an environment is not separate from life and back it. It is not a cause of life, thought, action. For this environment is merely the objectification of the social and cultural life. It is the life whole fixed for a moment awaiting its renewed flow. It is a phase in the continuity of life, is the means to that continuity. By this road we again come to the category of life. The criminal's life grows out of life and has relations to the life-whole. And that relation, or absence of relation, is the basis of explanation. Whether life relations are causal relations is a question to which we shall turn later. We shall try to show they are not.

The determined is the individual. Here we find two expressions used interchangeably which are, however, very different in their meaning. Once, it said that the environment forms the individual. Again, it is said that the environment determines or causes action.

The first of the two appears to mean that the individual's character, the pattern or law of his action is determined by the environment. He may be assumed to have the power to generate acts, but if and when he does act, he will follow a pattern which he did not create. He may have the wish or will to be an important person. If the environment develops a criminal pattern in him, he will inevitably follow that pattern. These attitudes and patterns are the source of his inclinations, of his will directions. The individual so conceived has will. What is really denied is his having intelligence. Logical thought cannot be the law of his action. This conception fits a great deal of man's action life. It has truth as fact but becomes most unfortunate when viewed as principle. We shall let it rest, though attention must be called to the word "forms." Causes produce effects. And, at least the mechanical causes, "form" nothing. We shall also pass by the innumerable conceptions of patterns as of the nervous system, habit, custom, inborn ideas, etc. It is clear we do not have here a clear cut determinism since will is all.

The second conception is rarely clearly distinguished from the first. It has its origin in English empiricism in the doctrine of mind as an empty slate, i.e., in the absence of patterns. The "idea" is a direct imprint on the mind. In terms of action, the individual is eliminated in the formula stimulus-response. Following out this logic rigorously, we find the individual reduced to a puppet. He has no spontaneity of any kind. Every act is caused. Every word he speaks, song he sings, every book and syllable of that book he writes is caused by the environment. This means that the environment speaks, sings, writes books, plays the piano, bakes the bread. All the properties ordinarily attributed to the person are attributed to the environment. It has become the person back of the person. The logical fallacy of hypostatizing the individual and positing this abstraction back the concrete person, is obvious. Its motive is the causal explanation, the idea that explanation involves getting back something to explain that thing.

In order to avoid this crude personification of the environment, the environment, in turn, becomes depersonalized by pluralizing it into an infinite number of causes. It would be interesting to follow out this attempt at escape in more detail. We should soon be amazed to learn how all these millions of little causes managed to arrange themselves in such beautiful and sensible orders, also how each little cause would have enough sense to know what all the other little causes are doing so as to come in at just the right fraction of a second and leave again just when it ought. Since the "scientists" are so puzzled about causal explanation we should learn that each little cause knows much more than all the scientists put together. But all this that passes understanding we shall prefer to leave to the causal mystics.

Another problem is as to whether only the individual or whether society, too, is determined by the environment. The criminal seems to be the individual determined to act against society. He cannot help himself. But isn't society determined in the same way to act against the criminal? Is it necessary to change the environment of society first so that it will act differently toward to the criminals? And who is to do that?

Ambiguity in the little word "in"

We shall again start with the formula that the individual is determined by the environment. This may be stated: the individual's character and his actions are a function

of the environment. Of course, it is a function of the environment in which he is. We shall follow the idea.

On a pleasant afternoon I take a walk into the delinquency area of my city. The sun continues to shine brightly, but a peculiar change comes over me. I begin to feel very devilish and do some naughty things. The fact is, I discover I have become a delinquent. Fortunately, I am a scientist and understand this business, so I get out of the area and hie myself home where I recover my old personality. The theory is most illuminating. For example, it explains so well how criminals, who hatch a dark deed in their criminal environment but the execution of which lies in the environment of a good Methodist community always became transformed upon entering that community and always end up by going to prayer meeting. Since in traveling we pass through many different environments, it explains too, why traveling sixty miles per hour is so wearing, painful, and disorganizing to personality.

