In search of the human in the shadows of correctional practice: a theoretical reflection with Shadd Maruna

David Polizzi, Indiana State University
Shadd Maruna, Queen's University, Belfast

Introduction

The concept and practice of offender rehabilitation has under gone a variety of interesting transformations over the span of several decades. Though a topic whose history dates back to the very inception of the penitentiary system in America, the problem posed by criminal behavior has not changed: can the state help to transform individuals into law abiding citizens (Hirsch, A., 1992; Rothman, D. 1990)? Rehabilitation, a term originally defined by more overtly religious connotations, has gone through a variety of re-conceptualizations, and currently remains a concept without a clear or specific definition that all or most practitioners can agree (Ward, T., Maruna, S., 2007).

Generally speaking, the practice of offender "rehabilitation" regardless of it's various manifestations and theoretical derivations consists of two identifiable frames of reference. The first one, and perhaps the one that presently seems to garner the most support from practitioners, researchers and theorists alike, may be most easily identified as the risk perspective (Kratcoski, P. 2004; Van Voorhis, P., Cullen, F., Applegate, B., 2004). Central to this frame of reference is

the idea that offending behavior is largely a product of irrational thinking patterns that must first be controlled and then transformed in the interest of the greater social good (The book Clockwork Orange comes to mind). Within this context, the definitional parameters of the criminal offense become analogous to the definitional parameters of individual existence, making it impossible to differentiate between the criminal act and the individual involved in this behavior. Once human possibility has been so reduced, the individual identity of the offender is erased, leaving only a set of aggregated behaviors or variables to be counted and maintained.

In opposition to the risk assessment model of rehabilitation is the more traditionally therapeutic model of offender treatment. Generally speaking, such an approach seeks to focus on the needs of the offender, not as a set of risky behaviors or thoughts that need to be controlled and maintained, but as a human being who has been damaged by a variety of overlapping constitutive structural systems that have resulted in the criminal act for which the individual is now charged. Though this more traditionally psychotherapeutic perspective is able to recognize the role played by the individual in the criminal act, it refuses to construct that behavior as the sole factor determining who the criminally inclined individual actually is. Such distinctions are

essential to the practice of offender rehabilitation and to our understanding what may be termed the phenomenology of desistance.

(My conversation with Shadd Maruna took place over a period of approximately nine months via e-mail correspondence. During that time, we explored a variety of ideas and philosophical formulations concerning the practice of offender rehabilitation, the phenomenology of desistance, the social construction of the offender, Agnew's GST and the interface between criminology, philosophy and psychology. We explored the ways in which the social construction of the offender evokes a variety of implications that constantly challenge the offender's ability to successfully re-enter society. Perhaps most important to this formulation is the way in which various structural systems, be they located in the penitentiary proper or as represented in a variety of social contexts, powerfully influence the process of re-entry and often become the most challenging obstacle to the successful completion of that process.

We start our conversation by focusing on Shadd's important text, Making Good: How Ex-Convicts Reform and Rebuild their Lives.)

Polizzi: I've started reading your book, Making Good: How Ex-Convicts Reform and Rebuild Their Lives ... Should I ask if you're read Nietzsche?

Maruna: Well, you can ask... I actually have started reading a lot of Nietzsche for my newer, post-Making Good research on punitiveness. I've been quoting Nietzsche for years, especially: "Mistrust all in whom the impulse to punish is powerful" and "Whoever fights with monsters should take care that in the process he does not become a monster." (The guy was a king of one-liners – why don't more philosophers write

in bursts of one-line bits of wisdom like Nietzsche?) But, I must admit I wasn't reading him at the time of Making Good. Let me know the link you see, though, as I'm currently writing something on redemption that revisits some of the Making Good themes and combines them with some of the findings from the punitiveness research, so Nietzsche could fit right in!

Polizzi: I was thinking about a dialogue in Thus Spoke Zarathustra (2005), where Zarathustra/ Nietzsche states that because you're capable of evil, do good. This recognition of the human possibility for evil is important and is an observation that is often lost or covered over. Evil is unfortunately an all too human potential that each of us is capable of evoking. The possibility for evil is not an exclusive potential of a certain group of individuals, but an existential fact of human nature (May, 1983). We become susceptible to this possibility when we forget that the monster "out there" is merely a variation on what is also possible for me.

Maruna: That's it in a nutshell. This is precisely the issue that my new work is coming down to: the labeling of others as deviant seems to serve a key scapegoating function, whereby they assume blame for all the problems of the rest of us. I have a paper I am working on about

the psychopathy diagnosis as an example of this. If you read the psychopathy literature it is amazing how many of the characteristics of so-called psychopaths sound suspiciously like contemporary society (they are motivated purely by selfish interests, they want only money and power, they don't care about others, they seem charming and warm, but underneath they are pure rational calculators seeking to rip us off). I am sure that there are people who are like this. I have met plenty of them. Yet, one can't help but see our obsession with psychopaths as a kind of scream for help from our individualistic, market society. We are so frightened by the cold commodification of everything around us, that we project these fears onto a scapegoat figure of the psychopath.

