

## Exploring the Paradox of the (Un)reality of Richard Quinney's Criminology

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*A core tenet of Zen Buddhism is that life is full of paradox. This article explores the paradoxical reactions of criminologists to the work of Richard Quinney. Quinney, a renowned criminologist, is known among a majority of his colleagues as "important" yet "unreal." Meanwhile, some people who have undertaken journeys of what might be called self-discovery, including the present authors (two of whom are ex-convicts turned criminologists), celebrate his work as the most real criminology around. The article explores this paradox.*

*Hal*

It is a considerable honor to know Richard Quinney, to have used his *Social Reality of Crime* in 1971 (together, for balance, with the *President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice* report of 1967) as a text for the first criminology class I taught, to have grown through his work and through a personal friendship that also began in 1971, and to have occasion to consider what he has contributed to so many criminological and other lives, including mine.

The paradox of how Richard's work is received as real and yet unreal is profound. Some convict criminologists, like Alan and Chuck, who find Richard's work most real, most practical, most enlightening, and most valuable, identify as having belonged to the criminological underclass prisoners. Both have journeyed from the extremely marginalized social world and status of prisoner to the halls of academia. And due to what they discovered about themselves and the world during their years behind bars, they highly value Richard's work.

Meanwhile, it is a truism that criminologists are instruments of the state, a truism, by the way, that Richard was the first prominent post-World War II U.S. criminologist to affirm. The "modern" science of "empirical" criminol-

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ogy in the 19th century was founded on explaining differences between prisoners and the rest of us supposedly law-abiding folks. They were poor, and so on. Maybe they were born criminal. Maybe a father was missing from the home. A great teacher of mine, Les Wilkins, once wrote, "Kings and queens have subjects, researchers should not!" It is ironic that Chuck and Alan, who have both been primordial subjects of criminology, most embrace Richard's work as real, whereas among those whose work most accepts state definitions of crime, I daresay Richard is regarded as a well-known kook.

#### *A NOTE ON METHOD*

*Hal*

Inspired by Richard Quinney's example, Alan, Chuck, and I have joined together to write a rather unorthodox contribution to this volume. We take turns in conversation, each of us writing in the first person. In so doing, we seek to affirm our individuality, even as we join together in celebrating a largely common significance of Richard's writing and friendship to our criminological lives.

In this tribute, Chuck writes about meeting Richard and hearing him present a Chinese Buddhist story of an oxherder at an American Society of Criminology (ASC) meeting. I sat in the front row beside Alan and Chuck at that session. Notwithstanding my longstanding admiration for Richard's work, I was struck by how enraptured Alan and Chuck were by what Richard presented. Before their doctoral study in criminal justice at the University of California at Irvine, Alan and Chuck had each spent long years in prison. They are among those identifying themselves as "convict criminologists." Even then, I found myself reflecting on a seeming paradox, that these two friends with so much real-world experience of crime and criminal justice would find so much meaning in work that others have dismissed as criminologically irrelevant.

I wrote a draft exploration of this paradox on my own. The guest editors of this issue of *Crime & Delinquency* suggested additions. I asked Chuck, who in turn asked Alan, for input.

Chuck and Alan saved me from the danger of speaking for others. That ASC session with them so stood out in my mind that I presumed all convict criminologists to be Quinney fans. That may or may not be true. What Chuck and Alan reminded me is that my inference came from them personally. Within the tradition of peacemaking theory it is entirely appropriate that they intervene in this article to speak for themselves, as I do only for myself. Their

participation in this article, now a conversation among us three, is a profound contribution to the exploration I myself undertake here. And so we join together in authorship of this text.

This article contains no citations. We focus on Richard's work, which is amply cited in this issue. We ask readers to think through with us the implications of a rather obvious paradox pertaining to how Richard's work is variously received.