Perhaps, we shall be accused of not having got rid of the devilishness acquired on that sunny afternoon. It will be objected that "in" is not merely a question of space, also one of time. Naturally, the environment doesn't change us in a moment. It must not become fused with dynamite. But imagine this experiment. Instead of locking some stupid fellow in a prison cell transplant that cell to a big library. Keep him there for ten years, taking him for daily walks in the book stacks, make him handle the books, wipe the dust off them, wheel them around in a wheel barrow. Obviously not at once, but in ten years time he will be a library product, a great scholar.

If this is not satisfactory we should like to know what else must be brought in to make the statement, that the individual is a function of the environment, intelligible. If the success your experiment be questioned, we should like to know on what grounds. It will certainly not be argued that the individual must do something before the environment can form him and that its influence over him is dependent upon his efforts. That contradicts our theory completely for it makes the active power of the environment upon the individual dependent upon him. Our theory asserts that the individual has nothing to do with it. The environment inevitably molds him. All that is required is that he be put into it.

We must admit that we cannot make this conception of individual-environment relation clear to ourselves. To us it appears that being "in" the environment is something much more than a physical relation. The individual is not "in" it until he absorbs its influences. At the beginning his relation may be near zero. The relation is not ready-made in advance, but grows. Things that had no meaning or even existence for him at the beginning take on reality and begin to have a profound influence on his mind. And as his world grows, he grows. The two develop together. The environment is the content of his being. Separate the two and you have two empty abstractions. Make one abstraction determine the other and you still have abstraction. The space-time and causal relation can only be considered an end term of the individual-environment relation, the end where the relation is minimal. The real, dynamic relation is organic. Objects do have influence. But these influences are not direct. They depend upon our effort. They depend upon all relations we have established. So it is only in and through the relations achieved that objects have influence. The having of relations with out world depends upon creative acts. Through paying attention, thinking, working, creating objects of beauty, do we achieve a relation with our world. We do not have an environment, we achieve it.

The End-Products of the Philosophy

Since we cannot find our way to any clear conception of causal determination, we had better turn to concrete interpretations in the book for help and guidance. We are told that determinism gives us a view of crime and penology radically different from that of the prevailing free will philosophy. Let us examine these unique end-products of the philosophy and try to work our way backwards from these to a clear meaning of determinism. Turning to concrete instances of action how does Professor Taft interpret them? Has he a different conception from the common of what constitutes a good, what criminal act? There is no evidence of it. What is crime for the common view is crime for Prof. Taft. He accepts all the definitions and categories of crime as worked out by the common free will assumption and makes these basic to his criminology. The exact point we are making is that he accepts them and does not treat them as mere ideas or superstitions of a society. Had he done this, his book would have dealt with superstitions about crime and the action to which they lead. He would then have proceeded to explain the causes of these fantastic free will ideas. He would have thrown their phantastic character in high relief. He might have shown how ridiculous such distinctions in crime as between manslaughter and first degree murder are. He might have argued that since all acts are identical in being causally determined, there is no distinction as between a good and a bad act. Or assuming that injury to property and others is a criterion of a criminal act, he might have pointed out that the whole category of criminal acts must be revised. If I slip and fall in a way so as to injure another person near me, I have caused injury. I ought to be sent to prison. True I had no intention or will to do so, but I have no intention or will anyway. In some such way, Prof. Taft might have made clear to us the falsity of free-will conceptions. He certainly does not mean to argue that free will philosophy is false while all its conceptions are right. A determinist might well accept these ideas and their consequences as fact. He would explain to us a causal environment produces ideas of a non-causal environment, of free will. But he would not make them the basis of a science.

