'The interior landscape on the outside' - 1st Draft

Abstract:

The shadow of Foucault (1977) stretches long over a criminological understanding of prison. In particular, Foucault's identification of the disciplinary functions of psychology has grown apposite with the foregrounding of the 'what works' agenda and public protection, rendering forensic psychologists 'incredibly powerful' (Warr, 2018: 16). Medicalised discourses have also played a role in legitimising the entry of the arts into the prison as art therapy (Cox and Gelsthorpe, 2012: 259). However, medicalised applications of the arts have met with ambivalence from other creative practitioners who arrive in prison via creative rather than clinical routes with focus on empowering not treating offenders. In this view, the arts might be therapeutic but they are not therapy (Hopwood, 2001: 30). This polarisation of positions, however, is not supported by the autobiographical narratives of creative practitioners (Simpson, 2022). A number of these research participants had their own stories of mental health issues. In addition, while none sought to rehabilitate offenders, there were examples of practitioners recognising and engaging with the mental wellbeing of prisoners. Ironically, it is Foucault's later work on care of the self and, in particular, self-writing in the context of ethical self-cultivation that can shed light on the ethical subjectivities of practitioners and offer a wider commentary on the emergence of trauma informed practice in the prison field.

Lit/History review:

Foucault's (1995) seminal text on the birth of the modern prison identifies psychologists and psychiatrists as one battalion in 'a whole army of technicians' (Foucault, 1995: 11) employed to deliver the 'technolog(ies) of the 'soul'' (Foucault, 1995: 30) that contributed to the shift to a new 'non-corporeal penality' (Foucault, 1995: 11). Foucault casts a long shadow over a criminological understanding of the prison and his identification of the disciplinary functions of psychology has grown even more apposite in recent years as the foregrounding of the 'what works' agenda and public protection have rendered forensic psychologists 'incredibly powerful' (Warr, 2018: 16). The power of this medicalised knowledge (Warr, 2018: 42) has been pervasive, and among other manifestations, opened one of the legitimate routes for the entry of the creative arts into prisons (Caulfield and Simpson, 2019). Cox and Gelsthorpe (2012) highlight art therapy as one of the earliest vehicles through which the arts gained

official ingress through the prison gates during the mid twentieth century. However, the clinical role of the art therapist is not unproblematic in this context.

In the context of England and Wales, Brandreth (1972) questions the prevalence of art therapy in prisons in the late 1960s/early 70s, arguing that '(a)lthough fifteen to twenty per cent of all offenders...receive some form of psychiatric treatment during their sentence, rarely does it involve the use of creative arts' (Brandreth, 1972: 34). Nor did things appear to progress substantially in the following two decades, and in her personal reflections, Marian Liebmann (1994), a key figure in early prison art therapy writes about her sense of isolation and only rarely meeting with other practitioners engaged in similar work (Liebman, 1994: 1). Meanwhile, in the first concerted academic survey of arts practice in prisons (Hewish, 2015: 13), conducted during the late 1980s, Peaker and Vincent (1990: 183) note that arts provision was delivered by psychology departments only in 'a few cases'. Reassessing the literature on creative arts in the CJS some 15 years later, Hughes (2005: 24) still finds only 25 projects out of a total of 200 were delivered via art therapy, dramatherapy or psychodrama. A part of the explanation for this lack of provision may have been due to the low levels of clinical and counselling services provided by psychologists up until the postwar period (Crighton and Towl, 2007 cited in Warr, 2018: 31), suggesting a lack of supply. However, more recently there is evidence of prisoners' resistance to psychological intervention generally (Warr, 2018; Maruna, 2011) and in terms of the arts specifically. Carlo Gebler, an established and long serving writer in residence in the Northern Ireland prison system has made keen observations about prisoners fearing that 'prison authorities or whomever, want to get inside their brains and… in prison parlance, '"fuck with their heads"' (Gebler cited in Broadhead, 2006, p. 124). Suspicion about forensic psychology has also been expressed by professional creative writing practitioners, who began to enter the jail under the auspices of humane containment (Dunbar, 1985) or what Duguid (2000) refers to as the 'opportunities era', which followed from the 'Nothing Works' debacle (Martinson, 1974). Many of these professional creative practitioners came from the community arts movement, 'an inherently political project…(which)...attracted people with leftist sympathies' (Matarasso, 2018: intn) and aimed to challenge, and in some cases, overthrow the status quo (Rimmer, 2020; Lewis, 2014; Kelly, 1984). Specifically in the context of arts in the criminal justice system, research by Peaker and Vincent (1990) has highlighted the radical dimensions of creative arts practitioners' work in prisons. While not all practitioners came to the prison with a radical agenda, a proportion did, and Peaker and Vincent cite the dancer, Kevin Fegan, speaking about the challenge presented to the status quo by the essentially anarchic qualities of the creative process (Peaker and Vincent, 1990, p. 105). More generally, there appeared to be a consensus among the practitioners they interviewed that