### *CONVICT CRIMINOLOGY: ACT I*

*Alan*

I became interested in Buddhism during my 8th year of incarceration. I was in personal crisis and Eastern thought provided a different way of seeing the world and my place in it. I became aware of the paradox of separation, its myth and reality. Buddhist cosmology holds that part of the nature of being human is for each of us to see the world in a unique way. Subjectivity in perception divides us utterly from one another. Perceiving oneself as a Self, an individual, isolates one from all that in non-Self. This separateness frames our worldview.

It was easy to feel separate in graduate school. I was grateful to be admitted at all, but I felt underutilized. For example, even with all of my practical experience I was never selected to assist for a prisons course. I recognized then that doctoral credentials gave the experts free reign to pursue their agendas. Heady stuff. In my reading I found an academic production process that was prolific in its creation of Others. For solace I turned to African American and postcolonial writers, people who were experts at being on the receiving end of stigma and objectification. I particularly enjoyed titles such as *The West and the Rest* and *The Empire Writes Back*. Within the criminology literature I discovered *Peacemaking Criminology*. It was the perfect antidote to books then current in the field, such as John DiIulio's *Governing Prisons* and *No Way Out: The Future of American Corrections*. Quinney and Pepinsky's *Peacemaking* inspired me to entertain the notion that giving voice to experience could alter the status quo. While working on a class assignment and fueled by frustration, I gave it a try:

I have a problem. I go to this school where good, well-intentioned people are working to make the criminal justice system an efficient, effective, and more equitable social institution. They work hard, and their efforts are joined to the accumulated sweat and knowledge of many others, past and present. Over the

years, scholars such as these have produced a mixed bag of approaches to solving society's crime dilemma. None, however, has yielded better than inconclusive results. The latest trend for cutting edge research is to abandon a measure of scientific detachment and talk right to the horse's mouth: to interact directly and respectfully with criminal justice professionals and learn first-hand of the day-to-day difficulties of operating a conflicted juridic bureaucracy. Relying on the highly vested vantage points of law officers is problematic, but that's not my problem. On principle I have no objection to academics mixing with practitioners. The two camps, in fact, have much to learn from one another. If what they purport to discuss is "organizational management" or "systems behavior" I totally see the point. Many researchers are trained to act as evaluation specialists and operations consultants. They can access the environment, inquire as to problems, investigate to determine if perceived problems are indeed real, and, if so, come up with ameliorative solutions. For their part, practitioners are experts at falsification. They know what won't work on the ground.

The interesting thing for me is that when these very well intentioned scholars get together with their technically skilled, professional counterparts, the practitioners, well, the feeling of omnipotence is palpable. There is hardly a single aspect of the criminal justice dilemma that someone in that room doesn't know nearly everything about. Except how to stop people from committing crimes, of course. And that's my problem: If criminologists want to learn how to get people to cease and desist with their criminal activities, why don't they talk to some criminals? Conferring with practitioners, insofar as it gets researchers up and out of their armchairs, is clearly a step in the right direction. The difficult thing for typically insular scholars to recognize, however, is that in restricting their review to officials they are talking to the horse, but they are concentrating on the wrong end of the animal.

Every criminal is a criminologist. Each is a specialist in the manner, means, rationale, cause, and certainly the potential consequences of a certain order of crime/s. The person who is apprehended, sentenced, convicted, and incarcerated acquires an in-depth and extraordinarily vivid view of the criminal justice system. He, and it is usually a he, acquires substantial expertise across many dimensions of criminological discourse. Arguably an amateur, he lacks formal training in the cognate discipline. A possible indication of this amateurishness is his insistence on a positivist orientation. He can tell you where he committed his crime and why, and who talked him into it. If pressed, he can narrate an account of the entire criminal decision-making process. Given time, perhaps behind bars, he may provide a finely grained analysis of when and where he went astray: the family problems, neighborhood pressures, and personal shortcomings that brought him to his present state. Every person who becomes a prison inmate knows that he made mistakes, and that those mistakes finally caught up with him. And more than anyone else, he blames himself for his condition.

