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## Citation

Fleetwood, J; Presser, Lois; Sandberg, Sveinung and Ugelvik, Thomas, eds. 2019. The Emerald Handbook of Narrative Criminology. Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited. ISBN 9781787690066 [Edited Book]

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## Introduction

Jennifer Fleetwood, Lois Presser, Sveinung Sandberg and Thomas Ugelvik

*This is a postprint version of chapter 1 (p.1-26) in Emerald Handbook of Narrative Criminology (2019), eds. Jennifer Fleetwood, Lois Presser, Sveinung Sandberg and Thomas Ugelvik.*

Rosario Castellanos' (1962) *The Book of Lamentations* and Mario Vargas Llosas' (1981) *The War of the End of the World* tell epic stories of poor indigenous people fighting for their physical and spiritual lives. Both describe fictional characters, inhabiting the impoverished states of Chiapas in Mexico (Castellanos) and Bahia in Brazil (Llosas), inspired to revolt, by real people and events. As in these books, intertwined Catholic and local beliefs were important, narrative resources in actual indigenous revolts against ethnic, class and colonial hierarchies. Narratives can also legitimize conquest, and not just rebellion, as Keeton (2015) shows in his analysis of the link between Old Testament narratives and the colonization of the USA. Biblical stories move: carried and passed on by people, traversing continents and oceans. Narratives also travel in time, enduring thousands of years, continuously changing and intermingling with other stories.

Narratives undergird power as well as resistance. They have inspired some of the darkest moments in human history; The Third Reich built its legitimacy on epic stories of valor and glory adapted from a mythical northern-European past. Narratives can also challenge harms; old tales of native people's resistance were crucial for the renowned Zapatista uprising of 1994.

These histories, motivated by stories, continue to be storied in the present, acquiring new meanings and significance. Stories move in and out of “reality.” Some have an historical point of reference, others do not; it is their “storiness” (Hogan 2003, 203) that gives them their unique power. Power to defend the established order and do harm, but also power to change society and better the conditions under which people live. The capacity of stories to arouse people is at the heart of narrative criminology. Put simply, stories shape our social world; they inspire us to do or resist harms. With careful and close attention, they can tell us a great deal.

Hence this volume. For ease, we have organized it by moment in the process of research – collecting versus analysing stories. Around this somewhat arbitrary binary is a profusion of discoveries as to what narrative criminology – indeed, criminology – can do and be. First: where have we been? What research has been done to date in narrative criminology? What have we learned? Second: what are this Handbook’s specific contributions to the field? Third: what are some important future directions in narrative criminology? What has narrative criminology yet to grasp, hone, or pay attention to? What good could it do in the world?

## Looking Back

Stories connect the present with past and future, and so too is the present and future of narrative criminology closely connected to its past in any recognizable account. Where did narrative criminology come from? Several origin stories have been told (Maruna, 2015; Presser & Sandberg, 2015; Sandberg & Ugelvik, 2016a). Linkages to mid-century American sociology are often highlighted. Sykes and Matza's (1957) description of how delinquents use ‘techniques of neutralisation’ to make their offending behaviour morally justifiable is said to be an important inspiration, as is Mills’ (1940) elucidation of ‘vocabularies of motive’. Similarly, Scott and

Lyman's (1968) study of how people's accounts of their own actions bridge the gap between action and expectation is said to be another core text. These works related socially structured discourse to individual action. Labelling theories, as well as theories of gendered action, would emphasize identity mechanisms driving that relationship. For example, narrative criminology owes a profound debt to Becker's demonstration in *Outsiders* (1963) that deviance is not an attribute of any act but rather the meanings attached to it. Building on insights from symbolic interactionism and especially Goffman, Katz (1988) showed that crimes are an acting-out of certain narrative scripts and thus actions in general are shaped by their storytelling potential.

Maruna's (2001) *Making Good*, which set out the close connections between desistance from crime and narrative reconfigurations of self-image, was a rigorous take on the idea that behaviour reversals are founded on stories. Outside criminology, myriad studies have theorised specific mass harms (e.g., violent attacks on abortion clinics, criminal executions, war, terrorism) in narrative terms. In psychology, anthropology, political science, medicine, geography, and still other non-literary disciplines – the narrative turn had already taken place. Hence an alternative origin story might be that, bolstered by the development cultural, constitutive, and psychosocial criminologies, the moment had finally come for narrative criminology.

When Presser coined the term 'narrative criminology' in her 2009 article in *Theoretical Criminology*, there existed a reservoir of evidence and theory to draw from. Her paper was a timely and productive intervention that drew together and summarised several coinciding developments in the social sciences. Looking back, one is tempted to say that it was like a spark in a fireworks factory. NC was quickly adopted by a number of scholars internationally. Sandberg further developed the framework (Sandberg 2010, 2013, 2016), and with colleagues he analysed the importance of stories for topics such as terrorism, illegal drugs, drinking, violence

and humour. Connections were made with visual criminology (Sandberg and Ugelvik 2016b) and Bourdieusian criminology (Sandberg and Fleetwood 2017, see also Fleetwood 2014, 2016). Presser, for her part, developed narrative criminology further. Her book *Why We Harm?* (2013) pivots from 'crime' in the narrow sense to encompass legal and routine harms. In *Inside Story* (2018) she explores why and how stories captivate audiences and drive mass harm.

