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# The Story of Crime:

Offending Scientific Tradition and  
the Role of Crime Fiction

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‘The complexity of human subjectivity,  
we are sometimes told, is best left to  
poets, playwrights and novelists...  
yet...’

(Maruna and Matravers, 2007: 429)

‘...It may be that the social scientist has much to learn from the creative artist in terms of appreciating and engaging with human subjectivity.’

(Maruna and Matravers, 2007: 429)

'(T)he myth of the bogeyman'

(Maruna, 2001: 5)

<b>Institutionalised Means</b>	<b>Cultural Goals</b>
<p data-bbox="131 468 792 749"><b>‘the distribution of opportunities to achieve these goals in socially acceptable ways.’</b></p> <p data-bbox="198 999 923 1053"><b>(Hopkins-Burke, 2009: 119)</b></p>	<p data-bbox="962 468 1754 892"><b>‘those material possessions, symbols of status, accomplishment and esteem that established norms and values encourage us to aspire to’</b></p> <p data-bbox="1039 999 1754 1053"><b>(Hopkins-Burke, 2009:119)</b></p>

**(based on Merton, 1938)**

	Goals	Means
Conformist	Accept	Accept
Innovator	Accept	Reject
Ritualist	Reject	Accept
Retreatist	Reject	Reject
Rebel	Creates New Goals	Through New Means

(based on Merton, 1938)

‘the sports, arts and entertainment industries frequently attract, develop and absorb ‘innovators’, celebrating their novelty’

(Hopkins-Burke, 2009: 121)



- Divergent thought processes
- Similar creative strategies
- Opportunism
- Understanding of risk

(based on Gamman and Raein, 2008: 173)

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(based on Merton, 1938)