*“THE LOGIC OF COMMODITIES”*

*Hal*

At the 1998 ASC meeting in D.C., former Quinney student Randy Sheldon, at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, and his former student Bud Brown, at the University of Michigan at Flint, organized a tribute to Richard. Alan and Chuck were there. T-shirts were sold at the event. I wear mine with pride in warm weather when I introduce insights of Richard’s into my classes. The back of the shirt lists his books, and the front contains this quote from his 1998 book, *For the Time Being*:

Although we live in an historical era in which all aspects of everyday life are mediated by the logic of commodities, everyday life is the source of social change and transformation. Everyday life is, indeed, of consequence. The lived experience—shared with others—is our social reality. And it is the only reality we can know.

“The logic of commodities” is the key phrase in the first clause of this quote. Are we as criminologists a commodity? Are we forced to solicit state grants and sell our products to survive?

When I met Richard, he directed the graduate sociology program at New York University and had just been awarded a major National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) grant for developing the doctoral program. Shortly thereafter, he resigned. He lived for several years in a rural commune. Thereafter, he lived off book royalties and had a free office at Brown University. He founded a criminological collective in Boston. Eminent criminologists like Steven Spitzer were nurtured there. Eventually he got a job teaching at Boston College, then returned to near his Wisconsin home, to DeKalb, Illinois, where he and Solveig live today.

To me, as I suppose to Alan and Chuck, Richard lives what he believes. He never believed that he should be a servant of the state. He bowed out.

I entered graduate school in 1968, 1 year after issuance of the crime commission report, 1 year after publication of Richard’s first book, refreshing because it was among the few critical volumes around. It was the year of the passage of the Omnibus Crime Control Act, which gave a virtual monopoly on criminal justice research funds to the U.S. Justice Department. The School of Criminal Justice was just becoming the first Ph.D. program of its kind at Albany. I attended my first ASC meeting. Whereas attendance at ASC’s annual meetings in the burgeoning crime control industry is now several thousand, that year it was 125. At that time, Richard was already a prominent resister against criminological commodification. His consistent integrity to

personal independence is perhaps one of the implicit attractions he offers all of us, including criminologists who have been to prison.

Richard's *Social Reality of Crime* was so refreshing to me and others when it appeared in 1970. In so many ways that Richard carefully reviewed, crime and enforcement were politically arbitrary social constructions. Thanks to Richard, you could be a legitimate criminologist and believe that crime control as we know it is a massive exercise in prejudice and ignorance. He kept pursuing implications of his understanding of crime and his relationship to it. He did not take state definitions of crime at face value. Was he merely, therefore, a nihilist? He noticed one troublesome feature of prevailing definitions of crime and criminality. Those who had the greater power got to vilify subordinate classes hypocritically. Richard's dissertation had been on white-collar crime pharmacists' violations of law. He knew in his heart and experience, as do many of us, that those who define and enforce law are no less violent and exploitative than those they imprison. Although the Berkeley School of Criminology was closed in the early 1970s for being so Marxist, Richard legitimized U.S. reference to Marx and class in his next two volumes, *Critique of Legal Order* and *Class, State, and Crime*. By the early 1980s, I heard a report to a criminological body that Richard had become the most widely cited contemporary criminologist. I did not count citations myself, but I believe it.

#### *CONVICT CRIMINOLOGY: ACT II*

*Alan*

The convict who stumbles onto the formal study of crime and society often gets a surprise. It is called the sociological perspective. In its more radical forms, it implies that he is still responsible for his crimes but that the responsibility is not his alone. Society, through intention or neglect, prepared a criminogenic stage on which he was encouraged, if not compelled, to act. Society abused and discriminated against him, filled his head with materialistic desires, and instilled an urge for power. Society, in its often indiscriminate cruelty, told him in no uncertain terms that he could be whatever he wanted to be. He soon discovered, however, that he could not. If he was going to get what he desired, what he deserved, whether money or power or freedom from worry, he would have to step outside the lines. He knew where the borders of legality lay, and he had a sense of the depths he would have to cross. The popular culture of consumption, that alluring damsel, led him to the water and bade him drink. He drank, but he didn't drink alone.

