

# **The “Home-Sickness” Of *The Jack Roller*: The Underlying Conflicts Of A Delinquent Boy’s Own Story**

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In our contribution, we will approach the single case study *The Jack Roller* by taking a perspective that centres on conflicts, ambivalences and contradictions in the narrator’s construction of his life history.

Based on an analysis of the different meanings of “home” in Stanley’s story, we will illustrate the ambiguity of his “home-sickness”: on the one hand, his longing for a home when he is institutionalized, on the other hand his discomfort and unhappiness when he is “at home”. The key to this ambiguity of home-sickness can be found in his stealing that begins in early childhood. Stanley, the jack roller, argues that his criminal career is the result of miserable circumstances and fate, it is especially the fault of his hated stepmother.

On first glance, the explanation he offers is plausible. On second glance, there is a deeper level of conflict hidden in this argumentation. By tracing the connection between the concept of “home” and the concept of “stealing”, we will argue that there is an underlying conflict of a striving for recognition, attachment, and autonomy.

## **Reference**

Koesling, A. & Neuber, A. (2005). *The home-sickness of the jack-roller. The underlying conflicts of a delinquent boy’s own story*. Paper presented at the British Society of Criminology Conference in Leeds, Great Britain (13<sup>th</sup> of July 2005).