With the popular view that the criminals ought to be apprehended, tried, sentenced, incarcerated, Prof. Taft again seems to be in complete accord. But we may be told that it is in the treatment of crime where the real meaning of deterministic philosophy comes to light. That may indeed be the case. Seeing our author is a determinist, we might anticipate his approach to penology. We shall be told that reforming criminals is utterly impossible. A criminal is a product of the environment. To change him would imply changing the environment. But man is not a master over the causal powers. The environment is master over us. Changing the environment implies free will. The criminal cannot change his own world from a bad into a good one, nor can anyone else do it for him. Such a master over the environmental forces could only be some angel or god. To argue that an individual may be determined by the environment to improve the environment is simply to argue the power of self determination and will as an attribute of the environment. That contradicts its blind causal character which is our whole assumption. In short, deterministic penology will teach that all ideas of criminal reform are outgrowths of the erroneous free-will philosophy. It will logically demonstrate our total inability to do anything whatsoever about crime.

Strangely enough, we are told nothing of the kind. Prof. Taft believes not only in the desirability, but also in the possibility of criminal reform, just as do the believers in free will. This brings us to a curious impasse. We began with the idea of the individual determined by the environment and tried to see what it meant in concrete terms. That translation failed. We then began to investigate concrete interpretations in order to work back to the real meaning of determinism. But, we are stuck. We cannot discover a meaning.

The Meaning of Determinism

There seems to be one way out of all this difficulty. We shall make the assumption that Prof. Taft has a very important idea in mind in all this discussion of determinism, a valid idea, but that this idea has got itself into a wrong coat. We shall argue that the real meaning of his deterministic view has relevance to method, and not for philosophy, at least not for the old deterministic philosophy.

Deterministic philosophy has two main forms, the religious and the mechanistic. An example of the first is a Calvin's doctrine of predestination. For Calvin the life of every individual, righteous and unrighteous, is part of God's plan laid down with the foundation of the world. Such a part of the plan was Judas. Not even Christ could change him. Prof. Taft does not believe in determinism of life from birth, not to mention the beginning of the world. His determinism is of an altogether different species. It does not root in the will of God, but in environmental conditions very limited in space and time. The individual can be taken out of one space-time environment and be put into another with resulting transformation in character. But you can't take the individual out of God's plan.

The second form, mechanism, differs from Calvinism in that it denies plan, purpose, meaning in the universe. There never has been a consistent mechanist in the history of philosophic thought. All smuggle in will, meaning, value. With loud acclaim they push these out of the front door only to leave them in quietly at the back one. The assumption is that of a universe driven by blind physical forces. There is no good or bad, right or wrong. There is no such thing as crime. Are there criminal winds and non-criminal ones? Can there be a criminology of chemical elements, of sound waves, of light? Since all phenomena in the universe are of identical mechanical nature, there is no more sense in having criminology in the human sphere than in the physical. Criminology rests on the free will idea, on the false notion that there are values, that none can act on the basis of meaning, that men's actions differ in moral worth.

We take it that those two main forms exhaust deterministic philosophy. Developmental forms may be considered as variants and have no relevance here. Since Prof. Taft's book fits into neither of the above, we must conclude that he is not a philosophic determinist. From this it does not follow that he accepts the free will conception and that his book does not make an important point. We might make headway by asking ourselves as to why Prof. Taft espouses that philosophy. In that way we might hope to come to grips with the real underlying issues.

Why Professor Taft Espouses

Prof. Taft's learning toward an out and out determinism seems to have its roots in several very basic problems. These are all closely related but we may distinguish them as the problem of explanation of individualism and responsibility, of the nature of will, and of scientific method.

