



Cesare Lombroso and the positive school

He argued that criminals were biological reversion to an earlier evolutionary stage, people more primitive and less highly evolved than their noncriminal counterparts

Charles Darwin

- *“With mankind some of the worst dispositions which occasionally without any assignable cause make their appearance in families, may perhaps be reversions to a savage state, from which we are removed by many generations”*

Lombroso performed a postmortem on a thief who came from Southern Italy

... on laying open the skull I found on the occipital part, exactly on the spot where a spine is found in the normal skull, a distinct depression which I named median occipital fossa, because of its situation precisely in the middle of the occiput as in inferior animals, especially rodents.....At the sight of that skull, I seemed to see all of a sudden, lighted up as a vast plain under a flaming sky, the problem of the nature of the criminal – an atavistic being who reproduces in his person the ferocious instincts of primitive humanity and the inferior animals











Physical characteristics related to crime include:

- Deviations in head size and shape
- Asymmetry of the face
- Large jaws and cheekbones
- Unusually large or small ears or ears that stand out from the head
- Fleshy lips
- Abnormal teeth
- Receding chin
- Abundant hair or wrinkles
- Long arms
- Extra fingers or toes
- An asymmetry of the brain

Charles Goring

Our results nowhere confirms the evidence [of a physical criminal type], nor justify the allegation of criminal anthropologists. They challenge their evidence at almost every point. In fact, both with regard to measurements and the presence of physical anomalies in criminals, our statistics present a startling conformity with similar statistics of the law-abiding class. Our inevitable conclusion must be that there is no such thing as a physical criminal type

- Towards the end of his career he looked more and more to environmental rather than biological factors. In the fifth edition of his book "L'uomo delinquente" he included, among the factors related to crime causation:
 - Climate
 - Rainfall
 - The price of grain
 - Sex and marriage customs
 - Criminal laws
 - Banking practices
 - National tariff policies
 - The structure of government
 - Church organization
 - The state of religious belief