Polizzi: Yes, the key thing is the person doing the labeling. The labeler's position -- as prison superintendent, case manager, correctional officer or psychotherapist -- seems to provide a degree of psychological protection against any specific vulnerably to a sudden flash of conscience.

Maruna: True, although I have a lot of empathy for those doing this type of work (as I know you do as well). Working every day with, for instance, people who have committed sexual offences against children and finding the people who did these things (inevitably) to be

recognizably human does put an individual in a vulnerable position. To me, this makes the kind of obsession with pathologizing one sees in that profession completely understandable as a form of self-protection. Working in prisons and jails is such an unnatural occupation (keeping others incapacitated against their will) that it almost requires the "us and them" neutralization to get through the day.

(Our conversation moves to a reflection on Jung's concept of the Shadow. Jung's formulation of the Shadow Archetype is perhaps the most troubling within this theoretical perspective. Sanford defines this concept as follows:

> The term "the Shadow," as a psychological concept, refers to the dark, feared, unwanted side of our personality. In developing a conscious personality we all seek to embody in ourselves a certain image of what we want to be like. Those qualities that could have become part of this conscious personality, but are not in accord with the person we want to be, are rejected and constitute the shadow personality.
> (Sanford, 1987, p. 49)

The image of the offender, marginalized social group or adversarial nation becomes the recipient of these "shadow projections," and splits

our ability to recognize the possibility of evil in ourselves. When we construct the offender as the exclusive receptacle of evil and antisocial behavior, we deny those same possibilities in ourselves and act as if we are above moral reproach.)

Polizzi: Absolutely. This discussion reminds me of our shared interest in Jung's (1969) concept of the "shadow", which I discussed in a presentation I gave at ASC titled, "Social Presence and the Criminal Body: A Phenomenological Perspective" (ASC Annual Meeting, November, 2009, Philadelphia, PA). The "criminal" comes to represent a shadow reflection of the social body that is perceived as separate and therefore foreign and dangerous. I think Arrigo and Williams' (2009a) conceptualization of the shadow/ stranger dyad reflects Jung's description and make-up of the shadow rather well. The shadow reflects all that the body politic must deny relative to the recognition of its own deviance or moral irresponsibility; while the stranger is the image that emerges from this dangerous split.

Arrigo and Williams' (2009a) description also evokes for me the image of Levinas and his contention that the other must be configured as ontologically other (Levinas, 1969). However, I am inclined to agree with Derrida, at least on this point (Critchley, 1992) that the conceptualization of otherness as ontologically other may not evoke

the type of ethical call or response Levinas intends by this formulation. (Levinas, 1969) By constructing the other in this way, the face-to-face encounter may call forth the very same "foreignness" that allows for the continued de-valuation of the other (Polizzi, 2007).The ability to recognize difference does not need to evoke a sense of the stranger, or "foreign" otherness, only another possibility for what it means to be human. When I am confronted by the gaze of the other, the eyes indeed speak and it is within that strange cadence that I may also recognize myself (Levinas, 1969). I also think that this description fits very well with much of what you discuss in your article in Deviant Behavior, "Disowning our Shadow: a Psychoanalytic Approach to Understanding Punitive Public Attitudes". (Maruna, Matravers, King, 2004).

The danger of becoming what we most loath is actually the danger that Jung identifies in his concept of the shadow. My inability to recognize and own my capacity for evil almost guarantees that I will always see it reflected in the actions of others. Such a one sided recognition of the presence of evil helps to inflate my own sense of moral certainty, my own sense of moral infallibility, which in turn justifies every immoral action I perform in the name of the Good and places my actions beyond moral reproach. I am also reminded of Neumann"s (1969) distinction between living in sin and living with sin.

To live with sin demands that we recognize our own potential for evil, and come to understand the psychological implications of such a stance and not simply the convenient ability to recognize this possibility in other individuals or groups. To live in sin is to remain blind, unconscious and to ultimately become the monster that we seek to destroy. (Neumann, 1969)

I think this can be witnessed at the macro-social level to which you eluded concerning the social attitudes toward punishment and at the micro level concerning the way in which offenders are often treated by those who are responsible for their care. All too often, I have witnessed colleagues treat or discuss their clients poorly without any real recognition or awareness of the implications of such behavior. Their position as superintendent, case manager, correctional officer or psychotherapist seems to provide a degree of psychological protection against any specific vulnerably to a sudden flash of conscience. These individuals are ontologically other and therefore my actions remain justified. (I see this as a reversal of Levinas's contention that it is the otherness of the other that calls me to moral action; the more foreign the other remains, the more likely that his or her call will be ignored.) When we look into the eyes of the offender sitting across from me, it is essential that I do not see my own reflection in their gaze or else I'm doomed. When such recognition can no longer be denied, I am left

with two options, embrace my own shadow, my own humanity or punish that which has forced upon me this unwanted awareness of self. The way in which this moment is negotiated is essential to both participants in this encounter.