As a criminological sub-discipline, narrative criminology reached maturity with the publication of the edited collection *Narrative Criminology: Understanding Stories of Crime* (Presser and Sandberg 2015a). This volume includes a range of different studies with a variety of topics – prisoners' work on the self, drug users' use of narratives and the connection between bad trip stories and folk tales about magical creatures and dark forces. It also covers stories justifying mass atrocities and sex offences, and the relationship between cultural and narrative criminology. The anthology was followed by a special issue of the journal *Crime, Media, Culture* (Sandberg and Ugelvik 2016a). This special issue covered issues such as forms of narrative, narrative habitus, boundary work, media narratives and the relationship between narrative and image.

## Recent developments

Narrative criminology is, formally speaking, only 10 years old, but it is already moving in new directions, especially around a deepening understanding of human experience and meaning making. The field is still expanding, with novel research topics, analytical perspectives and methodological options. Indeed, the last year or two has seen a rapid proliferation of narrative perspectives across various criminological areas.

Continuing narrative criminology's core interest in understanding violence, Henriksen and Bengtsson (2018) find that marginalized Danish youths describe violence as "nothing special" ; as an acceptable and even trivial part of their lives. Colvin and Pisiou's (2018) examine the narratives of members of right-wing groups in Germany, finding that violence is neutralised through tropes such as pragmatic *realpolitik* (a way of "getting results") and the mythical race of *Herrenmensch*. Looking at a very different group – serial killers – James and Gossett (2018) show how even people who have committed the most heinous of crimes are able to narratively reconstruct themselves as people with high moral standards. Raitanen, Sandberg and Oksanen (2019) explore connections between the master narrative of school shootings and personal stories of being bullied. The same kind of micro-macro link can be found in Banks and Albertson's (2018) study of violence committed by ex-service personnel. They locate such violence in both personal biographies and individual psyches, and the structural conditions of advanced capitalism. Lastly, Sandberg, Copes and Pedersen (2019) expand the traditional focus on violent populations, to "peaceful people", arguing that narrative analysis far exceeds approaches such as subcultural and neutralization theory in understanding engagement in violence.

An emerging literature concerns the narrative dimensions of representations of *armed conflict and war*. Following Houge's (2016) study of perpetrators of mass violence in post-conflict international tribunal proceedings, Rauschenbach (2018) studies the tension between 'judicial truth' and other kinds of truths in interviews with individuals accused by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. Walklate (2019) shows how images of violence and atrocity play an important part in the political aftermath of such incidents, a point that is also made by Houge (2018) in her study of international criminal tribunals as sites that impact on societal understandings of mass violence, promoting a particular kind of story.

Another core interest in narrative criminology is *drug crime*. In research by Webb, Copes and Hendricks (2019), people engaged in so-called micro-dosing of psychedelics talk about their drug use as rational and normal, narratively emphasizing connections to conventional citizens who hold middle-class values. Rather similarly, Arnall and Ryder (2019) describe how young women normalise their alcohol and marijuana use by telling stories in which they are in control of their substance use and that it all just “good fun.” Hammersvik’s (2018) study of cannabis growers and dealers highlights camaraderie. His participants reconstruct their growing and selling of illegal drugs as a way of helping out their friends. Narratives have also become important for scholars who wish to understand the absence of crimes and harm. One novel contribution here is Rowlands, Youngs and Canter’s (2019) exploration of the role of narrative identity change in substance misuse recovery.

Several recent papers offer *meta arguments* unpacking what narrative criminology is, what it can and should be, and how different analytical and methodological perspectives can be brought into and add to the original conceptualisation of narrative criminology. Wesely (2018) contends that, given that much narrative criminology research has been interview-based, narrative criminologists should look more closely at how interview dynamics and the narrative techniques both participants and interviewers deploy during interviews impact our analyses. Brisman (2019) shows how values that contribute to pollution and thus climate change are reproduced in stories for children. He contends that narrative criminology can very beneficially analyse fictional narratives and situates his ecology-focused work under the rubric of green cultural criminology. Presser and Sandberg (2019) have connected narrative criminology to critical criminology, arguing among other things that narrative criminology is rooted in a concern with harm, legal or illegal.

Walklate has, with her colleagues, developed narrative criminology in the direction of a narrative *victimology* (Walklate et al. 2018), as have Pemberton, Mulder and Aarten (2018), who claim great potential for the study of the multiple ways victimization experience is embedded in life stories. Pemberton, Aarten and Mulder (2018) highlight the need for victims to own their stories to avoid secondary victimisation. Together, these authors point to the potential for narrative approaches for understanding how victimisation is made sense of and told about, as well as how these narratives may (or may not) catalyse responses by the criminal justice system or policy makers. Narratives of victimisation are both personal and existentially significant *and* motivators for political and social change. Analysis of both depends on a keen attentiveness to questions of power that infuse who can tell a victim narrative.

