

SHAKE IT UP BABY:

Practicing Rock 'n' Roll Criminology

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Kathleen Daly

At many criminology conferences, there is the conference dinner and with luck, a dance band. At these events, criminologists of all theories, methodologies, and ideological persuasions gather to shake it up. We twist, jump, hop, twirl, gyrate, and move, some more wild, sweaty, sexy, and expressive than others. But the general mood is abandonment, leaving the academic role behind, getting out of our skins, and being on the floor as a group. If conference life is a 'ritual occasion ... [that can] bring out the worst in people, [where] you have to work hard to remain a decent human being' (Cohen 1995: 33, 45), the dance band floor is a singularly unifying occasion. It helps me to identify what is needed to bring out the best in people doing criminology.

A key text that inspires my essay is Nils Christie's lament about the boring qualities of criminology. 'How can it be like this?' he asks. 'How come that so much criminology is dull, tedious and intensely empty as to new insights?' This is especially perplexing when, as he observes, criminology is 'based on material from the core areas of drama ... conflict ..., danger ..., catastrophe, abuses and sacrifice'; and yet it is 'still so trivial' (Christie 1997: 13). His answer is that criminology is 'over-socialized' by schooling, conventional thinking, state-generated data and state-determined questions, and overly short time frames that leave 'too little time for dreaming' (p. 19). I build on Christie's ideas by outlining some practices of rock 'n' roll criminology, by which I mean ways of shaking up how we do our work.

Like any type of music, rock 'n' roll has a complex history, and I selectively highlight elements that resonate for me and with my use of the term as a metaphor. I

cannot conduct a scholarly review of the music literature on rock 'n' roll, but will take my chances with the Wikipedia entry for 'Rock and Roll'. A blend of blues, country, and gospel, the genre became immensely popular in the 1950s and early 60s with significant cultural impact (p. 1). Rock 'n' roll music was associated with 'breaking boundaries and expressing the real emotions that people were feeling, but didn't talk about'. It combined white and black forms of musical expression, breaking down racial segregation, and 'encouraging racial cooperation and shared experience' (p. 8). The 'songs described events and conflicts that most [adolescent] listeners could relate to', encouraging a youth culture (p. 8). Described by one writer as creating a 'global psychic jailbreak' (p. 1), rock 'n' roll evolved into new musical forms in the mid 1960s and beyond. In imagining a rock 'n' roll criminology, I would like to encourage forms of criminological research and writing that press the boundaries of convention and conformity.

Styles of Criminology

As is the case in other fields, we think of criminology as having different schools of thought, methodological approaches,¹ and political-ideological positions. As a student in sociology, this is how I learned the field; and like so many others, I began to understand variation and differences across the field and to see students and colleagues using this mental map. I want to argue against viewing criminology and ourselves in this manner. We need a new aesthetic, which does not deny differences of theory, methodology, or politics and ideology, but which views the enterprise and our judgements of the value of the work we do in a different way.

¹ Drawing from Creswell and Piano Clark (2007: 4), *methodology* refers to the broader, philosophical framework or set of assumptions used; *design*, to 'the plan of action' that links methodological assumptions to specific methods; and *methods*, to specific techniques of gathering and analysing research materials.

We need to shift our mental maps of the field from ‘schools’ to ‘styles’ of doing criminology. By styles, I mean the differing ways of conducting and communicating research. A major impediment in the field is that many think that there are just one or two styles. When reading what are regarded as top-rated journals in criminology, this is often (although not always) the message communicated. These journals, e.g., *Criminology* or *British Journal of Criminology*, contain articles that typically use one style – what I term Standard Scientific – of conducting and communicating research. We see a familiar template with the headings of introduction, theory, methods, findings, and discussion. This template is not confined to journals that typically publish statistically based research; it is also seen in those publishing interview or ethnographic material. It is the discursive frame and orientation of the author using Standard Scientific that makes it distinctive, not the methodologies, research designs, or methods used.

