

Contents

Introduction *xiii*

Part I. The Victim as Criminal and Artist in America

- Chapter 1. The First Literary Genre of the United States:
The Slave Narrative 3
- Chapter 2. The Worker as Criminal and Artist:
Herman Melville 31

Part II. History

- Chapter 3. Plantation to Penitentiary: Songs of Slavery,
Peonage, and Prison 73
- A. *Songs of Slavery* 73
- B. *Songs of an Imprisoned People* 98
- Chapter 4. A History of Literature by Convicts in
America 124

Part III. The Present

- Chapter 5. Two Novelists of the American Prison 181
- A. *Malcolm Braly* 181
- B. *Chester Himes* 206
- Chapter 6. From Malcolm X to Attica and Beyond:
Contemporary American Prison
Literature 233

Notes 277

Appendix: An Annotated Bibliography of Literature by
American Convicts: 1800-1977 291

Index 325