Narrative criminology was originally explicitly centred on the narratives of offenders. There is now a sizeable literature on the *narrative lives of professionals* working in the social control professions. Kurtz and Upton (2018) continues this recent development and reveal that a certain kind of masculine police culture is reproduced through the sharing of stories. Similarly, Petintseva examines the narratives of youth justice workers (2018) and Baker (2018) looks at how believable truths are constructed narratively in coroners' reports. Whilst criminology has long attended to the discursive qualities of law and criminal justice institutions, studying personal narratives opens up daily practice for analysis, and the ways that individuals draw on, reproduce and adapt narratives about crime and justice. Whilst studying the 'texts' of law is important, narrative criminology is well placed to the importance of storytelling as a form of social action - the daily performance of stories as part of daily working lives.

Narrative criminologists have mainly, although not exclusively, used qualitative methods. Canter and Youngs (e.g. 2012, Youngs and Canter 2012a,b) have done *quantitative research* on



the narratives of offenders for some time. Their methodological example has provided notable inspiration, especially their commitment to standardised methodological approaches reflecting their psychological approach to studying offenders. Recently, using quantitative analysis, Goodlad, Ioannou and Hunter (2018) have explored how offenders with personality disorders and psychopathy experience committing a crime. Ciesla, Ioannou and Hammond (2019) surveyed female prisoners to examine their narrative and emotional experiences. Kruttschnitt and Kang (2019) studied persistent offenders' understanding of their past crimes using Canter and Young's narrative 'life as a film' method (see also Ioannou et al. 2018). Through analysis of stock narratives, they draw out the significance of structural disadvantages in their analysis, attending to the intersections of race and gender in particular.

A literature has also flourished concerning how prisoners narratively come to terms with their sentence. Rather than examine how narratives contribute to crime and other harmful actions, these researchers address traditional questions from the field of *penology*, but from a narrative theory perspective, such as how prisoners use discursive resistance strategies as part of their everyday lives in prison. Following Ugelvik's (2012, 2015) narrative studies of prison environments, Vannier (2018) highlights the importance of letter-writing for prisoners who have to endure the most extreme kinds of imprisonment, and also the analytical potential these letters have for researchers. Warr (2019) studies how prisoners sentenced to long periods of custody must undertake 'narrative labour' to manage the carceral identity imposed upon them, including their daily struggle to construct an acceptable narrative identity. Finally, Easterling, Feldmeyer and Presser (2018) describe the narrative strategies of incarcerated mothers managing the identity threats that incarceration presents for them as mothers. These are, in effect, studies of narrative responses to what Sykes (1958) called 'the pains of imprisonment'. Narrative

criminologists are poised to revisit classic ideas from criminology, connecting them with the idea of stories' productive potential.

The above overview over publications in narrative criminology from the last two years gives a flavour of recent research in narrative criminology, updating previous reviews (Presser and Sandberg 2015a and 2019 and Ugelvik and Sandberg 2016a). The study of narrative is inherently interdisciplinary, and it is hard to do justice to the array of interesting and creative ways narrative approaches have been deployed across varied disciplines and sub-fields. As well as expanding the methodological toolkit, the following chapters continue to broaden our understanding of the ways in which stories matter for understanding contemporary issues of harm, crime and justice.

## Chapters of this Handbook

The book is structured along two broad methodological dimensions. The first part explores different ways of *collecting* stories, including ethnography, interviews, texts and images and objects. While authors address the particularities of each of these methods of collecting data to varying degrees, we want readers to get an idea of the many ways stories can be found. For good reasons, narrative criminology has tended toward using interviews to generate narratives, and hopefully these chapters presenting alternative methodological approaches will inspire researchers to expand the pool of stories studied. Chapters also suggest innovative ways to work with interviews data, suggesting ways to be more reflexive and systematic when using interview data. The second part of the book concerns ways of *analysing* stories. Previous work in narrative criminology has used a multitude of analytical approaches, but in this volume the tool box is

expanded further to include membership categorisation analysis, psychoanalysis, dialogical analysis, ‘life as a film’, counter-narrative analysis, and narrative victimology.

## Part I: Collecting stories

Thus far narrative criminologists have been mostly concerned to draw linkages between harm and story, paying less attention to the ‘places’ where stories can be found. In this first part of the Handbook we highlight different ways of accessing stories, through ethnography, interviews, texts, images and objects.

### Observations and fieldwork

Ethnography is “the study of people in naturally occurring settings or ‘fields’ by methods of data collection which capture their social meanings and ordinary activities. It involves the researcher participating directly in the setting, if not also the activities, in order to collect data in a systematic matter” (Brewer 2000: 172). Traditionally, ethnography involves one or a few researchers engaging with a small group for a relatively long period, with a high level of engagement and commitment, and with the aim of understanding the culture, perspective and organisation of that group. Lately, ethnography has expanded to include forms such as auto-ethnography, netnography, multi-sited ethnography, and narrative ethnography. This last is conceptualized as “aimed at close scrutiny of social situations, their actors, and actions in relation to narratives” (Gubrium and Holstein 2008: 250). The narrative ethnographer documents the vagaries of story construction within concrete social interactions.

Sébastien Tutenges, in Chapter 1, describes how to access, collect and process the stories of street-level offenders using ethnographic fieldwork. In what he describes as ‘narrative

ethnography under pressure' at a street drug scene, he details the advantages of being deeply embedded in the cultural context where narratives emerge, to get a better understanding of narrative performances and the impact they have. This narrative ethnography enables researchers to use all senses when studying storytelling and see how they evolve and change across time and space. Chapter 2 is similarly based on a traditional approach to ethnographic fieldwork. Here Anna Offit continues the argument for narrative ethnography in a study of American federal prosecutors. Participating in their daily work and ongoing discussions of trial opening and closing statements, she gains unique insight into how justice is continually negotiated in narratives. More generally, stories are made and re-made by narrators in collective story-making processes.