There is a place for Standard Scientific, of course, but it is one of many styles that we should be practicing and appreciating in the field. There are many others, too many to review here, but I name and describe several to encourage their use. They include the Contemplative Review, the Synthesis, the Non-Standard Scientific, and the Send Up. These styles are practiced by a variety of analysts, that is, across all types of theoretical, methodological, and ideological positions. Variation is evident, however, in the degree to which an author is successful; and this is distinguished by dynamic, clear, and compelling communication. I shall give a few examples of essays or writers that demonstrate the style, but there are many more who come to mind.

The Contemplative Review takes a broad problem (or set of problems) in an area, and asks questions about or examines the problem from several positions. Some questions may be answered, but others may not be. The aim is to address the complex

qualities of a problem, at times drawing from extant theories or empirical material, and to make sense of it. Examples of this form are Tony Bottoms' (1998) consideration of trends in sentencing and his (2003) sociological analysis of claims and facets of restorative justice, and Barbara Hudson's (1998) reflection on the problems raised for informal and restorative justice by sexual and racial violence. The Contemplative Review may require the writer to step back and 'suspend belief' on commonly accepted ways of thinking; and in so doing, the field may be advanced by looking at a problem in a fresh light.

The Synthesis takes stock of a large body of theory or research (or both) with the aim of making sense of it: empirical patterns or conceptual themes are identified and assessed, varied approaches or debates are canvassed and compared, and disparate bodies of work are brought together. The Synthesis may sum up an older, well-known field of knowledge; or it may introduce and elucidate a new field, e.g., 'feminist criminology' or 'cultural criminology'. The aim is to assemble and depict a wide view of what is known or occurring, and to do so compactly, accessibly, and with an analytical focus or a framework of analysis. Without the latter, it is not a Synthesis, but a review of the literature. The Synthesis can be carried out with different goals in mind: to establish evidence-based policy, to set a more general policy direction, or to develop new theoretical understandings. Among the examples are David Garland's (1990) theoretical synthesis of punishment and Doris McKenzie's (2006) review of correctional strategies. Such work would be more prevalent in policy-related areas if Elliott Currie's (2007) argument for a 'public criminology' were to be taken up.

The Non-Standard Scientific aims to be scientific, that is, to produce authoritative knowledge, but to do so in ways different from the Standard Scientific. This style can take many forms, but what I have in mind are discursive frames and

author orientations in conducting and communicating well-theorised empirical work, which break with the tenets of positivism.² One tenet is separation of the author from the subject(s) of research; a second is separation of the author from the written text; and a third is separation of the author from the reader. I recognise my limits: I am not a rhetorician, discourse analyst, or specialist in interpretive social science. However, stated briefly, Standard Scientific presumes that authority and objectivity are best achieved through a *separation* of author from the research subject(s), the written (or spoken) text, and the reader. Non-Standard Scientific challenges this understanding of authority and objectivity. Its practitioners may choose research topics to research that flow from their biographies or, in other ways, relate to their lives. In conducting research, they may become close to those they study, forming relations over several years. In writing and communicating, they may bring themselves into the research as an actor and participant, and they may relate to readers directly.³

This style is most likely seen in field studies or ethnographic research, where the author is part of a group and participates with group members, albeit in varied ways. In keeping with my theme of rock 'n' roll criminology, I would like to imagine that Non-Standard Scientific could also be practiced by those who are more comfortable and familiar with a positivist methodology, but who want to shake it up and try another style. This is a significant methodological shift, but it may bring personal and professional rewards, and moments of intellectual breakthrough. For example, Karen McElrath (2001) describes her shift in identity as confirmed quantitative analyst to a believer in qualitative approaches. This came about when she moved to Queen's

² The term post-positivism is often used today and is more accurate, but for simplicity, I use positivism.

³ Some authors may have little discernible presence in a text, others present their views and emotions in footnotes, and still others write themselves into the text as research participants.