**Jack Henry Abbott**

**Jeffery Archer**

**Brendan Behan**

**Edward Bunker**

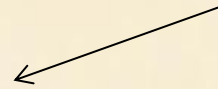
**John Bunyan**

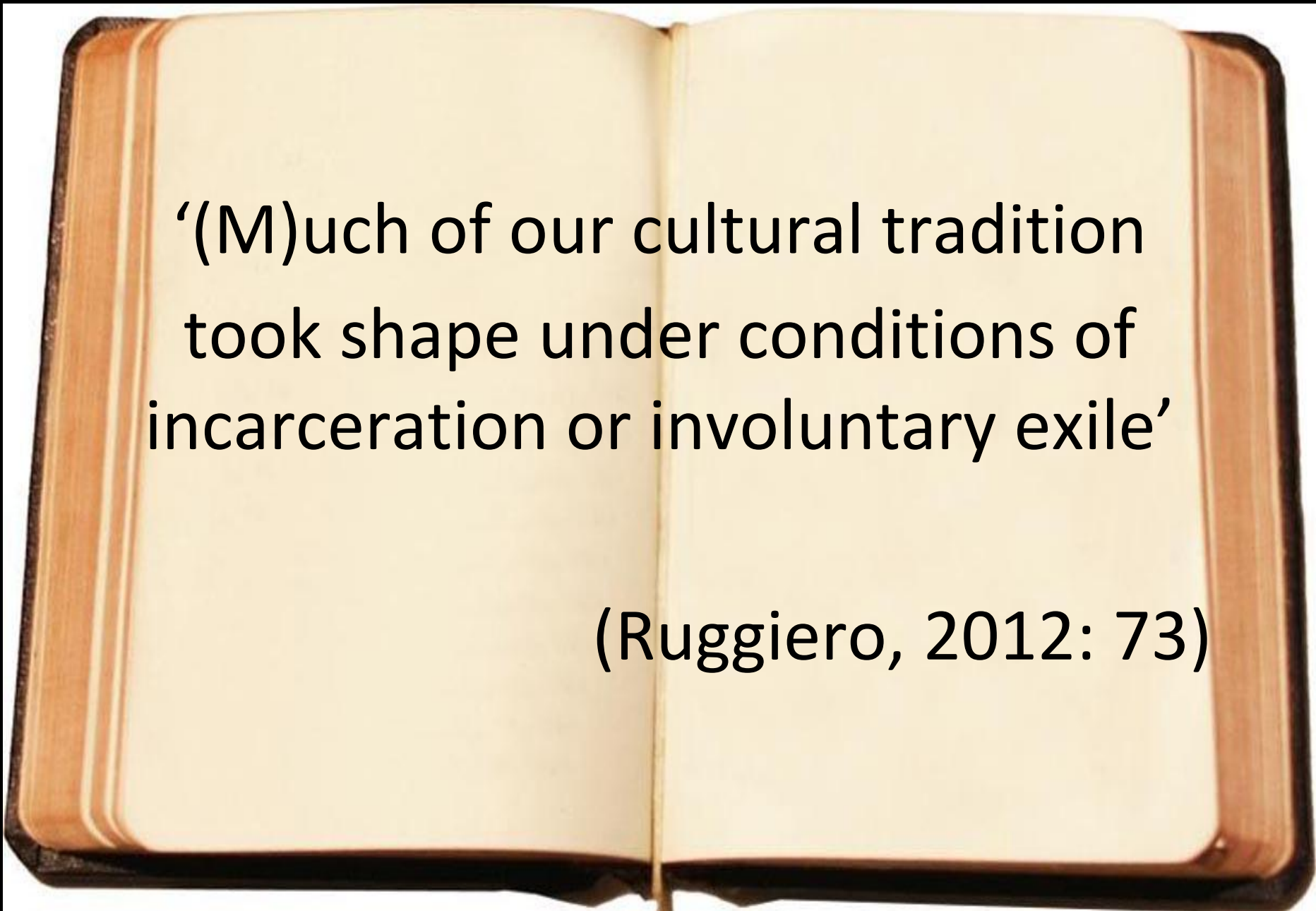
**Miguel de Cervantes**

**Marquis de Sade**

**Daniel Defoe**

Writers who have served  
time in prison





‘(M)uch of our cultural tradition  
took shape under conditions of  
incarceration or involuntary exile’

(Ruggiero, 2012: 73)

‘it is probably criminology of all the branches of sociology and psychology, where the problem of unchecked positivism is greatest’

(Young, 2004: 20)

‘to go out into the city and “get the  
seat of your pants dirty in real  
research”’

(Bulmer, 1984 cited in Hyle, 2001: 271)



# **THE JACK- ROLLER**

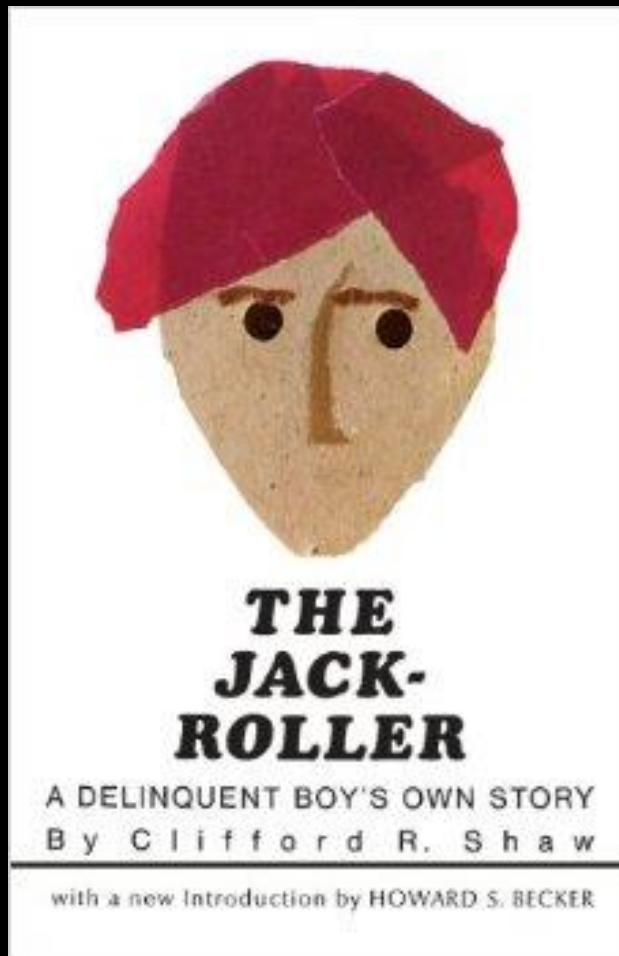
A DELINQUENT BOY'S OWN STORY  
By Clifford R. Shaw

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with a new Introduction by HOWARD S. BECKER

'...is the story of a youthful criminal, written by himself, but as a result of painstaking encouragement and drawing-out by Professor Shaw.'