In Chapter 3 Rod Earle works from interviews with other convict criminologists but also explores the potential of narrative auto-ethnography. He argues that first-hand experience of imprisonment may be helpful to understand not only prison conditions but recent expansions as well. He puts narrative criminology into dialogue with convict criminology, whose stories are potentially a form of activism – a means to take down the carceral regime. The chapter speaks to problems of making collective narratives – or counter-narratives – out of personal narratives and demonstrates the advantages of combining different data when studying narrative. Narratives are not confined to one particular setting, they move back and forth from mainstream media, popular culture and social media, to individual, groups and communities – and they are increasingly transnational and global in their scope.

## Interviews

A classic definition of interviewing is “a face-to-face verbal exchange, in which one person, the interviewer, attempts to elicit information or expression of opinion or belief from another person or persons” (Maccoby and Maccoby 1954: 449). Against this commonly accepted formal definition, it has been said that we inhabit an “interview society” (Atkinson and Silverman 1997), in which interviewing is part of everyday life and a common way to seek and obtain information (data) or just a feel for what goes on in a particular locale. As chapters in this Handbook illustrate, interviewing has become so assimilated into ways of knowing, including but not limited to research, that it is seldom reflected upon. The chapters in this section address the interview situation pointedly.

Practitioners of ‘justice work’ tell stories about their charges and those stories have implications for practice. In Chapter 4, recognizing that professional stories reproduce racist treatment and subordination, Olga Pentintseva describes experimenting with discursive intervention during interviews with youth justice professionals in Belgium. The method, which she calls a ‘light’ form of Socratic dialogue, reminds us that we cannot treat narratives as simply ‘there’. Pentintseva shaped the narratives overtly and with a transformative agenda, but she nonetheless reminds us that even passive ‘collectors’ of narrative data – minimally probing interviewers and archivists, for instance – can powerfully shape their data. Chapter 5 similarly explores and reflects upon the interview situation by asking what to do about ‘tall tales’ in interviews, when participants are obviously making up stories. Here Carmen Wickramagamage and Jody Miller offer a vantage on the sometimes messy world of interview research. They also reflect on the complex relations between ‘truth,’ ‘fiction’ and ‘lies’, showing that even tall tales can teach us a great deal about research participants and perhaps also researchers.

Many other chapters in this Handbook use interview data as well, illustrating the prominence of this approach in narrative criminology as in qualitative research generally. Close attention to narrative, however, invites new ways to scrutinize interviews, getting more out of them than reports about ‘facts’. Chapters in the second part based on interviews include Canter, Youngs and Rowland’s quantitative approach to interviewing, and Sandberg and Andersen’s description of how interviews can benefit from being done collectively by research groups. Cook and Walklate, Ievins, Dollinger and Heppchen, Kurtz and Colburn, Verde and Knechtlin, and Boonzaier also all use narrative interviews in their contributions.

### Texts

Document or textual analysis is often seen as a separate category in methodological literature, sometimes associated with discourse analysis. Yet, in terms of narrative analysis there is usually little difference in whether we have documents or other texts, interviews or ethnographic data. We are still searching for elements of narrative, characters, metaphors etc. There are many advantages to working with already finished texts however. They can be easy to access, and in a society where many of us engage more with texts (e.g., on social media) than with ‘real’ people, and where most public policies are firmly anchored in texts, they are important data to study narratively. This section offers examples of rather different texts that can be relevant for narrative criminologists.

In Chapter 6 Simon Copeland uses the case of an American jihadist to argue that auto-biographies are rare resources for doing narrative criminology. His is a detailed account of how and why to study auto-ethnographies. Drawing on literary criticism, Copeland shows how auto-biographies, like narratives, are shaped both individually and collectively by genre. Chapter 7 by Avi Brisman starts from fiction, showcasing the value of narrative criminology for green criminology – or the study of environmental harm – and the sustenance given to harm-genic stories

from works of fiction. Brisman also reports from web- and interview-based studies to illustrate the importance of stories for environmental harm. Texts in all forms, including news coverage (e.g. Barrera's chapter later in this volume), official documents (e.g. Xiaoye and Xianliang's chapter), criminological texts (e.g. Presser's chapter), text messages, social media and webpages etc., are clearly of great value for anyone interested in stories. We have only seen the start of how such resources can be used.

### Beyond the text: Images and objects

Ethnographies, interviews and texts are much-used troves of narrative data. In this final section on collecting stories we turn to novel sources. Narrative criminology takes as its point of departure that stories can be found everywhere, following Barthes' (1977, p. 79) famous observation which begins: "The narratives of the world are numberless. Narrative is first and foremost a prodigious variety of genres, themselves distributed amongst different substances – as though any material were fit to receive man's stories." The authors of this section's chapters likewise argue that we can find narratives in a variety of non-textual representations: photographs, art and objects, drawing on exciting synergies between narrative and art history, photography and material culture.