Too often it is forgotten or ignored that Jung's concept of the shadow is not simply evil, but also represents an integrative possibility for a more conscious psychology. The shadow also reflects possibilities of resilience and perseverance, which are also present. If we only believe that the shadow exists "out there," we remain hopelessly cutoff from those parts of ourselves that remain actively, but indirectly engaged in this process. I particularly like the way in which you describe these attitudes in the individuals you interviewed for Making Good who though realistic about their situation, still seem determined to live better and change their lives. But such turns are nearly impossible for these individuals when society continually demands that they remain ontologically other, ontologically shadow. The inability to own our own shadow is powerfully witnessed in the punitive attitudes you discuss in your article.

Maruna: I still think there is a goldmine in trying to understand where our punitive attitudes come from and what they mean. My work in that area, primarily with Anna King (Rutgers) has yet to materialize into a

book, but I still think it is a crucial area for explaining where we currently are with crime and justice in contemporary societies. It is not that punitive attitudes themselves are driving the sorts of punitive policies and practices we see in criminal justice (like locking up 2 million Americans), but rather like David Garland put it, the educated public is like the "dog that didn't bark" during this insane prison build up. Where were we? Why did we let it happen? The same sort of questions will be asked of us (indeed, already are asked of Americans in most other parts of the world, where prison numbers are nowhere near as high) as are asked of ordinary German citizens at the time of the Holocaust or ordinary southerners in the antebellum South. Not that the citizens drove the policies, but why did they tolerate them?

Polizzi: I am also interested in how you have drawn on McAdams' very philosophical work in psychology. According to McAdams's theory of the life story identity, adults create a personal myth by which to provide a unified frame of reference by which to understand their experience; this concept is very similar to Bob Agnew's description of storylines, which it could be argued, also represents the construction of a personal myth by which to understand their experience of criminal behavior. I will soon be publishing an article (International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology) titled, Agnew's Strain Theory Reconsidered: A Phenomenological Perspective, which was

directly influenced by Agnew's storylines article. I have always seen General Strain Theory as a constructionist social psychological treatment of criminal behavior. It seems much better suited philosophically to a perspective like phenomenology or narrative work because its fundamental focus is upon the way in which the perception of negative experiences helps to influence subsequent criminal behavior. I think the concept of desistance is also well served by a phenomenological grounding of this process.

Maruna: I was/am a student of Dan McAdams at Northwestern, and I never cease to be amazed at how many of the big ideas that I think of as being my own really keep coming back to ideas that I learned from McAdams and my other Northwestern supervisor Dan A. Lewis fifteen or twenty years ago. It is scary, but if I went back to the notes I scribbled from those years I spent at Northwestern chatting to the two of them, I'm sure someone could put together, not just the outline to Making Good, but indeed to bones of the seven or eight other big thoughts I've had from neutralizations, to the Jack Roller work, to my stuff on punitiveness in the years since. It all happened in those discussions. I guess that is what education is. I just hope my own students get the same level of good stuff that I got from them.

In regards to strain theory, I was awfully pleased to see Agnew's article on storylines appear. It has lit a fire under a number of us who have been doing narrative work for some time now. Because Agnew is such a legend in sociological criminology, he adds a real sense of credibility for young criminologists who were never sure if this narrative identity business wasn't just some new age nonsense dreamed up in touchy-feely psychology units. Now it is legitimate to talk about self-stories if folks like Agnew even believe they are real.

Polizzi: Ha, yes! Narrative theory probably was dreamed up in touchy-feely psychology units in the States, true. Regardless its actual paternity, though, your point is well taken and your observation concerning the relationship between desistance and identity, if I may, is spot on. In Making Good, you write: "Therefore, I argue that to desist from crime, ex-offenders need to develop a coherent prosocial identity for themselves" (Maruna, 2001, p. 8). I think you are absolutely right; however, I do believe that this newly emerging identity can reflect certain qualities that perhaps will not be viewed as universally "prosocial" by all segments of a given society or culture. Let me explain.

The notion of a coherent "prosocial" identity seems to smack of a Durkheimian structuralism that is somewhat untenable for overly

heterogeneous cultures. Such an identity may come to be viewed by certain segments of society as being "prosocial," insofar as this identity reflects an image of resistance toward these larger socially oppressive dynamics and structures. Malcolm X comes immediately to mind, though many other examples exist. It is certainly possible for an individual to develop a coherent social identity that rejects the psychological artifacts of an oppressive social structure. Durkheim's (1951) belief that deviance is evidenced by the absence of the sufficient internalization of social norms in the individual is hardly exhaustive of this process. It could just as easily be argued that deviance is representative of an over abundance of these very same internalized cultural values, which include the continued marginalization of the poor, racism, sexism, etc., which in turn results in the manifestation of criminal behavior Within this context, criminal behavior comes to represent a strategy of resistance. It is also important to note that resistance is also a prosocial stance that refuses to accept the imposed values of a deviant social structure.