the function of the arts was to encourage questioning and critical thinking on the part of prisoners, which was at odds with the rehabilitative intentions of psychological interventions.

Cox and Gelsthorpe (2012: 263) have identified tensions between these two different approaches to contributing to beneficial outcomes for prisoners. On the one hand they identify what Fassin (2015: 9) describes as a 'moral economy' of punishment enshrined in an official rehabilitation rationale intended to reform the individual (Robinson and Crowe, 2009), or latterly to manage risk (Simon and Feeley, 1992), contrasted with creative practitioners' commitment to a radical type of social change premised on notions of social fairness and justice. The latter understanding is tied up with ideas of empowerment and the raising of political consciousness, while rehabilitation aims to shape the prisoner into a conforming, law-abiding citizen (Hollin and Palmer, 2006). Some practitioners have attempted to navigate a line in between the extremes of individual reform set against social change by drawing a distinction between art as therapy opposed to the therapeutic value of art (Hopwood, 2001: 30; Brown, 2002: 115-116). Thereby taking a line that resonates with, though does not explicitly articulate, a Foucaldian critique of the coercive dimensions of psychology. Writers in Prisons Network, the leading organisation in the delivery of creative writing residences in prisons from the 1990s until 2011 (O'Keefe and Albertson, 2012a) make the distinction explicit in its training materials for new writers, creating a clear separation between artists, teachers and therapists and their respective roles in their work with prisoners (Kehan, 2013: 179). The emphasis is placed firmly on the practitioner's status as a creative professional who is 'simply there to practice…(their)... art and to motivate others to express their capabilities as artists' (Keenan, 2013: 179).

However, this distinction between therapy and the therapeutic is far from clear cut, attempting as it does to separate the noun from its related adjective. Academic research in the arts in criminal justice field (Cheliotis, 2012: 7) and particularly, evaluation research, has long promoted the therapeutic benefits of the arts for offenders (e.g. Bilby et al., 2013; Cheliotis, 2014; Digard et al., 2007; Hughes, 2005; Peaker and Vincent, 1990), which does little to clarify the distinction between art therapy (as delivered by clinicians) and the therapeutic value of the arts (as delivered by creative practitioners). This situation has been further muddied more recently by a shift in terminology, which has reframed the 'therapeutic' in terms of 'health and wellbeing' (ACE, 2018; Wilkinson and Caulfield, 2017; Daykin, 2019; Fancourt and Finn, 2019; Parkes and Bilby, 2010; Bilby et al., 2013; NCJAA, 2019; Carpenter and Knight, 2018). This literature suggests that the binary of therapy and the therapeutic does not entirely hold, as the hospital, clinic and prison continue their epistemological 'thaw' (Foucault, 1995: 187), which sees shared discourses melt further into

and through each regime. This conclusion is given additional weight in recent research (Simpson, 2022), which found that creative writing practitioners themselves, when given the opportunity to express their views outside of official discourses, frequently frame their experience in terms of mental health issues in surprising and subjective ways. While these practitioners do not necessarily connect their own experiences of mental ill health directly with the creative work they facilitate with prisoners, when considered through the lens of an anthropology of ethics, subtle but important connections between the two are suggested.