We are sometimes inclined to fall into a very primitive idea of explanation. We think that a thing is explained by some force or power back it. Wind is explained by a wind spirit, an instinctive act by instinct, or any thought or act is explained by some power in us or outside us which accounts for its existence. We should like to point out that there is nothing back of anything, That it is not the function of explanation to tell us what causes space, time, life, thinking, acting, society, or even cause itself. The essence of explanation is to say what things are and to define them in and through their relations to other phenomena or forms of phenomena. We can't be magicians in our explanations and pull things into being out of the void. Biologists explain one function of the body in relation to other functions. They relate the form of one animal body to that of other animal bodies, even to plants and inorganic compounds. But they do not ask for the cause of animal bodies, do not assume some entity back that class of things which brought them into existence. Why, then, do we assume that there is something separate from and back of action? Thought, action, personality, life, society, etc are categories as ultimate as space, time and cause. They are the ground of explanation. It is in relation to these categories that life-phenomena are made intelligible. Ignore them and you fall into the blue of empty abstractions and purely fictive explanations.

Prof. Taft denies that all responsibility of a criminal act rests upon the criminal. In that his conception differs from the popular view, which always makes the criminal an object of its "righteous wrath." One way to avert this unjust action is to show that the criminal has been subject to unfavorable circumstances and that not much else could be expected. Go one step farther and argue that he was caused to act so and that he has no responsibility at all, and one is well on the way to determinism. To argue that the criminal has a little responsibility, at least, does not help matters much. There can be little doubt about the correctness of Prof. Taft's thesis that the criminal is a victim of his environing circumstances. If so, how can one escape determinism?

Actions do not take place in a vacuum, but in a world of ordered objects. A familiar fact in life is to find ourselves in situations in which no intelligent act is possible. At much times we are at the mercy of those situations. We are not responsible for what happens then. This does not mean that no such thing as responsibility exists. It is not some absolute in the individual possessed at all time and under all conditions. Rather, it is a question of our world and our relation to it. In a rightly ordered world, to whose objects we have access, we gain the capacity for intelligent action. Responsibility itself is a condition achieved through a right ordering of our world. Conversely, it is lost with its disorganization. An individual will plan to avoid situations in which he cannot live and act. But the power in this direction on the part of individuals is limited. Each exists within a societal frame which he cannot modify. This frame may be such that at some point in it some individuals can't even exist, let alone act intelligently. This means that responsibility is not merely individual, as the common view has it, but corporate as well. These disordered areas of our life in which human life inevitably suffers, grows perverse, degenerates are the creations of a society lacking intelligence and possessing wrong aims in life. And, we suggest, that it is in terms of our corporate life and its failure, and not in

terms of some entity called environment, apart from and back of life, thought, action, human relations, where the explanation lies.

Professor Taft objects to the free-will doctrine. There is no denying that the old idea of will power has been pretty well exploded by now and is rather hard put for champions. Nor do we care to argue that position. The logic is clear. Either one believes in free will or in determinism. Reject the first, and you must take upon yourself the second. How will you escape it? Then there is science. Will you not grant that the humanities should make every effort to become scientific? We do. Observe then that the essence of scientific explanation is the discovering of causal relations. And the causal view is necessarily a deterministic one.

Those last two points require special discussion. We may not have gotten at all the sources of this drift towards determinism. Enough has been said to indicate that Professor Taft's position is not an arbitrary dogmatic one, but that it roots in very difficult problems which he tries to answer in his theory.

The Rejection of Will and the Resulting Dilemma

In rejecting the idea of will, Prof. Taft gets himself involved in a serious contradiction. We shall state that the dilemma in some such way as this: If the individual is determined by his environment, then he cannot act contrary to or against it. Hence, crime is impossible. Or, the individual can act against his total environment, in which case crime is possible, but the criminal has free will. For, it is of the essence of the free will doctrine that the individual can act contrary to his environment. The good man can act contrary to his evil environment, the bad man contrary to a good environment. Obviously, if determined by the environment they would each act in accordance with it. So, the question is how on the basis of Prof. Taft's theory of action, crime is possible.