Maruna: This is a really important point David, and it gets right to the heart of Making Good. I sometimes do see the book as falling in a Durkheimian tradition. One of my major influences, after all, has been John Braithwaite anyhow, and he was once dubbed "The New Durkheim." But, you are precisely right that Durkheim has far too rosy

a picture of contemporary society, and there is no way that I would characterize the Liverpool narratives as being "prosocial" in Durkheimian terms (indeed, that was a very poor word choice on my part).

As you will have read if you made it to the last chapters of the book, the "prosocial" narratives of interviewees remain highly critical of mainstream culture (have you ever been to Liverpool, by the way?). They do indeed characterize parts of their involvement (certainly the origins of this involvement) in crime and drugs as being a sort of resistance to the mainstream, and they find a sort of consistency in their current (crime and drug-free) lives by arguing that they remain "rebels" still. Even though they are "going straight," they continue to see themselves as very much fighting the powers that be. They are just using a different (perhaps "better") strategy for this resistance. In some ways, the strategy they are using is "prosocial" (by my definition at least). In that, I think what they are doing is what every good citizen should be doing (thinking for themselves, fighting injustice when they see it, contributing to the betterment of the society as they see it), but of course they come across considerable resistance in these efforts by the powers that be. So you are right, there is a more interesting story here than the familiar one of "I used to be on the 'bad side', now I've seen the light and want to join the 'good side'".

If I can defend the notion of "prosocial" it is this: A key challenge for all of the interviewees in the study was to prove to the world around them that they'd changed, and in order to do this, they needed a narrative that conformed to some of the rules of conversion narratives like the one I dismiss above. That is, they need – and Malcom X needed -- a story that "sells" at some level. They can remain rebels, but they have to explain how the continuity of this rebellion is now consistent with a radical change in behavior. Malcolm did that, while maintaining his strong critique of mainstream culture, and his text has become a sort of script for countless others who seek to desist with dignity.

Another model for this is the IRA (Irish Republican Army) and their shift from armed violence to purely pacifist means through the political party Sinn Fein. The former armed combatants have not changed their politics or their views about the role of the British state in Ireland. They have however put down their guns and made an enormous change in behavior to what some would see as "prosocial" strategies for rebellion and social critique. The average prisoner is no Martin McGuinness and certainly no Malcolm X, but their task is much the same – maintaining continuity and pride, while changing one's life.

Polizzi: Having worked clinically with offender populations for nearly fifteen years, it is very clear that your observation reflects the goal which many of these men and women have attempted to achieve. The process of reconstruction which you describe seems to take place within two specific contexts. The first reflects the way in which their current life story can be rewritten or rearranged so as to provide for a different set of possibilities or future. However, these are personal histories that do not necessarily address the overriding social context from which these stories emerge.

My own dissertation explored the phenomenology of anti-black racism as witnessed in the Autobiography of Malcolm X (Polizzi, 2003). Malcolm continually reconstructs himself throughout the Autobiography through the use of a variety of ready-to-hand social narratives which reflect a very specific phenomenological engagement to his world. Though Malcolm was clearly able to develop a coherent narrative, albeit continually evolving, by which to understand and make sense of his existence, the obvious fact of racism still remained. His various transformations reflected this ever evolving way of being-in-the-world, his ever evolving identity and its struggle with what I call the racist "they-self."

However, this relationship to the "they-self" is always multilayered, insofar as being-in-the-world is often engaged with a variety of competing meanings for existence. (Polizzi, 2003, 2010a, 2010b) The multilayered presencing of the "they-self" is clearly witnessed in the way in which Malcolm's evolving possibilities for being-in-the-world as black are both liberated and confronted by these competing meanings for black experience. Malcolm's narrative becomes specifically meaningful through this engagement with this multilayered they-self, which constantly seeks to provide being-in-the-world the meaning and potentiality for its existence. The individual involved in the criminal lifestyle is no different. The possibility for desistance emerges from this meaning generating process that on the one hand attempts to restrict the meaning of being and capture it within an exclusive formulation or construction of individual as criminal while other potentialities for that same being are attempted to be lived.

Maruna: What a great dissertation topic (Can you send me a copy?). Yes, Malcolm X is the perfect example (and the book was a big influence on me as a young person, probably bigger than I realize). This is the second time in recent weeks someone has raised that example too. I had the remarkable privilege of being a part of the preconference workshop hosted by LIFERS, Inc. in Graterford Prison

before the American Society of Criminology meeting. I'm sure you know them, but if not check out:
http://www.insideoutcenter.org/PDF_articles/InsideOut_LifersPublicSafety.pdf