The more nuanced connections between mental health, prisoners and practitioners lack visibility when the analysis is based on the rhetoric of public documentation, whether that be the evaluation studies of academics or the training materials of key arts organisations. All of these documents in one way or another seek to either reinforce or challenge the relationship between creative writing programmes in prisons and their potential clinical impacts, based on an acceptance or rejection of a moral economy of punishment that underpins notions of individual rehabilitation as desirable. However, as this article will go on to explore, these separations between therapy and the therapeutic and between individual and social change, when placed in the context of 'everyday' ethics (Williams, 2018: 1) are more complex. Practitioners both engage with the psychological benefits of creativity in their own lives and may enable those they facilitate to explore their personal change processes in ways that can support both individual and social change.

Moral Anthropology:

Fassin (2015: 9) makes the important point that when considering the state and its institutions it is vital to consider both the social facts of moral economies and the moral subjectivities through which individual employees develop 'ethical practices'. Williams (2018:) too, in his consideration of Muslim prisoners, highlights how an anthropology of ethics allows a clearer understanding of the freedom of the ethical subject to engage in processes of self-cultivation rather than being entirely shaped by disciplinary power. The drawing of attention to both CJS employees and prisoners is particularly apt for a consideration of the role of creative writing practitioners working in the custodial estate, as they are often perceived as outsiders on the inside of the prison (ref? - Squirrel?) and this liminal position is illustrated in the current study in the way that creative practitioners both challenge and relate to psychological discourse inside and outside the prison. These ideas question Foucault's (1995:) earlier arguments about the fundamentally coercive formation of an essentially passive subject in the context of the prison combined with a phalanx of staff concerned

entirely with applying the disciplinary instruments of punishment. Ironically though, one of the key theoretical antecedents to this ethnography of 'ethical self cultivation' (Faubion, 2011 cited in Williams, 2018: 2) is grounded in Foucault's (1994) later writing and particularly his ideas on technologies of the self. Foucault, in fact, becomes his own greatest challenger. As Williams (2018: 2) notes, Foucault reflects that in his earlier work he perhaps 'insisted too much on the technology of domination and power (Foucault 1997b: 225 cited in Williams, 2018: 3). Meanwhile, Focault's later work offers a less passive understanding of the subject, although the technologies of the self he describes are still always situated within relations of power (Williams, 2018: 5). In writing about this type of self-cultivation, Foucault 'provides a vocabulary for understanding self improvement around technologies or practices of the self' (Williams, 2018: 2). Particularly relevant to the current article, these technologies include 'self-writing' (Foucault, 1994: 207-222) which refers to the authoring of notebooks, correspondence and diaries, essentially, forms of autobiographical writing that the author uses in the process of 'establishing a relationship of oneself with oneself…' (Faubion 2011: 48 cited in Williams, 2018: 2). Foucault (1994: 232) makes an explicit connection between practices of self writing and their relationship to the care of the self as documented in Greco-Roman philosophy of the first two centuries AD., and contrasts this with the later Christian maxim of 'knowing thyself' (1994: 225-226). This distinction between care of the self and knowledge of the self resonates with the different psychological aspects of the arts as therapy and as therapeutic, both of which are encountered by the creative practitioners in the current study, and this will be returned to in the discussion of findings. The central affordance of an ethnography of ethics, however, is its ability to identify and articulate the creative practitioner as an active, or free subject able to cultivate, within the relations of power, the kind of self one wishes to be' (Williams, 2018: 3)

A second concept borrowed from an ethnography of ethics, which proves useful in articulating the broader motivations that underpin the practitioner's ethical work concerns the moral breakdown or 'ethical moment' (Ziggon, 2007). This moment describes a process in which the 'unreflective moral dispositions of everyday life' (Zigon, 2007: 139) are brought up against an ethical dilemma, resulting in a 'moral breakdown'. At such a moment it is necessary for the ethical subject to 'perform ethics' in an attempt to re-establish the former state of unreflective morality; to 'Keep Going':

> 'Thus, it is the moral breakdown, or the moment of problematization, that I call the ethical moment. This is the moment in which ethics must be performed. In this way, then, I make a distinction between morality as the unreflective mode of being-in-the-world and ethics as a tactic performed in the moment of the breakdown

of the ethical dilemma.' (Zigon, 2007: 137).