University, Belfast, and became 're-socialized' into new academic values, including a greater appreciation of qualitative methods (p. 3). This change occurred with the encouragement of colleagues to work on qualitative projects, coupled with McElrath's commitment to learn new ways of thinking, 'to play the role of student once again' (p. 3). Non-Standard Scientific invites reflection on how we relate to the people and phenomena we study, and how we communicate what we learn to others.

Of all the styles considered here, the Send Up is the least practiced and rarely seen. This is a pity for the growth and dynamicism of the field, and we should be encouraging more of this style. The Send Up reflects on the foibles, insecurities, egotisms, self-interests, and existential qualities of 'being' a criminologist. It may also consider the nervous ticks, turgid speaking and writing styles, and repetitive and boring features of criminology. Criminology needs comedy and satire, whether in written or spoken form, and anyone who has the gift for it should be encouraged to practice and perform. The contributions to the field would be great: it would help to lift the spirits of practitioners and to break loose from tired and conventional ways of thinking, and perhaps in the process, to become more creative. A sense of 'breaking loose' comes when we can laugh at ourselves, and it may help to alter or re-focus settled ways of thinking and knowing. It may also help to create a sense of existential 'we-ness'. I look forward to the day when the American Society of Criminology's Sutherland Award recipient does not deliver the standard 'serious' address, but rather gives us profound insights in the form of jokes, sketches, stories, and impersonations. It takes a special talent to carry this off, and it is not encouraged in graduate school or professional life. Little wonder, then, that we see so little of it. It could be a nice income earner for those considering retirement. Stan Cohen's (1995) Send Up of 'conference life' is exemplary.

Clarity

The end product of doing criminology is written and spoken texts.⁴ These may or may not be read or listened to, and they may have significant or minimal impact. It is surprising how little is said in theory or method textbooks, or in introductions to the field, about the importance of writing, and its corollary, speaking, for effective communication. Thousands of articles in criminology journals alone are published each year, with countless others in social science, humanities, and law journals. Drawing from *Journal Citation Report* for 2008, produced by Thomson Reuters (formerly The Institute for Science Information or ISI), the journal having the highest impact factor (IF) in ‘criminology and penology’ is *Criminology*, at 2.34 (*Science Watch*, 7 June 2009). Translated, this means that, on average, each article published in *Criminology* during 2006 and 2007 was cited an average of 2.34 times in the journals indexed by the Web of Science in 2008. For comparison, the impact factors for other journals in the top ten are 1.80 (*Crime & Delinquency*), 1.30 (*British Journal of Criminology*), 1.23 (*Journal of Quantitative Criminology*), and 1.19 (*Punishment & Society*). Despite the well-recognised problems with impact factors, particularly in the social sciences, they are a chastening reminder for anyone who takes pride in publishing articles in highly ranked journals. Few people seem to be citing the articles, at least soon after they are published, although a higher number may be reading them. Why are some texts more likely to be read and grasped? What is it that we, as readers, are looking for?

We desire clear, lucid, and lively ways of understanding complex problems about human existence and accounts of that existence. The two—human existence and accounts of it—cannot be separated in the work we do, which poses significant

⁴ I do not consider mixes of speech and visual forms, which are likely to increase in our work.

challenges for any depiction of our social and physical worlds. We inevitably work with approximations of human experience and behaviour, understood through several layers of social construction. The form of writing, especially its clarity, is one dimension, but there are others. Do the ideas engage us? Do they inspire or help us to see problems in new ways?

Quality and Originality

An elusive feature of our work is quality and originality. In a project directed by Michèle Lamont, she and her colleagues conducted interviews with fellowship proposal reviewers in the humanities and social sciences in the United States to determine how the reviewers arrived at judgements of quality and originality, and how they decided which proposals merited funding (Guetzkow et al. 2004). The reviewers were guided by stipulated criteria, including ‘clarity, significance, feasibility, and, in some broad sense, quality’ (pp. 194-95), but how were these qualities translated into practice?