Anyhow, the LIFERS spoke in depth about Malcolm X's influence – not in regards to his allegiance to Nation of Islam, but purely as a role model for them as prisoners who are transforming their lives through an intellectual journey, through a better understanding of their histories – their own life histories, but more importantly history through a social and contextualized lens as you say. They are trying to understand history itself in order to understand themselves, and they are changing history too. So they are the perfect examples of the journey described in Making Good – except for the fact that because of the draconian laws of Pennsylvania, they will never be released from prison. This role of history in the transformation of future behaviours is hinted at obliquely in Making Good, but it is something I very much am trying to develop for this new book I am writing about redemption in society, more generally. (So, send me that dissertation of yours)

(David Polizzi worked for three years as a psychological intern and then as a full-time employee, providing ongoing psychotherapy to

inmates incarcerated within the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections)

Polizzi: Having worked in the Pennsylvania system for approximately three years, I have certainly witnessed firsthand the results of this draconian legal process. I would only add that the Pennsylvania system holds the dubious distinction of having the largest number of inmates between the ages of seventeen to twenty one serving life without parole in the nation. The current number is approximately 515 inmates.

Offenders, at least in the States, must confront very much the same struggle. The fact that one is never allowed to truly be something other the convict, makes this transition very difficult to achieve. Many of my clients have struggled with this very real existential question. For example, it can become very difficult for some to accept that they will continue to be seen by loved ones or society as a thief, criminal, drug addict, etc, regardless the degree to which they have been able to actually transform their lives. Such realities often force the individual to explore the meaning of their existence, regardless the way in which it will be viewed by others. Though it may indeed be true that the unexamined life is not worth living, the serious examination of one's existence can often lead

to the same conclusion. As a result, some individuals do indeed fail. It is at often easier to resort to the web of chronic drug use then to try to live without substances. "Why should I get clean when no one will believe that I'm actually going to stop using?"

Maruna: Absolutely. Most readers concentrate on the happier stories in Making Good regarding desistance, and that was of course my intention. Yet, the "condemnation script" scenario I identified with the persistent offenders I interviewed (these were former prisoners living in the community who were willing to disclose that they were still involved with crime and had no intentions to cease this involvement in the short-term). When I talk about the sort of hopelessness that characterized these self-narratives, sometimes this is misunderstood as meaning they were sad and pathetic, "poor me" stories. Occasionally this was true, but hopelessness does not always manifest itself in depression-like states. With males, in particular, more often than not, this defeat was expressed as more of a "to hell with it" attitude. As Sykes and Matza put it, "If you're going to reject me, then you know what? I'm going to reject you too." This might manifest itself in what looks like a never-ending party – and it can be a kick to engage in this sort of nihilism – but that does not mean that underneath that exterior is not that same sense of internalized condemnation and humiliation.

Polizzi: I think the difficulty in defining desistance is in part due to the lack of understanding concerning the way in which this result is achieved by the individual(s). There often is very little discussion of the lived-meaning this possibility has for the individual and almost no serious discussion concerning the way in which social context helps to influence this decision or actually restrict or prevent it from ever occurring. One of your interviewees states this problem very nicely when he states:

> Well, whenever you're in prison you see the light so to speak. "Oh, I'm never going back." So I was all that, "Oh, I'm never going back," and I done well for a while. I managed to get a job and stuff, but things started going back to the old routine. (Maruna, 2001, p. 23).

It is very easy to deny the realities of another social context, when you are not currently facing it on a daily basis. The ability for this new intention to materialize is directly related to the context to which the individual returns. Desistance must not be seen as an academic concept but as a possibility, one of many possibilities that exist within the lived-experience of a specific social context. Because the possibility for desistance remains inseparably joined with any number of competing possibilities for existence, both must be taken

into account. How does the individual define from their perspective, their involvement in the criminal life style or their involvement in drugs? What do these experiences provide the individual and how are they viewed by the larger social surround to which the individual belongs? Simply to say, for example, that the gang lifestyle is deviant, misses many of the most important aspects of this experience. What does the life style provide that is not specifically criminal in nature?

What is needed is a phenomenology of desistance, which would better situate the meaning of this experience for the individual and would also be better able to capture the influence or strains that make this possibility difficult to achieve. I think Making Good, does explore the phenomenology of desistance in a very explicit way and more importantly, brings into clear view the real humanity of those individuals attempting to better their lives; this in fact may be the most important reason for pursuing a phenomenology of desistance. But, of course, this is not easy. You really get to the heart of this problem when you state that:

> The challenge facing phenomenological researchers, of course, is that subjectivity is by its nature rather messy. Abstract concepts such as identity and the self are difficult for researchers to reliably

study, and when they do, their findings are equally difficult for readers to interpret and evaluate (Maruna, 2001, p. 37-38).

However, for me, this statement reflects the shadow of the discipline of criminology specifically and the social sciences generally and evokes its need for Cartesian certainty. Measurement does not precede existence; "I measure therefore I am" is not an appropriate theorem for the study of human existence. (Giorgi, 1970) The problem is with the method and the unexplored assumptions of that method, not with the data. Phenomenological research seems messy, seems less scientifically certain because existence is messy. The rejection of positivism as an appropriate theoretical perspective for the study of the human sciences (social sciences) demands a rejection of quantification as well; at least as it is currently viewed within the discipline. Method should never determine what the data has to say and method should never be seen as a theory. Ultimately, method is nothing more than a specific epistemological tool used to reveal a certain set of preconceived a priori truths concerning a specific phenomenon. If we are to humanize the way in which we theorize about crime, we must also humanize the methods employed to bring forth the understanding we seek.