This concept will be employed to better understand the everyday ethics which inform one of the practitioner's narratives, thereby enabling a more detailed exploration of the nuances and imbrications that underlie processes of ethical self cultivation leading to individual and social change, with specific focus on the role of self-care and self-writing in these processes. It is notable that this approach switches attention from the prisoners' process of change to that of the practitioner, something that has hitherto been largely missing in the rehabilitation literature (Simpson, 2022: 39)

Methodology:

The data presented in this paper has already been analysed as part of a PhD study, based on constructionist narrative methods (Simpson, 2022), which underpin the subdiscipline of narrative criminology (Presser, 2009; Presser and Sandberg, 2015). The original study collected the deliberately crafted life stories of 19 creative writing practitioners, all of whom had at least one year of experience facilitating creative writing in prisons. Practitioners were asked to tell the story of how they came to work in prison. The stories were produced in two creative writing workshops, designed and facilitated by the researcher and involving an innovative data collection method based on a storyboard technique (Simpson, 2022:59-62). For the current study these storyboards, which aimed to par down the narratives to the bare bones of the plot, were supplemented with the transcripts of each practitioner verbally sharing their story in the workshop. This allows greater richness in the data than was possible or desirable in the original study, which used narratological methods of analysis based on literary structuralism (Eagleton, 1999: Bal, 200?), rather than fully exploring the ethnographic dimensions of the research.

Analysis of the data combines earlier findings from a narrative content analysis (Simpson, 2022), which are particularly relevant to the experience of mental ill health among these practitioners. These findings are then further developed by using a line by line analysis of each orally delivered narrative, with the intention of identifying all references to mental health and psychology and locating them within the specific context of each individual autobiographical narrative. From this, conclusions will be suggested about the relationships between the therapeutic and therapy, and between individual and social change in the work of practitioners. Finally, in order to understand this in the detail of everyday ethics, a single case study will be analysed and commented upon.

Findings:

Based on the existing literature and its suggestion of the reluctance of creative writing practitioners to align themselves with art therapy and its association with the disciplinary instruments of forensic psychology, it is perhaps not surprising to discover that only one of the 19 practitioners made direct reference to the therapeutic value of the arts, and no practitioners framed their work in terms of therapy. However, what is surprising is that six practitioners identified mental health episodes in their own lives. Three of these practitioners narrate mental health stories that are precipitated by specific life events. Susan and Henry both experience relationship breakups which cause significant disruption to their lives. Henry describes how, despite succeeding in becoming a successful full time writer:

> ‘my marriage was just getting worse and worse and I was going to have a sort of a breakdown…I had…to begin the new life so I suddenly found myself living in (an ‘edgy’ area of London) and I was going to be one person…(not two)...not trying to be this sort of conventional (person)’

For Susan, who had run away with the circus, where she worked as an aerial acrobat, after falling in love with a clown, suddenly at:

> ‘about thirty…I fell out of love… and I got scared of heights and like virtually overnight…And that sort of triggered a whole load of other stuff which was to do with actually suddenly becoming really scared of just about everything….I didn't know what to do with myself... you know I was kind of pretty lost.’

Meanwhile, Jessica, who worked as a probation officer for 20 years, reported experiencing a midlife crisis which led her to hand in her notice with the Probation Service and leave the UK to work as a volunteer for a year in East Africa.

Eric was a fourth practitioner who narrated his experience of a lack of mental wellbeing, however, in this case there appears to be a series of events that oscillate between hedonism, chaos and loss, with a specific moment of crisis when Eric finds himself alone in a Spanish city, ‘isolated , casaless, vulnerable, regretful and abandoned’ as he struggles to get his life back under control.