In Chapter 8 Heith Copes, Andy Hochstetler and Jared Ragland tell the story of Chico, a meth user, through visual and 'textual' means. As much as traditional (written and spoken) narratives, visual symbols on Chico's body, property and house reveal him to be both rebellious and caring. The authors argue that images also can be used to elicit participant storytelling and describe the process whereby they engage a dialogue with Chico around the photographs they have taken. These prompt him to reflect on his life and further expand on his self-story. Eamonn

Carrabine (Chapter 9) likewise emphasises the visual by scrutinizing Giovanni Battista Piranesi's images of fantasy prisons, and laying out in more theoretical detail the relationship between narrative and image. His chapter delves into the relationships between narrative criminology and visual methods through parallels to scholarship in art history, such as where "word" and "image" are related and juxtaposed.

Finally, in Chapter 10, Thomas Ugelvik pushes the boundaries of narrative criminology still further by finding stories in an object – in this case his wife's hunting rifle. Ugelvik lays out the possibilities and problematics. If objects narrate – if stories are already out there in the physical and not only cultural world – what autonomy is left for humans? The question gets to the core of studies in narrative criminology and social sciences in general. Combined, the three chapters compel the view that narrative criminologists ought not limit themselves to 'texts' – whether obtained from fieldwork, interviews or already existing writings – when exploring for the impact and importance of narrative. Note too that Ugelvik's chapter, like Earle's, draws upon personal biography in the analysis, thus expanding the pool of stories that researchers can study to include their own.

## Part II: Analysing stories

The second part of the book turns from how stories can be collected to how they can be analysed. Here new analytical approaches are introduced and the emphasis is more on what to do with data when collected. We start with those interested in victimhood and analysing the role of the victim before we turn to approaches scrutinizing categorisations, roles and plots, the dialogical nature of narrative and narrative absences. Finally, while many if not most of the contributions in this



volume consider asymmetric relations of power, we end with those chapters that most explicitly address such issues.

### Studying the victim

Like criminology in general, narrative criminology has tended to foreground harm-doers. Their stories are not the only ones necessary for understanding harm as storied. Alongside the burgeoning of victimology as an academic discipline, victim voices and characters are increasingly being studied within narrative criminology. In the first part of the analytical section, then, we position work that either directly or indirectly studies victim narratives.

In Chapter 11, Sandra Walklate and Elizabeth Cook ask what narrative victimology and narrative criminology can learn from one another. By exploring in great depth the narrative of a mother who lost her son to violent crime, they show that storytelling, long held to be essential for recovering from trauma (see Herman 1997), is also parcel to political struggle and community engagement. Their chapter reveals the importance of religious storylines for ‘narrative recovery’ and explores the complexity of victim voices in policy. Kristen Lee Hourigan, in Chapter 12, extends narrative victimology with insights from narrative ethnography (see also chapters by Tutenges and Offit) with those who have lost loved ones to murder. Emphasising different elements of the storytelling process – speaker, audience, timing – Hourigan shows how important it is to appreciate narratives across different settings; victim narratives are contingent, deeply personal and sometimes public and political. Both of these chapters are firmly situated within the burgeoning perspective of narrative victimology, and those interested in this perspective should also read Boonzaier’s chapter, the last one in the Handbook.

Alice Ievins (Chapter 13) moves the victim focus from voices of victims to representations of victims in offenders' stories, thereby blurring the lines between traditional 'victim' and 'offender' approaches. Noting that narrative can be a strategy for shame management, she demonstrates that crime victims haunt sex offenders' stories. In narrative terms, they are characters, perhaps the most important characters in their stories. The UK prisoners she interviewed often tried to challenge simple categorisations of 'victims' and 'prisoners' in their attempts to display penitence and reform. Some expressed remorse, some marginalized having hurt a victim, and some denied offender status altogether. Finally, Ievins directs attention upward, asking what sorts of stories the state facilitates concerning victims and victimization, thereby connecting to Xiaoye and Xianliang's chapter concerning Chinese prisoners that appears later in this book. Combined, they raise complex questions about who really 'owns' the stories that are being told in institutional environments.

### Categorizations, plots and roles

The next section of the book goes into greater depth on more detailed narrative analytical techniques and concepts. An almost endless supply stocks the narrative criminologists' repertoire, and only imagination as well as each individual scholar's capability to orient herself within the narrative literature sets the limits. As opposed to attempting an overview of possible narrative strategies this section therefore provides examples of some fruitful ways to approach stories within the framework of narrative criminology.

In Chapter 14, Bernd Dollinger and Selina Heppchen return to classic ethnomethodology and membership categorization analysis, and demonstrates its value for narrative criminology. In an in-depth analysis of Dave, a youth charged with sex offenses in Germany they show how he

balances between the categories (or stories) of psychiatry and law, between social work and criminal law and how it may influence the verdict. The work of categorising both Dave and the offenses he allegedly has committed is partly done by the youth himself, but heavy institutional interests and voices are also involved. They show how competing and very different narratives constitutes the reality of crime, which is an important insight of narrative criminology. In Chapter 15, Don Kurtz and Alayna Colburn continues the emphasis on institutions, exploring police narratives in the US and showing how important they are for police action. Here, narrative criminology takes on the harm of police activity as opposed to the harm of ‘offenders’. A corrective to notions of police subculture, these authors show us that police narratives reflect broad, conventional themes – and they discuss the many links between police narratives and popular culture. The plots and metaphors they identify in police officers’ stories are crucial to understand the culture behind police authority and engagements.