Maruna: Yes, criminology's shadow – I love it. You are right that the narrowing of method over the last three or four decades has really put blinkers on the field and reduced the scope of what we see. The result is that we miss some obvious things about what makes human beings tick (which is what we are getting paid to understand). The example I always give is this: Who commits the most crime? Young men between 16 and 25. What do young men of that age think about 95 percent of the time? Having sex. Yet, when is the last time sexual desire was mentioned in Journal of Quantitative Criminology? I haven't kept up with the last few issues, but I bet if you did an archive search, you wouldn't find many mentions of masturbation, fantasy, sexual confusion, experimentation with homosexuality, shame of virginity, desperation -- any of the things that are so profoundly influential in the lives of young males. How do we miss something that is so consuming in the lives of the people we are studying? Maybe sexuality has nothing to do with crime and violence, although I doubt that (and you'd think we would want some good evidence to prove this null hypothesis before dismissing such a substantial part of our subjects' lives). More likely, it is because we aren't looking with our eyes wide open, we aren't listening; we are not getting to know and trying to get inside the skin of our research "subjects" like we should be, but rather corralling them into narrow boxes of our own choosing. Like you say,

our approach is, "It is measurable, therefore it is." And if it ain't measurable, it ain't there. So, if sexuality (or other aspects of lived human experience) are too messy to measure, then we stick to what we can count. I am not opposed to quantification, by any means. I strongly support quant tools, I even published a chapter in the Handbook of Quantitative Criminology (2010), but I am opposed to the fetishization of quant methods and to any understanding of social science that excludes other ways of knowing and learning (which I say in that Handbook chapter too). That is just embarrassingly misguided and so dangerous for the future health of the field.

Polizzi: Agreed. Let me get back to the phenomenology of desistance, for a moment. Studying desistance and the phenomenology of desistance are really two different conceptualizations of the same topic taken from two slightly different theoretical frames of reference. Desistance is the cessation of criminal behavior simply as a matter of fact: has this person decided to cease their involvement in the criminal lifestyle or not? The phenomenology of desistance is much more focused on the contours by which this process unfolds and the meaning provided to it by each perceiving consciousness.

Though I'm alluding to Husserl, I'm really thinking about Heidegger and his concept of Thrownness. Desistance, seen

phenomenologically, represents that confluence between being-in-the-world and its relationship or grounding within a very specific type of "thrown" existence. The desire to desist, the ability to make the existential choice to cease one's criminal activity, presupposes that one's thrown reality is not so restricted so as to make this choice almost impossible to bring into being. I think this idea is reflected in Arrigo's concept of penal harm, (2009b) which recognizes the way in which the criminal body is overwhelmed and taken over by the constructing gaze of the criminal justice system and reduces it to an artifact of that process.

What I like about your work on desistance is that it reintroduces the human dimension into this conversation. The possibility for legitimate reintegration is really predicated upon the way in which this problem is contextualized and constructed. If we stay within the confines of Arrigo's concept of penal harm, reintegration is impossible because the total process failures in an essential way: it continues to fail to recognize the fundamental humanity of the individual offender. From this theoretical vantage, it really becomes irrelevant whether the specific conversation is focused on restorative strategies or processes of rehabilitation; we are still talking about an artifact, a cause that needs to be controlled by the system.

The phenomenology of desistance, which your work nicely illustrates, recognizes first and foremost the humanity of the individual who is involved with their own unique experience of reintegrating within the larger society. Rather than representing a set of variables or identifiable criminogenic factors, what is viewed is the human cost of crime and the criminal lifestyle from the perspective of the offender. How does one attempt to reintegrate when they are denied any legitimate voice in this process?

Maruna: Yes, "desistance", taken literally, is a behavioral term – or actually just the absence of a behavior. On its own, desistance is not a very interesting thing to watch (there's nothing to see, so little to study). So, when people talk about doing ethnographic studies of desistance, they are really talking about watching people formerly convicted of criminal offences going about their day-to-day lives doing non-criminal things. Not much interesting about that (not that all of our ordinary lives aren't fascinating). Yet, there is something richer implied in the term "phenomenology of desistance" about personal transformations and social reconstructions of reality that I think has captured the imagination of so many in and outside of academia. Just as you imply, the topic almost immediately generates heavy discussions about human agency, determinism, and the interplay between social constructions and individual choice. These discussions

were taking place in regards to desistance long before my book on the topic and other researchers have found them unavoidable, as much as they complicate and cloud our analyses.