None of these practitioners narrate an encounter with formal mental health services and each in their own way finds the resources to recover their mental wellbeing without medical

intervention. For all of these practitioners their engagement with creative practice in some way facilitates this process. Henry's recovery is to an extent facilitated by his continuing desire to work as a professional writer and is further supported by his subsequent employment as a prison writer in residence. Susan too, finds a resolution to her crisis through a prison writing residency, although much earlier in her recovery, at a point where she is still mired in the worst of her 'madness', she notes that 'the only thing that sort of helped me through that whole period was books really'. During her year of voluntary work in Africa, Jessica writes and begins to publish short stories, and on returning to the UK takes up a prison writing residency The presence of the two factors of creativity and a prison residency are most poignantly evoked in Eric's story, when he speaks about how his interview for a writing residency made him feel:

> 'respected, I was taken seriously…valued… I got the job, that's another story but equally I would have walked away… proud knowing that I'd actually… been listened to'.

This coda appears to be little different to the sentiments of many people serving time in prison where experiences of respect (Hulley, 2011) and empathy (Bullock and Bunce, 2020) are at best 'mixed'.

The final two practitioners narrate mental health conditions that necessitate clinical treatment. Rebecca experiences 'mental terror' as the daughter of a holocaust survivor and is prescribed 'valium at 15'. Meanwhile Joanne experiences a great deal of unhappiness and mental distress during her childhood and teenage years and is finally diagnosed with body dysmorphic disorder in her twenties. Joanne is the only practitioner who describes benefits from the process of diagnosis:

> 'ahhh that's why I've been feeling like this…it opened a lot of things for me because I looked back on my writing, see loads of metaphors and I think, that's what I meant.'

For Joanne a diagnosis offered an explanation of her writing, while for the other practitioners, writing offered a way to avoid a diagnosis. In Rebecca's case, though she was unable to avoid formal mental health services, she identifies the pharmaceutical intervention as 'a real turning point' after which she seeks out alternative, creative methods to alleviate her, and later other people's mental health issues. She tells how the experience is:

> 'why I'm so committed to working with people in prison and being alongside…(their)

mental health struggles’

The emphasis here is on ‘being alongside’ those with mental health issues, rather than seeking to treat or address those issues, which suggests supporting or even bearing witness (Anderson, 20?) to others' mental ill health. Ultimately, Rebecca reverses the expected direction of the relationship between mental health, prisoners and prison practitioners when she narrates a series of written interactions with a particular prisoner, which helped her to improve her own mental wellbeing:

‘A letter changes everything… Paul teaches me no one can imprison your mind’

In this instance it is the prisoner who becomes the ‘therapist’ and the practitioner benefits from the interaction.

The narratives discussed so far indicate that one third of the research sample had experienced mental health issues before beginning work in prisons. This is greater than rates of mental health reported in the general population (Baker, 2021), though less than estimates of mental ill health among the prison population in England and Wales (PRT, 2022; CMH, 2021). However, only a minority of these practitioners seek formal mental health intervention and in one of the two cases where mental health services are involved, only one practitioner found this intervention useful. This lends support to the idea that creative practitioners are wary of the discipline of psychology, not only in their work with prisoners but in their personal lives. Simultaneously, though, there are indications that practitioners in some cases not only recognise but have benefited from the therapeutic dimensions of their creative practice in their own lives. This is particularly the case for Rebecca, Eric, Jessica, Joanne and Susan, while Henry tends to construct his writing more in terms of professional goals. It is also interesting to observe that only one practitioner, Joanne, speaks about ‘helping’ prisoners through creative practice. The choice of the word ‘help’ has something of a paternalistic air to it, which hints at the coercive power of the prison. Interestingly, Joanne is the only practitioner who finds her personal interaction with psychological intervention unproblematic, which suggests less distance between her work with offenders and the rehabilitative discourses found in the prison regime. For the remaining five practitioners, four make no reference to the intended impacts of the creative process on the prisoners they work with, while Rebecca, as already discussed, sees her role as ‘being alongside’ rather than ‘helping’ prisoners.