Two criteria were most often mentioned: originality, followed closely by clarity. These were then followed by ‘social relevance, interdisciplinarity, feasibility, importance, breadth, carefulness, usefulness, and “exciting”’ (Guetzkow et al. 2004: 196, fn. 6). Focusing on the dimensions of originality, the authors learned that the most frequently mentioned element was ‘original approach’, followed by original theory, topic, method, or data. These findings for the humanities and social sciences differ from those in studies of science, where the production of an ‘original theory’ and ‘original results’, normally in the form of ‘making a new discovery’, are what is most valued (p. 197). Further, the *meanings* of original theory or results differ from those in the sciences. Original theory was in the form of ‘connecting or mapping ideas’ or producing a ‘synthesis of the literature’; and original results, in the form of ‘new

interpretations' (p. 197). The broader term, 'original approach', refers to the general direction of a project, including its 'perspective, angle, framing, points of emphasis, questions, unique take, or view' (p. 199). The more specific elements of theory, method, or data that are embedded in a 'new approach' are the 'juxtaposition of ideas' that are not normally put together, 'creative combinations of ideas, sources, or methods,' and 'new ways of combining' (p. 199). These elements are ideally what we would want to see and encourage as part of rock 'n' roll criminology: juxtaposition and creative combinations of concepts and methods.

Also of relevance to rock 'n' roll criminology, the elements associated with originality were related in reviewers' minds to the *moral qualities* of researchers. The applicants judged to have original proposals were described as 'adventurous, ambitious, bold, courageous, curious, independent, intellectually honest, risk-taking ... and challenging the status quo' (p. 203). By contrast, those whose proposals were judged not to be original were depicted as 'conformist, complacent, derivative, ... hackneyed, lazy, parochial, pedestrian, tired' *and* as 'fashionable, trendy, ... slavish, "riding on the band wagon" or "throwing around buzz words"' (p. 203). Guetzkow et al. say that these descriptors condensed judgements of a researcher's 'intellectual authenticity': 'independent and dynamic scholars are authentic, whereas phony scholars are lazy or worse, trendy' (p. 203). To be an authentic scholar, then, means not reproducing the status quo *nor* following the latest trends (p. 204), both of which are types of conformity. Instead, the message from Guetzkow et al. is to follow one's interests and passions, take chances, and think for oneself.

In reflecting on this last point, I was reminded of Christie's (1997) first 'block against insight': a lack of 'access to self'. In the process of learning authoritative understandings of crime and justice, students downplay their life experiences and

insights. This is reinforced in schools, and then in universities, where learning continues to be based on a 'schooling' model of socialisation and of filling empty vessels with authorised knowledge. Christie recognises that 'there is a tension, some would say outright conflict, between socialization and innovation' (p. 17). However, he worries that universities, which should be sites of both 'transmitting cultural heritage' and challenging that heritage (p. 16), are increasingly focused on the former, to the neglect of the latter. Access to self and 'trusting [one's] own experiences' (p. 17) are increasingly stymied in university learning. It is little wonder then, that conformity to the status quo or to trendy ideas is a safe path, one that many graduate students and academics elect. For Christie, as for proposal reviewers in Guetzkow et al., this produces trivial insights. Taking risks, being true to one's self, having a passion for pursuing ideas—all are constitutive of an 'intellectual authenticity' that is highly regarded in the field, but paradoxically not encouraged. I would want to reinforce the point, however, that no matter how original or passionate the ideas, they must also be communicated clearly. Without clarity, originality cannot be readily discerned.

Near Data Research

Christie (1997) draws a useful distinction between distant and near data research, and he suggests that the former is more likely to produce 'findings of triviality' than the latter. Distant data are 'already processed data,' such as official counts of crime, which 'have been given their officially designated meaning' (p. 21). Typically, they are called 'hard data,' the reference being to numerical representations of categories and action, which, if gathered in sufficient quantities, can be subject to statistical analyses. By contrast, near data, also termed 'soft data', are interpretations that social science researchers themselves make while observing acts and actors. They usually require

many observations of a smaller number of people and acts because the researcher has 'to be there'. To Christie, this raises a 'mystery' (p. 21). To paraphrase, why are many observations of a smaller number of acts or actors believed to be less 'honourable ... in certain scientific circles' than a few observations on a larger number of acts or actors? Christie's principle concern is that too much criminology is based on state-processed files, where the notion of 'crime' is not sufficiently problematised, when it should be.