*Chuck*

A seldom understood framework for living, one that truly reduces harm in the world, is far removed from mainstream notions of social control, mechanically oriented criminological research, and critical analysis of the social structure. Except for those who have embraced the journey of getting in touch with the core of their being, Richard Quinney's radical solutions that promote peace, love, and compassion must seem unreal because what he is saying is so far removed from their realities.

Roughly 3 years into my last prison sentence, I inadvertently embarked on a path of self-discovery, one that continues to this day. To break the monotony of prison life, I decided to enroll in the then-available college classes. What resulted was a search for answers, a search for a "way out," a search for the truth about my identity and the meaning of life.

Two years passed, and the foundation of my worldview and self-concept had been shaken by what I had learned in school. I came across a book by Bo Lozoff called *We're All Doing Time: A Guide for Getting Free*. Written for prisoners but applicable to anyone, it teaches about the human spirit, karma (the law of how cause and effect operates in the universe), and how underneath all that we worship—whether it be our looks, our trinkets, our degrees, or our beliefs—we are all fundamentally the same. We are all caught within a cycle of fear and desire. If school rattled my foundation, Bo's book, and the effects of the efforts I made to practice what he suggested, opened windows into worlds I never knew existed.

Bo's teachings motivated me to continue seeking. Before long I was reading books by Stephen Levine, Krishnamurti, Ram Dass, Alan Watts, and other teachers of reality at its deepest levels. I practiced daily meditation that helps quiet the mind. I also became more adept at watching my thoughts and actions as they happened. In short, over time my awareness increased. As these actions became part of my daily life, my view toward others and myself continually changed. Less and less I felt the effects of the hate, rage, and anger that had grown within me since childhood. In their place came love, compassion, and empathy toward others—even those I previously despised.

Believing I was institutionalized, and thinking that school is like prison because both are institutions (and that I might therefore do as well in one as the other), I decided to continue my education after being paroled. Four years later in graduate school, I was exposed to a mostly mainstream overview of criminology. Although I had a great time just being there, the representations of "criminals" and explanations for crime and criminal justice that I was exposed to did not match with my experience. The real lives of the real people who are oppressed by the system were basically missing from the curricu-

lum. And nowhere did I hear anybody talking about the process of self-discovery that had not only helped transform my life but also, I believed, could potentially change the world.

Then one day somebody told me about a book called *Peacemaking Criminology*, edited by Hal and Richard. After reading Richard's chapter, "The Way of Peace, on Crime, Suffering, and Service," I felt awestruck and inspired. It left me with the idea (which I was struggling with) that perhaps there was a place for someone like me in this field. In that piece he talked about things like life being a spiritual journey, and that awareness of reality can only be attained by losing the conditioned ego and realizing the essence of our inner self. He explained how no amount of theorizing and rational thinking could teach us much about the truth—that in fact we should avoid the tenets of modern science in a new criminology, which should be inherently nonviolent. Unlike anything I had ever heard in any criminologically oriented, academic environment, he wrote how healing the belief in separation from one another is necessary for suffering to end. The willingness to serve others, he said, along with having hearts filled with love, will help us know what has to be done and how it needs doing.

Unexpectedly, I was finding continuity in my life. What Bo Lozoff had introduced me to in C-block, Richard was extending in my academic world. Several of the authors I had read after reading Bo's book were cited in Richard's chapter. Of course, their messages were fundamentally the same. That is, the way to a better world will be found as each of us becomes more aware, more awake, more compassionate, more loving, and more connected with everyone and everything.

*"EVERYDAY LIFE IS THE SOURCE OF  
SOCIAL CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION"*

*Hal*

More than 20 years ago, Richard had established himself as a criminological friend of the underclass. He was a hero of the criminological left. He was acceptable reading among criminologists generally. He gave voice to the widespread recognition among many of us criminologists who felt pushed to become servants of the state. He invited us to question how we should respond. He became a darling of conflict theorists on the criminological left who hoped for political revolution/overthrow of the state or nurturance of rebellion by class enemies of the state.