This contradiction is not at once apparent in the book because of the distinction drawn between environment and society, a point commented on previously. In explaining crime, Prof. Taft shows a predilection for the term environment. He does not say that crime is an act against the environment, but against society. This indicates two worlds. Their natures are opposite. In the environment-world, the individual follows the law of causal forces. In the society-world he follows law as moral standard. He cannot act against the former, but he may disobey and act against the latter. In one, he is a puppet, in the other a man of free will. The environmental realm is a causal realm. But society is free. We never hear of society being caused to do anything. It is the realm of freedom as over against nature, and in it the individual is free. He can contravene its law, can act against the foundations of that order and threaten its existence, but against a bad environment he can do nothing. So, we have two completely different sets of assumptions as to the nature of the individual, of his world, and of his relation to it. With all of his emphasis upon determinism, Prof. Taft does not escape the conception of will.

The Will Conception

Unfortunately, Prof. Taft does not develop a criticism of the free will theory. Perhaps, we can surmise some of the main objections to it.

The traditional, perhaps academic, conception of free will has in it an element of magic. By some formal pronouncement or fiat something is to be changed in the world. But we cannot command a criminal into a useful citizen any more than we can command an idiot into a philosopher. This magical notion calls for criticism.

Another objection may be to the conception of will as a mysterious entity and power over the feeling, thinking, acting, individual. This fallacy is interesting. The more will is separated from the concrete person and made into an abstract power, the more it is depersonalized and approaches impersonal causes. At this point the free-will theorists and determinists may meet in all but name.

The final criticism of free will may be on the ground of caprice. It is taken to stand alone in the world, capable of acting without relation to anything. Such a conception negates the idea of relation and order upon which explanation must rest. Its acceptance destroys all grounds of intelligibility.

We must accept all these criticisms. We shall argue that the way out lies, not in the direction of rejecting the will idea, as such, and in accepting determinism, but in a new will-theory.

What is will? Life and will are not two separate entities. Will is life affecting itself in the world. It is life in its active aspect. Will calls for no special and external causes. It is an attribute of life. Without will there is no life. Life always exists as embodied. It may incorporate in a body, in sensory stuff, in objects, in vast organizations of objects. It is in these and through these as a system of means that life affects itself. Will achieves its ends indirectly, through an ordering of means. Will may then also be defined as the ordering of means to ends. Its essence is not caprice but order. Its procedure is not by force but intelligence. It is the opposite of fiat and magic. I cannot change myself by fiat. I can change myself through an intelligent ordering of means, as of diet, exercise, planned study. Prof. Taft is right in insisting that punishment will not recreate a criminal, but a right ordering of means, the same type of means that normally produce fine characters, may bring about great changes in the criminal. All he has to say about this line seems to imply the conception of will which we are here indicating. It seems to us that the difficulties we have encountered can get their solution only on the basis of such a conception and all it implies. The problem of developing a fine life and fine character of an individual, as well as a nation, is the problem of creating fine objects, physical and mental, and in ordering these objects to that end. Punishing, exhorting, working on the subject through propaganda, are all false and pernicious methods. Is not this the underlying idea of the book? If not of the whole, there is, at least, a great deal there that will give support to it.

Individual and Environment

The above theory of will has direct implication for the problem of the relation of individual and environment.

In their fundamental conception, the free will advocates and the environmentalists are in complete accord as to this relation. Both make of them two independent entities external to one another and acting upon each other. The difference comes in when the direction of action is considered. The free will theorists put the individual above the environment, and, in extreme form, deny all power of the environment over the

individual. The environmentalist asserts the power of the environment over the individual and, in extreme form, denies all power of the individual over the environment. Those completely befuddled talk of interaction.

Free will theorists and environmentalists make the identical error. They speak of individual and environment, whereas the two constitute the individual-environment unity which is the person.

The individual has a physical relation to the world in so far as he is a physical being. Defined in terms of space and time, as a mere object amidst other objects, all surrounding things are external to him. But man is not a stone. In the strict sense a stone has no environment. That belongs to living things. And man has a life relation, or an organic relation, to his world.