Polizzi: The phenomenology of desistance focuses not only on the fact of whether or not this individual will reoffend, but how their experience can become meaningfully engaged with the possibility for change from the contextual reality they are currently living. Too often the possibility of reintegration and desistance from crime is overly focused on the offender with little recognition of the way in which the possibility for change is also greatly influenced by the contextual realities of one's existence. This incongruent relationship between the willingness to change and the ability to change is often ignored resulting in a static configuration of the offender that remains ontologically isolated and for ever caught within the construction of the criminal.

Such a formulation reflects nicely with Jung's concept of the Shadow, which comes to represent the offender as the ontological manifestation of danger, lawlessness and potential harm. Within such a configuration, the offender becomes the living manifestation of this social evil, while at the same time allowing the social psyche from owning the implications of its own Shadow projections. The

phenomenology of the Shadow becomes a type of being-in-the-world that has become deformed and restricted in its possibility to be as others are allowed to be. Within this context, reintegration must be denied because to do otherwise would imply that the social body has summoned up the courage to confront the psychological consequences evoked by this unwillingness to embrace the Shadow. Jung is very clear on this point. We either accept the implications of the Shadow and integrate this possibility into our conscious awareness as individuals and as a society, or we choose only to recognize it in the actions of others who come to personify those manifestations of the social body that are incompatible with the way in which society needs to define itself.

Once these subject positions become firmly entrenched socially and psychologically, reintegration becomes difficult indeed. For the offender, criminality becomes one of the few possibilities for being-in-the-world and finds it difficult to configure a different way to be. For its part, society conveniently configures all of the manifestations of social ill within the image of the offender who now becomes responsible to bear the burden of this heavy weight. The offender is never really provided the opportunity for real change given that they are forever marked with the sign of the Shadow and are required to bear the totality of this social failure. Society, by its rejection of the

Shadow, always remains beyond moral approach because it is not it that is flawed and in no way complicate with these criminal acts. In the end, it leaves the whole of society living in sin as opposed to with it.

Maruna: This is it. You have really captured much better than I could how I think the research I have done in recent years on punitiveness and public attitudes (the shadow projection work) ties back in to the desistance research. I see the two as very much inter-related. Over the last ten years, since Making Good was first published, people have frequently asked me to talk about my desistance work and I have joked that I have desisted from desistance. Some seemed disappointed that I wanted to talk about the psychology of punitiveness rather than desistance, but in fact the two are deeply related, and in many ways I have come full circle in my research (that sounds better than 'going in circles,' at least) and come back to the core ideas in Making Good – just from the other side of the redemption coin. Or the other side of the shadow, maybe.

Polizzi: Incidentally, you may want to add that the Shadow is a conceptualization from Analytic Psychology and not Psychoanalysis; we old Jungians take some exception with Jung being lumped in with the Psychoanalysts. I have argued with former professors that Jung only became a student of Freud, after he had already begun his own work

on resistance and only after he had read Freud and believed that he was on the some journey.

Since you know Durkheim pretty well, too, I always have wondered this question. Did Freud get his concept of the Super Ego, in part from Durkheim who also places a great deal of significance on the internalization of social norms and values? Freud, I believe, would have been in Paris studying with Genet around the time that Suicide was published. Though I do believe that the architecture of Freud's theory is superior to Durkheim, it does appear that Freud may owe some credit to him for this idea. I suppose it is equally possible that differing examples of a social structuralist approach could come more or less to the same conclusion, unrelated to each other... You speak about redemption; do you know the work of Murray Cox?

Maruna: I'm afraid my knowledge of the sociology of the social theorists is too slim to be able to help you with the Freud/Durkheim question, although my hunch is you are probably right. Yes, I remember Murray Cox's book Remorse and Reparation well, and am drawing a lot on it in my new work. Cox's death in the weeks before the manuscript was finished was a real tragedy, but what a legacy. The book, as I remember, started off with rather modest ambitions – just an edited volume by a group of British forensic psychotherapists,

seen it all before – but Cox's asking for work on such a profound topic as remorse and reparation really opened the door for some fascinating discussions across a fantastic, international and interdisciplinary line up of authors, many of them practitioners. I am not telling you anything you don't know as someone with so many years of professional experience yourself, but there is something remarkable about essays like the ones in that book, where practitioners like Cox get a moment to reflect on what they do and why they do it.

After all, remorse is one of those issues that we instinctively think we know everything we need to know about. In practice, judges, juries, psychologists, and researchers all take for granted that expressions of remorse are an indication of change and excuses and denials are an indication that a person is not taking the first steps to rehabilitation. But, Cox introduces that book with a remarkable confession he says a colleague asked him, "Murray could you give me a research reference on the relationship between the expression of remorse and the diminished likelihood of re-offending?" and he did not know the answer. "After 25 years in the field I surely ought to have been able to do so 'off the cuff'," he writes, but he searched his files to little avail. "It was to my great surprise (and partial chagrin) that such references were scant, almost to the point of non-existence. … My surprise grew, almost by logarithmic proportions, when all searches in

specialist libraries, depending on appropriate databases, were only slightly more productive. ... Virtually all the experts, representing the wide variety of disciplines...came up with the same reply." The emperor had no clothes.