In the 1970s, Richard became a darling of emergent critical criminologists. I distinguish *critical* from *radical*. Richard was radical. He radically disappointed critical criminologists with his 1978 book, *Providence*.

To me, *critical* signifies recognition that something is wrong with the established order. *Radical* signifies a determination to get to the roots of the social problem. Richard's greatest contribution to my own thinking, and I surmise to others, is that in a violent world one has to understand one's own self and one's capacity to respond as fully as one recognizes what Richard calls "suffering" and others call "injustice." To get to the roots of this issue, one needs to balance an awareness of social, political inequities with one's understanding of how one, oneself, bears responsibility. Conscious social change is fundamentally a matter of growing self-understanding of the difference between serving violence and serving peace.

### *CONVICT CRIMINOLOGY: ACT III*

#### *Alan*

The third act of our drama involves the internal machinations of the convict criminologist as prisoner. He has a visceral loathing for his own weakness and incompetence but understands conceptually that he is not solely to blame for his condition. How to reconcile the guilt of personal responsibility with the knowledge that his choices were few? How to reconcile a nascent understanding of the true, shared culpability for his crimes with the extant legal reality of his sole responsibility for doing the time? and How, in short, can you demand to be "right" when the cost is your life?

#### *Chuck*

I met Richard, Hal, Dennis Sullivan, Kay Harris, Larry Tifft, and other critical, proactive criminologists at an ASC panel. Richard used the allegory of the oxherder during his presentation to illustrate that peace can come to the world only when we come to know the peace within ourselves. He was brilliant. I felt elated and humbled in his presence. Here was a true teacher. Here was somebody, an academic criminologist at that, who really knew what was happening. I remember thinking that a clear understanding of his message should be a prerequisite for all criminologists. At the same time, I feared that few could be open to what he was saying. As a consequence, most would cat-

egorize his message as meaningless. Such is the paradox of Richard's work and, it seems to me, the paradox of the world.

Before long, Richard and I became friends. As well as meet at conferences, we occasionally communicated through letters sent in the regular mail. Once, in my hometown of Santa Barbara, he, Solveig, and I met at a restaurant by the beach for coffee. He has always been supportive and always encouraging of whatever I am doing.

By the time Richard was given a tribute at the 1998 ASC, I had become familiar with his widely accepted earlier work. By then I had also heard comments made by other criminologists about how he had "become strange." Once, in a class I was engaged in as a teacher's assistant, the instructor told the students about how good Richard used to be but that something unusual happened to him, like maybe he "got born again or something." At a conference, another indicated the same thing, that in earlier years his contributions were incredible but that somewhere along the way he had "lost it." By the time of the tribute I fully knew that many criminologists viewed his later work, work I see as the most real possible, as unreal.

### *Hal*

If you are a prisoner, you are underclass. The world offers you fewer and fewer fair chances to join the power structure. How, then, do you survive? Do you surrender to your status, or do you try to transcend the "logic of commodities" in which you inevitably will live out your life?

When on my T-shirt I see Richard's reference to "an historical era in which all aspects of life are mediated by the logic of commodities," I infer that he (extraordinarily well-read as he is) is referring to Enlightenment thinking, in which heart and mind, spiritualism and rationalism, are separated. In *Providence*, Richard crossed the Enlightenment line. His reputation among leftist and mainstream criminologists alike suffered accordingly. He joined the academic underclass.

Now Richard is an avowed, exploring Buddhist. In his second spiritual book in 1982, *Social Existence*, he explored Taoist thought. Ironically, in the book that had leftist criminologists feeling betrayed and mainstream criminologists merely bewildered, he complemented Marx with Max Weber and Paul Tillich—a German social scientist and a U.S. Christian theologian.