There is another element of distant data research that troubles me even more. There is too much distance of the researcher from the actors and the action, that is, from 'being there'. My point is not that quantitative studies have no value, because of course they do, depending on their data quality. Rather, I am concerned with how researchers may orient themselves to the material, including the terms and language used to describe patterns and relationships. The tools of quantitative research are just that: *tools* for understanding, interpreting, and explaining complex patterns. They do not substitute for understanding and explanation. This point is lost on some analysts, who may be caught up in statistical precision and statistical interpretation more so than the complexities of the social phenomena under examination. Such tunnel vision arises, I believe, because analysts lack a sense of 'being there', of being on the inside of complex social phenomena and the worldviews of participants, as much as this is possible or practicable.

One way to address this problem is that distant data research should be linked to the relevant near data research, or researchers should approximate 'being there', whether by observation or experience, or more vicariously, by reading of others' observations or experiences. Of course, some areas of criminological investigation are not readily observable nor directly experienced. For these, we may need to rely on texts and traces of conversations and actions, which may include distant data or

approximations of near data. My point is that those relying upon distant data should aim to bring themselves as near as they can to the phenomena they are describing or attempting to understand.

Compared to sample surveys or other methods of assembling large quantitative datasets, near data research is less often practiced. In general, and here I have in mind field research, researchers' activities are physically and psychologically more taxing. It requires time to enter the field, establish a field presence, and negotiate one's identity and relationships with others. Field work needs desk work: time spent on reflecting and writing on the day's activities, typically with field notes going to the hundreds of pages, with interview transcripts also going to the hundreds of pages. Writing about what one has observed and learned takes a special skill in weaving 'action' with 'analysis', identifying themes, and moving between observed activity and accounts of it by participants. If carried off successfully, the author can take us into worlds of action and meaning that many of us would not otherwise have known. The work gives us a sense of proximity to action and behaviour; we learn how people negotiate self, identities, and relationships to others and to social and legal authorities; and we hear the argot in use that crystallises meanings, world views, experiences. This sense of proximity may also be glimpsed by in-depth interviews and re-interviews with people.

Selected examples of near data research are Lisa Maher (1997) on sex work and the street-level drug economy in Brooklyn, Jeff Ferrell (1997) on graffiti groups in Denver, and Robert MacDonald and colleagues (2006) on marginal youth in Teeside. In the spirit of rock 'n' roll criminology, I would like to imagine that Terri Moffit or David Farrington would want to talk with several Teeside youth 'at the sharp end' about how they 'live through conditions of social exclusion' (MacDonald 2006: 373).

If they did, I wonder, would these scholars' categories of analysis change? Would they think differently about pathways into and out of crime?

I wish to press this point further. All of us are caught up in favoured and familiar ways of 'doing criminology'. Some say that they have an aversion to numbers and could never participate in a statistical study; others say that unless they have a large number of cases, they cannot produce useful knowledge. Some believe that field experimental designs produce the most authoritative knowledge. They forget that this design can be applied to a selected set of problems, and they overlook the ways in which the knowledge produced is restricted to a particular range of cases, often for good ethical reasons. No one method, design, or methodology can have a claim to superior knowledge. All have a role and may produce a 'truth' of some type, and all are partial and limited.

Those who engage in distant data research need to suspend belief on their favoured concepts and understandings by reducing the distance between them and the phenomena they are studying. They can achieve this goal by confronting, appreciating, or utilising near data research, or approximations to it. Likewise, those who engage in near data research could create more distance between themselves and the phenomena they are studying. The value to distance is the ability to learn more, albeit perhaps superficially, about a larger number of cases or people. From this, we may be better able to discern patterns and variability. By shaking up our individual ways of 'doing criminology', we move from our comfort zones, become unsettled, and in the process, orient ourselves to problems in more imaginative and creative ways. There is an unfortunate skew in the field today: an overreliance on distant data research, when all of us would benefit by near data research, or approximations to it. We also require more pluralistic and juxtaposed approaches to theory and methodology.