It is the sort of eureka that makes the work we do so exciting. To have the opportunity that Murray did – to be able to say, OK, we don't really know anything about remorse, so let's commission all the smart people I can think of from across different disciplines and occupations, from distinguished California anthropologists to former parole board members, to think deeply about the topic on paper – is even more remarkable. And, the book is a triumph. Of course, it is not the last word on remorse and reparation, but that is what makes it so rich. So, now, the next time someone asks me "Can you send me a quick reference that proves remorse predicts desistance," I can say, "Nope, I can't do that, but I can send you a tremendous book that proves that remorse and desistance are far more complicated than that."

Polizzi: Exactly. Speaking of things being "more complicated than that," I like that, in Making Good, you dispel this notion that ex-inmates fall into two specific groups: desisters or persisters, successes

or failures. The "grey area" that you discuss is the ground of human existence, which is not reducible to methodically driven assumptions about what it means to be criminal or human. I like the notion of the grey because it nicely critiques the false necessity (Unger, 1988) of black/ white distinctions, which exist only because of methodological bias. The need to generalize data for the purpose of its subsequent measurement must be overly generalized, if the method is ever to deliver its false sense of Cartesian certainty. Grey is too variable, too unwilling to be easily reduced for later consumption.

I think this notion of the grey is the fundamental problem across the social sciences; we must simply accept that our data is different from the natural sciences and therefore demands a different approach to the issue of human existence and possibility. Gadd and Jefferson (2007) make the same point in their book Psychosocial Criminology when they critique the pursuit of a general theory of crime. It is simply impossible and ironically enough, the fanatical application of measurement will actually take us farther from that goal.

Desistance is not a variable to be measured but is rather, a different potentiality for being-in-the-world. Throughout the criminal justice process, one experiences the clash of competing they-selves. The very meaning of this type of being-in-the-world is held in the

balance. The more traditional perspectives on desistance, in the end, can only tally the scorecard of subsequent involvements in the criminal lifestyle, which tells us virtually nothing about the meaning that this behavior has for the individual.

I like what Katz (1988) does with his distinction between humiliation and rage. Humiliation is in relation to one's relationship to a specific they, whereas rage or righteous rage becomes the way in which being-in-the-world takes up this possibility. Mead (1967) is also very close to this idea in his I/me configuration. As Heidegger would say, there is no being without world, there is no articulation of human possibility, authentic or otherwise, without a specific social context.

In your work, you argue that the act of desistance can very much be an act of resistance to the restrictive demands of the retributive "they-self" of the criminal justice system. Within this context, desistance represents a breaking away for being-in-the-world, which refuses to be restricted by that which "the they-self" validates and that which it does not. Such a stance opens the way for another adumbration of "the they-self" to appear, providing a different and competing meaning for being. This was exactly my point with Malcolm X. Malcolm is able to embrace a variety of competing meanings for black-being-in-the-world that is able to transcend the limitations of being's potentiality. As Caputo (1997) would say, this emerging

hermeneutic destroys the calcified meanings for being and allows its potential to be liberated. This is not meant to imply that the restrictive aspects of thrownness disappear and one skips off into the happily ever after. But it does allow for an opening of being that is allowed to explore its own potentiality and perhaps be allowed to be like others are allowed to be.

By the way, I have come across a recent article where you are identified as a Yank... Is this true?

Maruna: Ha. I am indeed a Yank – although maybe I am in a "grey area" in terms of national identity myself. There was an article recently on "important works of British criminology" and the authors had an interesting discussion about how they would define and delineate what would be included under this heading. Anyhow, they devoted a whole footnote to Making Good – written by a Yank who works in Belfast, based on research in Liverpool, but published by the American Psychological Association for a US audience (complete with translations from Scouse into American English) – as an example of the boundaries of this notion. In the end, they decided it wasn't "British criminology" if I remember right. Plenty of Yanks wouldn't consider it "American criminology" either! It sort of falls in between those cracks, as well as plenty of disciplinary cracks too. I teach in a

law school, but am no lawyer. I suppose I am a criminologist, even though I've never taken a single course in criminology/criminal justice. Criminologists call me a psychologist, but no real psychologist would accept me into their club. Anyhow, all these grey areas suit me just fine, but maybe this is why I find myself so deeply opposed to labels and labeling in regards to criminal justice.

It is also why I am so supportive of efforts like this journal to introduce new concepts from philosophy, psychology and elsewhere into the criminological discussion. I have learned a lot from all of our exchanges. Your read of my book is probably smarter than the book itself – my Heidegger is as rusty as my Husserl. Still, it goes to show what new ideas can be generated in a dialogue like this one. I really appreciate you giving me this chance and hope this little exchange is of value for the journal. All the best, Shadd

Polizzi: Thank you Shadd, I really enjoyed thinking out loud with you.

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