In *Providence*, Richard wrote that it is not enough to know what is wrong with the social order. One has to add meaning (Weber) and transcendent value to life (Tillich) to decide how to respond to oppression.

*CONVICT CRIMINOLOGY: POSTSCRIPT**Alan*

When I read Quinney in *Peacemaking Criminology*, I was moved to read many of his other contemporary articles. I saw that he understood the conundrum of reconciliation, the paradox of living with oneself and within one's society. I suspect that he felt the tension himself in the context of his own work. His writings show that he recognized the frustration and pain systematically imposed on the dispossessed. He saw that criminological explanations of crime, at any level of analysis, only add to the pain. I believe that Quinney made up his mind to do no harm.

Although Richard knew that individual-level rationales for crime both attack and stigmatize the very humanness of offenders, social explanations take. They take some of the responsibility for law breaking, and they take some of the power that people, whether prisoners, need to build a life. It seems that the more we educate ourselves and cultivate an appreciation for the insights to be gained from abstraction, the less we are inclined to look within ourselves for answers or even to see if we are asking the right questions. On the other hand, the more we disdain an elevated level of sociological explanation, the more naïve we come to seem. Such are the issues troubling the credentialed convict criminologist.

*Chuck*

During the small, celebratory gathering at ASC, Richard humbly accepted the symbols, a plaque and T-shirt, given to him as acknowledgments of his contributions. His simple words at the time still ring in my head. "It is not enough to be critical," he said. "We must also be proactive." I believe the proactiveness he advocates means, in part, that each of us work on ourselves and, as we do, we will become more aware of who we really are as human beings.

Richard's message and example give me continued strength and direction. As he and others have suggested throughout history, only the truth can set us free. Yet of itself, the truth can do nothing. Freedom and peace can only follow from an understanding of the truth, the truth that in reality we all are one. For this reason, I believe that, in time, Richard will be seen as the most real criminologist of this era, as he is to me now.

*WHITHER CRIMINOLOGY?**Alan*

Currently, the criminological disciplines claim a slightly better than chance ability to predict future criminality on the part of individuals with previous criminal histories. It's not that I'm unimpressed that a profession constituted of a group of folks with a combined 10,000 or so years of college education can surpass a monkey with a quarter in predicting crime, but after all this time wouldn't you think we could do better? What is it that holds us back? Why do we forward our agendas by endowing ourselves with such grand mantles of expertise, be they based on education, experience, or both, when our ability to accomplish what we set out to do is lacking?

Quinney suggests that it is our habitual ways of being that both hold us back and propel us forward with our ideas, our ambitions, and our careers. We continue to look for answers "out there" when all the data we will ever need reside within our hearts. Look within, he implores, and discover the roots of all suffering. Then, join action to understanding, engage with the world, and work for the cessation of all suffering, everywhere. Only then will criminology become an anachronism and the reality of crime no more.

*"EVERYDAY LIFE IS INDEED, OF CONSEQUENCE"**Hal*

Take yourself seriously. Even if you are a renowned criminologist, take time to examine yourself. Step off the treadmill of conformity. I think that in the early 1970s some people got caught in conformist thinking and made the mistake of taking Richard for a servant of Marxist theory. The mistake was that Richard was not a position in a single publication but a being in quest of (self-) understanding. The reality of class oppression did not tell him, by itself, how to respond.

*"IT IS THE ONLY REALITY WE CAN KNOW"**Chuck*

For those of us who have undergone change in our lives as an effect of self-discovery, Richard represents an essence of our own experience of trans-

formation. The irony is that for the vast majority in the criminological mainstream, his work is regarded as not grounded in empirical reality. What does that denial, that judgment, say to me about the authenticity of my experience?

*Hal*

The Greek root of the term *empirical* is *empeirokos*, meaning experienced. Richard's approach to understanding crime and criminality has been supremely inductive. It has balanced an awareness of criminal justice as class warfare and social examination more generally with an attempt to become aware of self and of what allows one's compassion to open and close.