Chapter 16 is the only contribution in the Handbook that takes a quantitative approach. David Canter, Donna Youngs and David Rowland gives an instructive overview over some of the methodological and analytical tools they have used over the years, focusing on the Narrative Role Questionnaire (NRQ) and Life As A Film (LAAF). Distinguishing between the professional, the revenger, the victim and the hero, this chapter outlines fruitful ways of analysing narrative roles and themes in stories. Using a systematic approach to interviewing and data collection, their work counters the usual criticism of narrative analysis as anecdotal and subjective. Great potential exists in further developing these quantitative approaches to data analysis in narrative criminology.

All three chapters in this section present new and important ways to expand narrative criminology; developing new theoretical perspectives and analytical models, taking up and

reinvestigating classic ones – and not least, including new forms of data such as stories from the criminal justice ‘system’ and surveys. The emphasis on combining narrative criminology with other established traditions continues in the next section.

### Narrative dialogue, the unconscious and absences

Narratives are complex and ambiguous discursive formations. They contain multiple voices as well as impactful silences. And they are ‘heard’ in as many ways as there are interlocutors/audience members and readings. Researchers may discern a narrative ‘on paper’, equipped with a formal definition, but narratives also exist as cognitive schemes in the minds of audiences. Thus, it may be necessary for narrative analysts to cross over to boldly interpretative perspectives, from identifying to re-constructing narratives. Chapters in this section move narrative criminology in this direction, emphasizing narrative dialogue, the unconscious and narrative absences.

Chapter 17 starts out with a detailed description of socio-narratology and dialogical narrative analysis (DNA), and moves on to show how it can be applied in a particular case study, and the implications dialogical insights can have for narrative criminology. Dan J. S. Barrera argues that media narratives have a close relationship with the ongoing drug war in the Philippines. He links apocalyptic narratives from leading politicians in media to an ‘apocalyptic style of war on drugs’. It is not always an easy and direct relationship though, and the dialogical and often ambiguous nature of stories makes narrative analysis difficult. As stories, narrative analysis is an ongoing project, never finalized and full of contradictions. Alfredo Verde and Nicolò Knechtlin takes this further in Chapter 18 by pointing out the many similarities between psychoanalysis and narrative criminology. The relevance of psychoanalysis for narrative criminology is demonstrated in an interview with an Italian football hooligan. The justifications often studied by narrative

criminologists for example are in the same way as defense mechanisms not entirely known to the subject. Offenders are multifaceted, stories are co-constructed to deal with inner and outer tensions and samples are often small. Illustratively, several of the chapters in this volume is based on a single case, and so is theirs.

Stories speak – they put things ‘out there’ – but they also contain absences. Lois Presser contends in Chapter 19 that the narrative sustaining penal harm in the United States and elsewhere leaves much consequential ‘stuff’ unsaid concerning proper work and proper parenting. She demonstrates *how* we might rigorously locate the ‘not said’ in stories, including but not limited to the impactful stories that criminologists tell. Her methods include coding for figurative devices and ambiguation. Her vantage is critical, connecting to notions of ideological control and the silencing of the subaltern. Combined, the chapters in this section call for further engagement with narrative traditions in the social sciences. They demonstrate that we have so far only seen the beginning of the potential of narrative analysis in criminology.

### Connecting stories, power, and social inequalities

The final section of the book contains chapters that explicitly take on one of the greater challenges of narrative criminology: taking power and social inequalities into account. Narratives does not exist in a vacuum. Many contributors to this volume raise similar concerns (e.g. Earle, Pentintseva, Brisman, Presser, Kurtz and Colburn, Dollinger and Heppchen), but the authors of these final chapters confront social hierarchy as a central issue. In rather different ways, they show a way forward for narrative criminology that includes challenging established truths and knowledge regimes – while also pointing to alternatives.

In Chapter 20 Zhang Xiaoye and Dong Xianliang study a practice in Chinese penal institutions where prisoners write autobiographical essay as part of the admissions process. These accounts are a great resource for narrative scholars, and give an insight into prison reforms and society. They raise the question: Who tells the story, when the story is ordered by officials? The inmate's official story is molded by the prison into a testament to reform. In this way, Xiaoye and Xianliang question previous research that assumes prisoners' stories function as counter-narratives – and claim that inmates are engaged in a narrative combat they can never win. Their chapter shows that certain contemporary practices of autobiographical writing in China must be seen in light of the Chinese literary tradition and the 'confession movement' initiated by the Communist party, thereby showing how power relations in both literary genres and political environment shapes texts.

Sandberg and Andersen conceive of opposition to harm-doing as a narrative accomplishment in Chapter 21. Their primary aim is not only to identify but also to challenge narrative consensus, in this case the established belief that Islam is a religion of war. Their study centres on narrative resistance to jihadist terrorism among young Norwegian Muslims. The chapter discloses the nature of such resistance – distinguished as factual, emotional and humorous counter-narratives – and silencing as a narrative strategy for those that are narratively excluded from the mainstream. Our final chapter by Floretta Boonzaier (Chapter 22) similarly makes the case for a decolonial, intersectional approach to narrative criminology, drawing on interviews with women sex workers about their experiences of gendered violence in South Africa. Boonzaier illuminates the multiple and intersectional nature of the women's subjugation focusing her analysis on convergences of power abuse at material, representational and structural levels. In their stories the women blur boundaries between 'types of crime' rather in contrast to

criminology including narrative criminology has largely attended to factors/stories behind one crime. This blurring reflects the lived experience of intersecting forms of oppression.