A final, and related point, raised by these six narratives concerns Foucault's (1995: 174) notion of the hierarchy of the ‘disciplinary gaze’. Foucault is writing primarily about surveillance from an spatial point of view, however, he also makes clear that those selected to conduct surveillance are regarded as superior to those assigned under their watch (Foucault, 1995: 175). By disclosing the common experience of mental ‘pathology’ with prisoners, creative practitioners provide a challenge to their own superior status and by association the treatment and later actuarial models of offender rehabilitation (Robinson and Crowe, 2009) that aim in different ways to assess, control and correct the behaviour of offenders. This challenge to the hierarchy is, perhaps, most clearly demonstrated in Rebecca’s position of ‘being alongside’ the prisoners she works with and Eric’s claim to feeling respected by other prison writers in residence.

The sensitivity afforded by an ethnography of ethics has so far enabled a space to be opened between the prison regime and a specific group of creative practitioners who work in this environment. By doing so, the complexity of the practitioners’ interactions with the disciplinary instruments of psychology are made visible, both inside and outside of the prison environment. As Williams (2018:) suggests, this is made possible due to the greater freedom afforded to the ethical subject whose processes of self-cultivation are recognised, as opposed to a classic Foucauldian analysis, which sees the subject as entirely shaped by disciplinary power. It is, however, the case that much of the freedom discussed so far is, essentially, the freedom to lose one’s mind. However, this is illustrative of Foucault’s key point, that freedom is always exercised within relationships of power (ref). Equally, however, all six of these practitioners go on to use their creative practice to cultivate an ethical self, one that is influenced to some degree on their experience of their own mental ill health.

Finding More:

The utility of specific concepts taken from an ethnography of ethics and Foucault’s (1994: 223-249) later work on the technologies of the self and self care enables even greater analytical nuance. To explore this in greater detail a single case study will be analysed which can reveal aspects of autobiographical experience not apparent on the surface of the narrative. Foucault’s (1994: 226) work on care of the self will also offer a more sensitive articulation of what, until now, has been presented in this article as the therapeutic counterposed against therapy and the mutually exclusive roles of the practitioner as facilitator of individual change or social change.

Jean's narrative of her journey into prison has not yet been discussed as there was no explicit reference to mental ill health in her storyboard or the resulting narrative analysis. However, Jean's oral retelling of her story, which was introduced into the data for the current study, includes use of the word 'traumatised' in relation to herself. Jean's story also includes discussion of her political activism and her engagement with self care, which enables an elision of the boundaries between individual and social change in order to better understand the relationship between the two.

While it is clear from discussion of the other six practitioners that mental wellbeing was an issue for each of them, the initial narrative analysis was more focused on the role of this illness in the narrative construction of the story, rather than its role in the everyday ethics (Williams, 2018: ?) and self-cultivation (ref?) of the subject. In order to develop a richer appreciation of a practitioner's experience of mental ill health and its implications for ethical self-formation, this case study will employ two key concepts; moral breakdown (Ziggon, 2007) and care of the self (Foucault, 1994: 226). As used here, these two concepts are interrelated. Zigon (2007: 137) understands the moral breakdown to occur at the point when a subject experiences dissonance between a taken-for-granted set of moral expectations or dispositions and a circumstance, idea or newer set of values that impinge upon their unconscious adherence to the former values. This in turn forces the subject to engage in ethical work, which in the case of these practitioners can be conceptualised in terms of care of the self through the technology of self-writing (Foucault, 1994: 232).