Pluralism and Juxtaposition

I am mindful of the theoretical and methodological cautions by Garland (1990) and Creswell and Piano Clark (2007) when contemplating the mixing or combining of theories and methodologies. Garland's (1990) analysis of the theories of Durkheim, selected Marxists, Foucault, and Elias to inform a sociology of punishment could, he said, 'all too easily collapse into an arbitrary eclecticism ... an intellectual tangle of incompatible premises, ambiguous concepts, and shifting objects of study' (p. 279). Rather than trying to 'add together' these theories, he had a *pluralistic* objective in 'the construction of a rounded sociological account of penality'. Likewise, in putting forward the case for mixed research designs, Creswell and Piano Clark (2007) identify the different stances taken by practitioners on whether different 'worldviews' (e.g., positivist, constructionist, advocacy and participatory) can be combined. Some believe it is possible to combine them, whereas others do not.

In earlier work on gender, race, and sentencing (Daly 1994), I took the latter position. I was persuaded by Richardson (1990: 118) that logico-scientific and narrative modes of reasoning were 'irreducible to each other and complementary', each providing 'a distinctive way of ordering experience and constructing reality'. I said that knowledge producers needed to become more bilingual in seeing the strengths of statistics and story telling in creating truth claims about 'justice' in sentencing, and that research practices should *oscillate* between their familiar methodological home pole and another pole. I still believe that this is the case, although I remain open to new ways of representing social realities as these are inevitably constrained by language and discursive fields.

Pluralism and juxtaposition are particularly evident feminist perspectives in criminology (see Daly 2010), although they are not limited to this domain of inquiry.

As a practitioner in the area for over three decades, I am struck by an increasing appreciation of the diverse ways of constructing knowledge (often condensed to broad categories of empiricism, standpointism, and deconstruction), and a desire for more inclusive and imaginative understandings of inequalities and 'difference'. Several examples will suffice.

In the 1980s, two distinctive trajectories emerged within feminist research in criminology: 'real women' and 'woman of discourse' (Daly and Maher 1998). Both were prompted by major challenges to 1980s feminist theorising: one, by black and racialised women's critiques of dominant white analyses; and the other, by post-structuralistic critiques of positivism and dualisms in western thought. Although each has different emphases and theoretical orientations, it became evident to many of us that one cannot fully depict 'real women' without reference to the discursive fields by which girls or women are constructed or construct themselves. Likewise, one cannot assume that analyses of 'women of discourse' necessarily reflect girls' and women's identities and lives they lead. Ideally, then, the aim is to interpolate 'the discursive' and 'the real', not an easy task because each comes with its own set of theoretical referents and specialised vocabularies. Successful examples include Bosworth (1999), Maher (1997), Mason (2002), and Miller (2001).

Understanding difference, inequalities, social standpoints, and social relationships, which include multiple and contingent relations of sex/gender, race or ethnicity, class, age, sexuality, nationality, religion, and the like, is a significant task. Standard criminological approaches typically assume categorical and static approaches, for example, by statistical comparisons of black and white men and women's rates of arrest for violent crime. These may provide some insight into aggregate group-based differences, using distant data, but they do not give us a sense of action, dynamics,

process, and the fluidity of identities and subjectivities, nor of how the world appears from different perspectives or social locations. There are many ways to explore these complex realities (see Daly 1998a, 2010 for approaches and examples). I give two examples from my research. The first is ‘breaking boundaries’ by shifting a research angle of vision; the second is finding political common ground across ‘difference’, conflict, and inequalities.

