

Narrative Criminology: Appalachian Stories Straight From the Horse's Mouth

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Narrative criminology is an emerging field in which researchers attempt to understand crime through the stories of former or present offenders. Both telling and listening to stories are an integral part of our lives as social creatures, making storytelling a viable, interesting, and easily accessible avenue for exploring the phenomenon of crime. This paper will focus on the stories of substance offenders (both convicted and not) from the Appalachian region of Kentucky, identified as one of the most poverty-stricken areas in the United States. Throughout, we will examine issues of drug use and abuse, all within the context of poverty, family support structures, and the general lack of opportunity that this area fails to provide. Our goal with this paper is to shed light on the growing problem of drug abuse in this region by using both the content of the stories we hear as well as by analyzing the linguistic patterns used by the storytellers themselves.