(Bruce, 1930: 463)



“(W)e have found that the “own story” reveals useful information concerning at least three important aspects of delinquent conduct: (1) The point of view of the delinquent; (2) the social and cultural situation to which the delinquent is responsive; and (3) the sequence of past experiences and situations in the life of the delinquent.’

(Shaw, 1930/1966: 4)



‘Knowledge of the author’s intentions was “neither available or desirable” (Wimsatt, 1970: 3).’

(Belsey, 2005: :13)

- Narrative as record
- Narrative as interpretation
- A constitutive view of narrative

(Based on Presser, 2009)

‘narrative is a signpost of what occurred. Both conceptualisations... may be called representational, with the gap between the representation and the event(s) estimated somewhat differently.’

(Presser, 2009: 184)

‘(T)he ambition at least, is to tell “my story” about “their story” through the fullest conceptual bringing out of “their story”.’

(Willis, 2000)

‘(O)ffenders’ words have been fragmented, lifted out of context, trimmed to support particular criminological theories or policy initiatives’

(Weaver and Weaver, 2013: 260)

‘the concept of narrative does not travel from literary theory; it enters the discussion as an everyday term.’

(Hyvarinen, 2006: 22)

‘In the end we become the autobiographical narratives by which we “tell about” our lives.’

(Bruner, 1987: 15)

‘...displayed an exaggerated sense of control over their future and an inflated, almost missionary, sense of purpose in life. They recast their criminal pasts not as the shameful failings that they are but instead as a necessary prelude to some newfound calling. In general the highly positive accounts bore no resemblance to the ugly realities of the ex-offenders’ lives’

(Maruna, 2001: 9)



‘...more precisely an oral self-narrative, a spoken rendering of one’s personal experience as an agent in the world.’

(Presser: 2008: 3)

‘Good writing is essentially rewriting. I  
am positive of this.’

(ref needed)

‘A more or less constant stream of such writing has been published, often obscurely, sometimes with press fanfare....which has served to shape a recognisable genre of prison writing.’

(Nellis, 2012: 189)

‘prison is the crucible that fires the imagination, stirs the soul and draws forth the creativity of the imprisoned.’

(Broadhead, 2006: iii)

‘Criminologists use narratives to illuminate how people see (or saw) their world. The narrative is a certain rendering of what is or has happened, including the rendering of one’s own actions.’

(Presser, 2009: 182)

‘To move from say unemployment to crime, or deprivation to crime, you need narratives; correlation alone cannot assure causality, it is only the narratives which link factors to outcomes that can do this.’

(Young, 2004: 23)

‘(C)an any work of criminology really come close to matching the insights into crime and justice provided by works such as A Clockwork Orange, Crime and Punishment, In Cold Blood or Les Miserable?’

(Maruna and Matravers, 2007: 429)

‘(C)riminologists use narratives to illuminate how people see (or saw) their world.’

(Presser, 2009: 182)



‘(N)atural scientific methods can be applied to human action, behaviour is causally determined, incontestable objectivity is attainable, and precise quantitative measurement is possible, indeed preferable.’

(Young, 2004: 20)

‘(I)f you cannot measure it, it does not  
exist’

(Brown, 2010: 1.46)

‘In the life-history is revealed, as in no other way, the inner life of the person, his moral struggles, his successes and failures of securing control of his destiny.’

(Burgess, 1945 cited in Shaw, 1966: 4)

'Things need not have happened to be true.  
Tales and dreams are the shadow-truths that  
will endure when mere facts are dust and ashes,  
and forgot.'

Neil Gaiman,  
*The Sandman, Vol. 3: Dream Country*

'Prisons are scandalous, but they make  
people dream.'

(Ruggiero, 2012: 73)