Using materials from the New Haven felony court study (Daly 1994),⁵ I decided to take a different angle of vision: rather than analyse racial-ethnic differences in the court’s treatment of female defendants, I wondered how black women, as a group, related to the court (Daly 1998b). In particular, I was interested in the multiple positions of black women to ‘white justice’: as mothers, wives, girlfriends, and others who supported lawbreaking sons and daughters; and as crime victims and defendants. How did they challenge, negotiate, or agree with ‘white justice’? An important finding was that black women were most often present in the court and its records as mothers, girlfriends, or spouses of defendants. Crime victims or defendants, who are typically at the centre of most criminological research, were in the minority. I came away from the research with the realisation that if we wished to gain a deeper appreciation of how gender and race prejudice work in the court through the eyes and experiences of black women, we would learn as much from family members connected to cases, as from lawbreakers and victims.

I use the term ‘race and gender politics of justice’ to refer to the differing emphases that racialised minority and feminist groups take in seeking justice. In general,⁶ racialised groups give greater emphasis to offenders’ interests; feminist

⁵ These were pre-sentence reports and transcripts of judicial sentencing remarks.

⁶ Of course, there are exceptions to this dualism.

groups, to victims' interests. Is it possible to address these conflicting interests, or are they forever in tension? I have proposed an 'intersectional politics of justice', which could assist in changing antagonistic relations toward more constructive and progressive ones (Daly 2008). My application is to debates concerning alternative justice practices, including restorative justice and contemporary Indigenous justice practices, where there are conflicting interests between offenders and victims, race and gender groups, and the rights of individuals and collectivities. To address these, I propose that justice should not be viewed as a zero sum game, that we must engage in intersectional thinking by taking the positions of other group members, and that victims and offenders have rights that cannot be compromised by collectivities.

Pluralism and juxtaposition, and associated ways to combine, interpolate, intersect, or shift one's angle of vision, offer fresh ways to address problems. They force one to look again, in a different way, on what the problem is. They can provide new metaphors and concepts, and they push us out of our comfort zones into new areas of inquiry, new ways of learning and seeing. They may provide openings for us to glimpse and appreciate theories or methodologies that are not our favoured ones, but are worth trying, if only once. This may create a wider vision and understanding of the criminological field, which is renewed not by repetition in well-grooved places, but by breaking out of the tracks.

Last Dance

Some are critical of criminology for not addressing this or that problem or for dealing with it in too limited a way. 'Criminology' is not an actor. It is a discipline or specialism, which depends for its knowledge production, problem focus, and critical posture upon its individual practitioners. Yes, there is a socialising and 'schooling'

environment that we are brought into and that moulds and pushes us in certain directions. However, we are not helpless, unthinking pawns in a field of knowledge. If, as Christie thinks, a good deal of criminological knowledge is trivial, we cannot blame the field for this. Rather, we must take responsibility for changing and re-invigorating it, for shaking it up.

Enter rock 'n' roll criminology. I have suggested an alternative mapping of the field, with a greater emphasis on styles of criminology, proposing that we need to experiment with and be appreciative of a range of styles. Originality and quality are elusive terms, but they collect around the notion of a researcher's 'intellectual authenticity', which is associated with taking chances, challenging the status quo, but not conforming to fashionable trends. Elements of originality and quality include juxtaposition and combination, whether of theories, concepts, ideas, methodologies, methods, and the like, although novelty for its own sake is not recommended. Clarity and liveliness in writing and speaking is essential. I suspect that much of what Christie finds 'dull, tedious and intensely empty' about criminology stems from lifeless and dull texts and styles of communicating.

I have called attention to an overreliance on distant data research, with its most troubling feature being too much distance of a researcher from 'being there'. To compensate, I suggest that distant data researchers attempt to bring themselves closer to the phenomena they are studying by relying on near data research or approximations to it. The more general message of rock 'n' roll criminology is that everyone can benefit from shaking up their favoured ways of 'doing criminology', by stepping out of their well-grooved tracks, and by listening and engaging with those whose work is different or unfamiliar. All of this requires some degree of release from our respective 'psychic jails', our conventional ways of working, doing what is comfortable, familiar, and

known. We may take some comfort in recognising that others on the rock 'n' roll dance floor are ready to break out of jail too.

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