Narrative criminology is intrinsically critical; it questions established truths and reveals power structures and hegemonies of consensus. Social justice lurks as an inspiration of most of the chapters in this Handbook. Closing with these three chapters highlights the critical and emancipatory potential of narrative criminology.

## Future Directions

Stories connect the present, with the past and future. Reflecting upon the future directions of narrative criminology in the present also means telling a story with potential self-fulfilling implications. So what might the future hold for narrative criminology? Perhaps we can begin to think this through by telling another story.

In the spring of 2019, just as we were finishing work on this book, news circulated about a man who shot and killed fifty-one people and injured dozens more, as they prayed at a mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand. Chillingly, he live-streamed the attack on several social media platforms, carrying a gun inscribed with names of other mass shooters. His manifesto has been subsequently banned; likewise news media have agreed not to circulate his footage. Following Prime Minister Jacinda Arden's vow to never mention the shooter by name, most news media have followed suit. This event, all too clearly, exemplifies the narrative motivations of mass violence. Stills from the footage, recorded on body-worn-video, are uncannily like a first-person shooter video game. Inscribing the names of other mass-shooters makes evident his intention to enact a similar plotline. At the same time, this incident also tells of contemporary politics of

silencing; a refusal to re-tell the killer's story, or even to acknowledge him by name. It also points to the global circulation of narratives, and their importance, in a contemporary age.

Shortly after the attack, another video circulated online. The Black Power Gang, a biker gang, which takes inspiration from the Black Panthers, performed a Haka outside the mosque. A group of men, instantly recognizable as gang members, in matching leather jackets and bandanas, moved together to the sound of their shouts in Maori, telling a powerful story about nationhood, mourning and belonging. It conveys grief and anger as well as solidarity and common feeling. Soon after, further videos circulated of Hakas by school children and even other gangs. Despite lasting only a couple of minutes each, these complex performances challenge contemporary and historic marginalisation. The performance calls to mind New Zealand's own, violent, colonial history. Performed by a group of outlaws, it challenges who can deliver justice, or even what justice might be.

These events raise many potential questions for narrative criminology. Can a dance or performance be a story? How can we analyse it, narratively? These events are embedded in a multitude of stories that stretch across the globe and back into history. These movements rely on stories to be understood. Furthermore, what happens with 'the story of the dance' when it is performed by subsequent groups? Or when it continues its travel as a film clip to global mainstream media? Can it be part of a counter-narrative opposing xenophobia, racism and religious extremism worldwide? And what happens when the story "comes back"? Will its story be at all recognizable for those that initially performed the dance? We do not have the answers, but we believe these are all crucial questions for narrative criminologists in an increasingly global world.



## Traveling Stories

Narrative criminology is well-placed to explore how stories of ‘crime’ travel across time and space, nationally and internationally. Crucially, the movement of stories ought not be considered organic. Thus, we see two key future directions in narrative criminology research as interconnected – global traffic in stories and the deployment of stories to advance, uphold or contest power relations and inequalities. Along with stories of divine will and folk heroism, stories of ‘criminals’, ‘crime’, and ‘authorities’ migrate with dramatic ramifications. Iconic tales of Wild West Sheriffs influence contemporary policing, and can be traced to earlier stories of the valiant soldiers of the King’s Army. Stories of The Knights Templar defending Christian holy sites in the 12th century reappeared in the manifesto of a Norwegian mass murderer in 2011. In the same way, ‘gangster narratives’ have travelled a long way to popular culture, through the idealization of outlaws in the medieval period. The Robin Hood story still colors contemporary characterizations of tough men of honour fighting ‘the system’ – seen in contemporary Mexican *narcocorrido* or North-American gangsta rap. More commonly, however, ‘criminals’ are portrayed as imposters and villains across contemporary societies.

Thus, rather than focusing on a single field or group of storytellers, we might directly examine the way narratives and their meanings circulate and may change their meaning in different contexts. For example, Fraser and Atkinson’s (2014) parallel ethnography looks at how young people in Glasgow sought to narrate themselves as gang members on their social media pages, for example by ‘friending’ well-known criminals, posing with gang graffiti and so on. In the context of the street, gang membership was fluid. These pages, once read and documented by civilian intelligence analysts, could constitute evidence of being at risk of gang membership – a classification with potentially far-reaching consequences. Similarly, Lindegaard (2018) explores how young men navigate different context, school, job and ‘the street,’ and different

neighbourhoods in Cape Town, South Africa. Her emphasis is not on stories but could have been. The “ghetto chameleons” drew upon – and were constrained by – embodied stories developed in one context and transplanted in another. Their stories were the product of individual lives, neighbourhoods and particular institutions, but also political context, mainstream discourses and popular culture.

