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Editors' Note:

Words from the Editors' Workbench

The germ of the idea for a scholarly record of research and opinion on the intersection of crime, criminal justice, and popular culture was carefully cultivated by Professor Graeme Newman, eminent scholar of punishment and culture, disciplined thinker, and acrid social critic. A good teacher, Professor Newman passed this germ along to two doctoral students in order that they might nurture it further. In service of this idea, the Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture (ISSN 1070-8286) was launched on the Internet in 1993 from humble offices at the School of Criminal Justice at the State University of New York at Albany. Some three years later, the original editors stepped down from their posts in order to pursue other projects and to infuse new blood to the JCJPC editorial staff. While a paperback volume of the manuscripts and review essays published in these first three years titled Interrogating Popular Culture has recently been issued by Harrow and Heston, the publication schedule for JCJPC has been haphazard at best in the past year or so, attributable mainly to an inadequately fortified editorial staff. We are pleased to announce that this editorial anemia has been treated and that a reconstituted journal staff which includes the founding editors is now firmly in control of JCJPC affairs. This issue of JCJPC represents a new beginning. With these brief words from the editors' workbench, we wish to explicate the mission of a reformed JCJPC.

The newly composed editorial staff of JCJPC has two main concerns related to the prosecution of our duties. One of these concerns speaks to the substance of the scholarly record to be published in the journal while the other concern addresses the quality of that record. The substance of JCJPC will be research and opinion on the intersection of crime, criminal justice, and popular culture. Of course, crime and criminal justice must be recognized as cultural concepts, but when we think of the relations between culture, crime, and criminal justice, we have something more in mind than the simple recognition that crime and justice are cultural phenomena. Instead, we wish to continue the interrogation which JCJPC initiated in 1993, an inquiry broadly concerned with the ways that a multiplicity of shared forms and symbols relate to the specific forms and symbols which cluster around the concepts crime and criminal justice. We hesitate to advance further than this basic scheme since we prefer an attitude of openness regarding which aspects of this relation to address as well as the theoretical and methodological orientations best suited to the task. We wish to practice what Bruce DiCristina (1995) has deftly described as an "anarchic criminology," an orientation which values "freedom of thought" and "the absence of coercion or constraint in making choices concerning images of our world" (p. 88). We wish to entertain different conceptions of law and order, both with respect to our larger social world and the intellectual practices that have come to be known as criminology.[End page 1]

While we are open to all theoretical and methodological treatments of the intersection of crime, criminal justice, and popular culture, we maintain definite criteria about the quality of such investigations. An openness to theoretical and methodological anarchy in criminology should not be mistaken as an invitation for insipid and poorly crafted reportage and exposition. While we cannot construct an uncontroversial definition of quality reportage and exposition, we have nevertheless set down a number of criteria which will guide our deliberations and those of our external reviewers with respect to specific submissions. These criteria are clearly specified in JCJPC's "Statement of Purpose" which can be located on the journal's main home page. Generally speaking, JCJPC will only consider scholarship on the intersection of crime, criminal justice, and popular culture that is pursued with rigor and thoughtfulness and is presented in a clear and succinct manner.

In its original incarnation, JCJPC published review essays and manuscripts on the topic of crime, criminal justice, and popular culture. We have retained these two departments and have added three others to the reformed JCJPC. Whereas the journal previously focused exclusively on research related to crime, criminal justice, and popular culture, the current manifestation of JCJPC will also include expressions of opinion on the subject. More specifically, JCJPC has added a commentary department in which considered opinions on topics of relevance to crime, criminal justice, and popular culture penned by responsible scholars will be given a public hearing. In addition, the editors will submit a statement of opinion on a matter of import to the crime, criminal justice, and popular culture nexus in each issue. The aim of these commentaries and editorials is to foster learned debate about contemporary issues as they relate to crime, criminal justice, and popular culture. Finally, we have added another new department in which we will present special features, explorations of crime, criminal justice, and popular culture which, due to their experimental nature or incompatibility with the other departments, require a special home. A more specific description of JCJPC's departments may also be found in the "Statement of Purpose" located on the journal's main home page.

The new editorial staff looks forward to the intellectual rewards and challenges promised by a reformed JCJPC. We encourage submissions of review essays, manuscripts, commentaries, and special features from all scholars intrigued by the intersection of crime, criminal justice, and popular culture, regardless of one's particular intellectual heritage. We also invite scholars with an interest in the journal's subject matter to submit their vita to the editors so we can continue to expand our pool of committed external reviewers.

Enjoy the new issue!

References

DiCristina, B. (1995). Method in criminology. A philosophical primer. New York: Harrow and Heston.

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