This organic relation may be analyzed into three main relations. The individual, first of all, roots in his world. He organizes the materials of the world into his own being. The stories, songs, sights and sounds, become part of his own living tissue. The environment comes to life in him through a process of absorbing and ingesting it. What he turns out to be is largely a question of environmental stuff upon which he feeds. The stuff doesn't cause him any more than grass causes cows. One becomes the other through a process of growth. The two are continuous. The living plant takes in chemicals from the soil, air, water, light. Or, turned about, these environmental things become the plant. The plant is a form of environmental organization. So is the individual. When we create objects, make songs, write books, build cities, slums, armies, we create character. The two processes are identical. Long before the individual is born his character is being made by the generations before him which build the world for him to live in. That is what is meant by saying that our characters root in our whole socio-culture world, root in all the institutions. It is, also, that fact which ultimately gives us the one common character which lies deeper than the one developed within our more narrow life spheres within the whole. It explains too, why interpreting character and action merely in terms of the immediate environment might be a very superficial interpretation

The second relation is the end relation. The individual makes objects and institutions the end of his effort. His life becomes organized about them. They become the principle of his life. His environment becomes internal to him as the law of his being. In a warring society where war becomes the end of all his thoughts and efforts, he will be a warrior. His life will be in oneness with his world and will issue into it. So our lives become objects and orders of objects. We become part of the living environment. Where the individual's relation to the world is destroyed, his life cannot so issue. He remains an incomplete person.

All of which implies the third relation. To live and act, the individual must have access to means. The environment, then, stands to the individual in a means-end relation or as a body. Destroy the means or body and you destroy the life. A study of life, of personality, of human relations, of action, becomes unreal when severed from objects. The relation to them is a living relation.

If all this is correct, it will be seen that our usual individual-environment dichotomy, with which practically all our present day thinking in social science starts, is woefully inadequate and misleading. It is time we rid ourselves of that old fallacy.

Scientific Method

The essence of science is logic, not causal explanation. Science seeks to discover the nature of things. Scientific questions are those which inquire into the nature of light, electricity, life, personality, society, state, etc. That a match, thrown into combustible material, causes a house to burn, is of no particular interest to scientists. They study light and care little whether the light they are studying has been caused by lightning, by a match, or by fire-sticks. Problems of causes might be important for practical, i.e. technical purposes. At all events, science describes other relations besides causal. There is no intention here to deny the reality of causal relations in nature, nor in human life. The point is that it is not the whole of science and is not the only kind of relation.

David Hume denied the existence of causal relations. He maintained that these are nothing but space and time relations. We observe certain phenomena following upon each other with regularity. Becoming habituated to it, we begin to speak of causal chains and of a necessity that inheres in that chain. Hume explains that none such exists. There is no ground whatever for saying things must happen in that order. The notion of necessity is but a survival of animism.

It does no harm to recall Hume in this connection though it is not the line of attack we should like to make. We should like to point out that this emphasis on causal relations is part of a great trend in modern thought in the direction of oversimplification. We cannot meet the problems. Our way out is to make the problems small enough so we can deal with them easily. Great ideas must be pulled down. After they are pulled down sufficiently, we marvel at the stupidity of great thinkers and admire ourselves by this now favorable comparison. Colors must be made grey. Eternal values must be brought to about the stomach level. Men must be reduced to rats, action to reflex, thought to association, human relation to the relations of animals in the forest, or even to the relation of billiard balls. Against this vast tide, one shouts in vain. It is an aspect of the collapse of modern culture life. We operate with fixed ideas and are no longer able to grow.

If we are not mistaken, all this talk about being scientific in the humanities is largely just that thing. Instead of approaching human nature and human relations with the end in view of discovering the nature of man, of society, of relations, we approach our material with ready made conceptions from the natural sciences and foist these upon our material, only to violate it. What we cannot sufficiently squeeze into the pre-existing mould, we conveniently explain away. Under this influence of "scientific" zeal, all that is human and most human, has been pretty well banished from sight. What is most human is an intelligent, moral, creative life. If we cannot study that, if we cannot make discoveries here, of what use is social science? Astronomers would not allow us to interpret the solar system in terms of family relations. Why should we permit some "astronomer" to interpret the family relations in terms of the solar system? There are, obviously, connections between the higher and lower systems. The individual, himself, has his being in several, rather, in all the systems of the world. But that does not mean that those relation-systems are identical.