The most striking thing to me when I first met Richard, already a criminological hero of mine 30 years ago, was that he was interested in me. He wanted to know about me, not just intellectually. He was interested in my simple humanity. As a corollary, he was interested in himself—not just as a professional figure, but as a full being. He validated me, he encouraged me.

To me, this goes hand in hand with his works of self-reflection. He indeed shares with others, profoundly, meaningfully so.

In Zen Buddhist terms, every paradox is a *koan*, a riddle to be transcended through meditation. I believe that Richard has solved his koan, for himself and for so many of us who have been validated and encouraged by his work and personal friendship and mentorship. It is no mystery to me why many of us love all of Richard's work, whereas others dismiss his later work. Richard is in tune with a crucial side of ourselves—some call it the right brain—which other criminologists dare not touch for fear of losing objectivity. Richard teaches us that the only thing you lose when you lose objectivity is the dubious privilege of being a social object yourself. You gain, by sharing experience with others, the very stuff of cultural transformation. You gain compassion.

As I revisit lessons that I have learned from Richard, I think that he inspired me to a realization that I now make explicit with my students. In everyday life, we can seek chances to express all the repressed feelings, beliefs, and subservience that we have been forced to keep to ourselves. As criminologists, we can explore our own relation to the state. My criminal justice students can do the same. We can ask ourselves what criticisms of patriarchal order we have had to repress. We can take time to mourn our own structural traps. In that process, we stand to recognize and not rationalize the suffering of others. I have come to believe that this is the process by which people in my own country, the United States, can recognize how punitive and uncompassionate we have become as a people, and transform ourselves one by one.

In peacemaking theory as I have come to recognize it, as Richard has inspired it, the first question for change is not what others need to do or should do but what I myself, in everyday life, do next. That includes the question of what I do as a criminologist in the next moment of everyday life.

*Alan*

Richard Quinney is one of my favorite authors, and not because of his lyrical prose or brilliant insights. For me, Quinney stands out because he writes about one of my favorite topics: personal responsibility. Quinney's message, especially in later years, might properly distill down to the following: The conduct of everyone, the fate of everyone, and the needs of everyone are the personal responsibility of everyone.

Quinney's views are presently out of the mainstream, but they are hardly novel. They are based on wisdom traditions stretching back thousands of years. Our personal and social dilemmas today largely spring from our having accepted the validity of a quite different interpretation of our rights, responsibilities, and relationships. We have come to fear crime and even commit crimes because we suffer from the culturally induced delusions of separateness and scarcity. The cure, as always, is the truth: Whoever you think you are and whatever you think about others, the lived truth is that we are interconnected in myriad ways and none of us will ever be truly safe until we are all safe. As human beings we are obligated to one another. We are each other's personal responsibility.

*Hal*

The cruelty of making anyone "do time" is stark to me, even in making a child do a time-out, let alone "doing life." In *Journey to a Far Place* (1991), Richard sought to affirm the importance of that which had no manifest production value to him as a sociology professor. The gentle, open manner in which he documented his own everyday life gives us an opportunity to confront our own meaning systems, values, and stories. What have we learned along the way? Rather than focus on the criminal or the state, we are led to ask ourselves, How far have we come? What part do we play in creating the world we all share? I find tremendous comfort in the recognition that there is great consequence in the ways we get up and go about our daily business. I trust that Alan and Chuck made the time they did in prison of consequence.

*Alan*

Even though Richard's message of communal responsibility makes a lot of sense, accepting this truth and living in accordance with it is a real challenge. Such a way of being requires much dedication and practice. Maintaining a diligent practice is hard work, but the good news is that as we get better at embodying our values, by being patient with ourselves and gentle with others, our determination will make itself shown. Our prose will become more lyrical, our insights will attain brilliance, and we will come to know ourselves—and each other—as if for the first time.