Crime discourses emanating from the USA have been spectacularly mobile. Whereas ‘three strikes’ derives from baseball, America’s alleged national pastime, it reappears as a trope for commonsense punishment in the US, the UK (Jones and Newburn 2006) and farther afield. We might consider which specific ideas about crime and justice lend themselves to adaptation elsewhere. We should also wonder about the role of geopolitics in the unequal transnational transfer of ideas about crime and punishment (de Sousa Santos 2006). Furthermore we might examine how different narrators story the same event. And, beyond that – how such narratives might anticipate, respond to, or contest that of the other group. Storytelling always anticipates and responds to present or distant, real or imagined audiences.

To study stories’ reworkings and routes demands multi-cited data collection. It also demands a sensitivity to varied forms for the same basic prototype: these are the forms covered in this book – diverse texts, images and objects, grasped through ethnographic observation, interviews, archives, and so forth. Studying how stories travel would move our narrative perspective even further away from a traditional focus on individuals (and their storytelling) to an emphasis on stories as point of interest and research unit.

## Harm, power, and inequality

Narrative criminology is fundamentally committed to understanding issues of harm, power and inequality (Presser and Sandberg 2019). Whatever topics, concepts and methodologies steer their work, narrative criminologists should remain attentive to power. This will continue to mean studying harms done by the state as well as criminalized individuals and groups. It means more inquiries into those narratives that challenge harms.

We can very usefully attend to questions of power and inequality in the research process. We must attend to the ‘narrative environment’ (Gubrium and Holstein 2008: 252) – what kinds of speakers are empowered to speak. Institutions (e.g., prisons, courts, schools) empower some kinds of narrators and not others. When we conduct research in these places, we inevitably become part of the power dynamics (Presser 2005). These environments also shape the things that people feel free to say. We must attend to the ways that narrative conventions and patterns make available some kinds of realities whilst ruling out others. These issues surface in many of the Handbook chapters.

In addition to attending to power and inequality in the research process, we might also consider which individuals or groups our research stories make visible, or invisible. In order to extend criminology beyond the global north, we should also be cognisant of criminology’s geopolitical divisions (Aas 2012). Indeed, there is a neat synergy between narrative criminology and ‘southern’ criminology since both question where a particular story (or theory) comes from, and whose purposes such a story might serve. Whilst criminologists question whether theories developed in the Anglophone north might effectively travel (Carrington et al. 2016; see also Cain 2000). Nonetheless, we still contend that narrative criminology may be more transposable than most criminological theory (Fleetwood 2014).

Furthermore, narrative criminology is poised to take all kinds of ‘stories’ seriously, and has the potential to attend to historic ‘silences’. We might direct our attentions to indigenous arts or crafts that tell stories about colonialism, violence and ongoing injustices (Cunneen 2011). For narrative criminological theory to move beyond the global north, we need to be better able to think about race, colonialism and post-coloniality, such as understanding that when stories move from the Global to South to the Global North and vice versa their travels are deeply embedded in power structures and global inequality.

Lastly, as narrative criminologists we might consider if or when it is our duty not just to analyse narratives, but to try and change them. How might our work amplify the potential power of counter-narratives that seek to confront or challenge harmful narratives? Not all of us undertake the kind of work that melds well with activism, but we might ask - what is the role for criminology in informing or supporting particular narratives beyond the academy?

## Conclusion

In compiling this edited volume, we have tried to reflect the ‘state of the art’ in narrative criminology. Whilst we draw on the work of some familiar names, we have especially tried to invite early career scholars, and to aim for an international representation. The result is an extensive and varied selection of scholarship. The twenty-two chapters of this Handbook are empirically, geographically, topically and thematically diverse. What they share is an interest in – and more thorough engagement with – methods than previous work within narrative criminology (but see Presser and Sandberg 2015b). The chapters demonstrate that narrative criminology is not wedded to any one data source or form of analysis. There is a methodological openness towards any approach that can assist in explorations of how stories motivate, sustain or prevent harmful action. As one of the last disciplines to have its own ‘narrative turn’, narrative

criminology is able to draw on an already-established set of research tools. Whilst we cannot predict what future developments in methodology await, we can point to the fruitfulness of continuing to draw on this interdisciplinary scholarship on narrative.

The chapters in this Handbook expand the horizon of narrative criminology in many other ways too; most importantly, extending what we approach as ‘story’, and what or whom we think of as storytellers. In this volume, people, but also texts, objects and pictures, tell stories – and these stories are analysed in new ways, emphasising absences, dialogue, allegories, humour, and elements of tall tales. The political dimension is more present than ever. Chapters explore intersectionality, narrative agency and narrative resistance in meetings with injustice and powerful hegemonic consensuses. All chapters work from the fundamental premise that ‘crime’ is constituted in and through stories. This is a simple idea, but as these chapters tell, one that inspires creative, innovative and critical scholarship.

Like stories, academic perspectives travel, and live their own lives beyond the control of those that initially framed them. We thus encourage readers to do as the contributors in this book have done, and make narrative criminology ‘their own’. This can help us move forward in directions we had not anticipated. Our hope is that narrative criminology can be a tool for critique and thus inspire counter-narratives at the same time as it remains guided by the empirical data (stories), and committed to intellectual openness and integrity. Most of all, we hope that narrative criminology can inspire researchers to *do good work* – in academia and beyond. At the core of this is difficult task of connecting intimate, narrative imaginaries to the vast horizons of a world out there.

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