We spoke of this tendency of fake simplification in connection with culture loss. It has another source which might exist independently. We refer to a false assumption as to the nature of unity. We want unity in society, in thought. How is that to be achieved? The answer is through uniformity. Uniformity and unity which are polar opposites are taken to be the same. Under this motive, everything must be viewed in the same way, say

as physical, if we want to get unity in our thinking. Such errors effectively bar us from any real connection with our distinct subject matter.

Our discussion has led us to describe relations of a type altogether different from the caudo-mechanical. We shall assume that the point we are here trying to make, namely, that the causal relation is only one type of relation among others, and is not the distinctive human relation at all, has been sufficiently clarified.

Toward a Theory of Crime

Crime is clashing of wills. The disturbance created by the clash may range all the way from a momentary disruption of relations of a small group, say of a family, to the jeopardizing of the whole system of public relations. As it approaches the latter pole, it becomes crime in the full sense of the word. The situation out of which the clash springs may be immediate. It springs from a grave misunderstanding between two persons. The jolly companions have imbibed too freely. There is a flare of sex-jealousy. The situation may widen until we come to those clashes between persons which root in the whole social organization.

If crime be defined as the clashing of wills, then, its opposite is contract, the agreement of wills. From that point of view crime may also be defined as the failure of contract. In a narrow sense this is a question of understanding as between a few people. Its meaning may be much wider. In the widest sense, contract is the integration of the entire societal life toward a common object. As our life becomes organized about a great object it becomes dynamic, its hidden powers come to light, it becomes rich and complete. Through such a public object public relations are created and maintained. The failure in contract is, then, ultimately our failure in developing such large objectives. It is the failure in developing a great public creative life. To the degree that a society fails in that task, to that degree it becomes divisive. To that degree conflict, repressive force, frustration, tension, are generated. Means through which the individual normally realizes his physical, social, artistic, life have been perverted by the will schism to class ends or private ends.

In that situation the lives of many will remain incomplete. There may follow personality disorganization or a surrender to the situation. In both cases we may have sudden irrational outbursts of emotions which lead to crime. Or, the situation may not be accepted. The individual schemes and fights to the end of achieving a fuller life. But that struggle itself perverts him.

The clash of individual wills roots, then, in the clash of purposes in society. Since those purposes are institutionalized, we may say that crime has its source in the conflicting institutions. The connection of crime with war is clearly pointed out by Prof. Taft. It is true, that crime in the usual sense of an individual acting against the person and property of another, is continuous with the same act on the part of institutions and of whole societies. The smaller clashing of wills is but the clashing of small waves in the great sea of big clashing waves.

The Elimination of Crime

The idea of crime prevention, as of war prevention, is purely negative. No direct action upon or against crime will achieve anything. The most such action would do would be to repress the last means to a richer life on the part of the unfortunate. The life of some business men would become very poor if they could no longer practice the fine arts of swindling the public. Those more unfortunate than he would be so much worse off. All repressive measures can effect is the repressing of life to lower levels, the making it even less human. And picking up the victims on the battlefield of life and doctoring them up, does nothing to stop the battle.

Crime does not have its origin in human will. Society does not will crime, but it has it. It has come as a by-product of its own life and will disorganization. Likewise, the elimination of crime will come solely as a by-product.

Crime will disappear when we shall gain a common objective, when we shall integrate our total life toward the building of a just world. As long as we remain confused as to where we are going and what sort of world is demanded as a complement of our full life, so long shall we have disorganized life, crime, and war.