*Hal*

For 30 years I have been in correspondence with many prisoners. I never ask them what their offense is or what they have done to get to prison. The main thing I want to know is how they are doing here and now. Pen palships are made and broken based on how we interact on matters at hand, not on the past.

I imagine that the line "everyday life is of consequence" must be profoundly validating for all who have dramatically transformed their lives. The line suggests that it is not so much what we get done, how others see us, or what we gain, but how we lived that day. The direction it points to, it seems to me, is not to "be" a criminal, or "be" a professional, or anything else. Our task, instead, is to be as genuine, open, and honest as we can, and see others as doing the same. To me, these words of Richard's are a profound validation of my reality—that whether a prisoner is worthy of my trust and friendship has nothing to do with the "seriousness" of the pretext for the imprisonment.

Everyday life is of criminological consequence in another respect. In the book Richard and Kevin Anderson recently edited on the work of Erich Fromm, one finds that Fromm's key insight was that our class warfare in the form of wars on crime is fueled by individual projection and the displacement of secret shame. We each feel isolation from having violated or been violated by others. In Quinney's Buddhist terms, it is only by acknowledging and sharing our daily personal existential suffering—in other words, by being compassionate with our own daily existence—that we can empathize with the suffering of others and thereby transform the urge to punish into compassion.

Among my criminal justice students, I find that as I encourage them to express their own honest feelings and opinions and experience about "justice," and as we together recognize their exploitation as a "student" class, they become noticeably more "liberal" about wars on crime. As their everyday lives become of consequence, their will to punish abates.

*Alan*

Recently, I attended a conference on leadership. It was organized by Tibetan Buddhists and attended by high-powered businesspeople, organization theorists, educators from all levels, and social service practitioners and administrators. I was the sole criminologist. As a criminologist I was of much interest, and with regard to civic leadership I was bemused to note that I held something of a middle ground. Others belonged to groups that had both much more and much less “relevance” to leadership in the organization of everyday life. What really struck a cord with the assemblage about me was not that I teach criminology or conduct research but that I teach meditation in prisons. A discussion arose based on a series of magazine and newspaper articles about a Zen monk and his students. The monk is a prison volunteer and his students reside in state prison.

The monk had been in communication with one of the more prominent conference presenters. We were told how the monk had expressed doubt as to whether meditation instruction in prison was “right” ethical practice. His worry was that by teaching prisoners how to be more contented in their daily lives he was in effect condemning them to social extinction. At the root of his concern was his feeling that prisons are wrong, *prima facie*, and that teaching convicts to be peaceful fed right into the hands of power. After all, few changes have come to the penal establishment in the absence of disruptive, violent uprisings.

The monk’s paradox is one that is faced by many prisoner advocates and prison volunteers. Is it better to help ease immediate individual suffering or work toward structural change? Most of us try to avoid the question by posing another in its place and then leaving it unanswered: Can a small group of transformed individuals succeed in transforming an entire organization? Inevitably, it seems we want to have our cake and eat it too.

My experience tells me that the battle for systematic penal reform is a long and chancy proposition that entails much sacrifice and the potential for many casualties. Will our ends justify the means? Should the monk (and the rest of us) withdraw from prison work and leave the current mess to the “professionals” alone? Quinney is instructive here, I think. His message is one that I have tried to put into practice. It is that the direct easing of human misery is always a self-justifying “right” action. All the rest—the strategic maneuvering, political tactics, and public pressure—is indirect, abstract, and unreal. Changes on a grand scale may come to pass or, despite our best efforts, they may not. The germane point is perhaps best summed by Dennis Sullivan in his remarkable book *The Mask of Love*. Their message is unambiguous and, I



think, exemplary: Means are ends. Easing human suffering is an end in itself. So is condoning pain, even in service to "higher" purposes.

We owe Richard Quinney our thanks for cultivating an awareness of the illusions of ego and the veils of grandiose abstraction, and for keeping it real. In the Zen tradition, life itself is seen as a paradox. The masters say that the answer to a paradox is never either/or but one liberally sprinkled with laughter.