The Case Study

The roots of Jean's moral breakdown occur at an early point in her childhood and are grounded in the relational dynamics of her family experience. Her narrative begins with a description of an unhappy home life in a single parent family:

> "for me home was prison really, oddly I hated Sundays when it always seemed to be raining and I wasn't allowed to go out and the atmosphere in the house was pretty shitty coz my mum was always shouting and my grandmother was always having an argument with her and it was like, it was like a fucking nightmare basically"

The underpinning of this exposition concerns the moral economy of the family and the taken-for-granted power inequality implicit in the parent-child relationship (e.g. the parent controls the child's movement in and out of the house). The point of moral breakdown is presented as an escalation of the unequal parent/child relationship:

> “one day it just culminat(ed) in my mother screaming at me, I'd done something wrong and she was going to send me with a label round my neck back to America to live with my father who was the devil incarnate and.. I was totally traumatised by it”

This threat of rejection by her primary caregiver is framed in terms of a psychological shock by Jean, however, it is notable that the reference to mental health in the word ‘traumatised’, is juxtaposed with an ethical dilemma, expressed in terms of a sense of injustice. This articulates a kind of moral rather than psychological violence and Jean’s reaction to such an ethical assault:

> “I also had this raging sense, as children do, of injustice..'why is she doing this to me she's bigger than me’”

Jean’s choice of words indicate she holds an ethical position that runs counter to the broader moral code on which the relational inequalities within the family are premised (Cohen and MacCartney, 2008). However, it takes the point of the moral breakdown to bring this stark sense of injustice to the surface and from which, Jean must perform ethical work in order to repair the damage. This damage is done to Jean’s own sense of self by the unequal and unethical use of power by her mother; this is the point of ethical dilemma. Jean herself identifies this incident as central to her future development , describing how “the seed was sown” in that moment.

Jean’s ‘raging sense of injustice’ is central to her project of ethical self-cultivation and a need to create social justice runs through the rest of the narrative, where it is quickly associated with the creative arts. For Jean the arts are a way to understand and then to attempt to ameliorate social injustices through political means. This ambition clearly relates to the political project of the community arts as identified by Matarasso (2018: intn) and rather than carving out an ethical project based on her own individual change alone, she appears to want to challenge broader morality by infusing it with fairness. This is firstly framed in terms of political activism and Jean highlights a number of causes she was engaged with (e.g. Vietnam, Biafra and apartheid), although, she also notes:

> “I wasn't going on demos then because I was quite young, I wasn't allowed out but I was absolutely…there”

This sentence emphasises the ongoing unequal power relation between Jean and her mother. However, undeterred by the restrictions placed upon her freedom by her mother, Jean engages with the issues through literature and media representations of social injustice. She talks about watching social realist films such as Kes and Cathy Come Home as a way to engage with broader social inequalities, and she also reads a great deal of literature including history and poetry, especially war poetry. This exposure to literature offered Jean a way to develop an ethical understanding of power inequalities, the ones she had experienced first hand and also then those macro injustices that were reflective of the David and Goliath dynamic in her own situation.

This stage of Jean's ethical self-cultivation is reminiscent of, although not identical to, Foucault's ideas on self-writing and the use of hupomnemata to 'collect what one has managed to hear or read… for a purpose that is nothing less than the shaping of the self' (Foucault, 1997: 211). The obvious difference between the Greco-Roman hupomnemata or notebook, produced during the 1st and 2nd centuries (CE) and Jean's reading of a wide selection of texts is that Jean reads but does not record her reading, or does not think it important to disclose her notetaking. For the classical authors of hupomnemata the copying of extracts from other sources is of central importance. In both instances however, there is a sense in which the practice of reading from multiple sources provides a 'means of establishing a relationship of oneself with oneself' (Foucault, 1997: 211). It is a way to better understand oneself and one's experiences and this appears to underpin Jean's early attempts to resolve the ethical dilemma that results from her mother's abuse of her parental power and Jean's own powerful reaction to the situation. Here a moral code concerning the unquestioned authority of parenthood clashes with Jean's ethical sense of 'raging injustice'.

While Jean does not connect reading and writing in the same way as the authors of classic hupomnemata, the next significant activity she narrates in her journey to prison is that of writing, in this case poetry:

> "...going from reading, which is still very important to me, but starting to write about my life and finding that space, that quietness"

Arguably, this links to the second form of 'self-writing' identified by Foucault (1997); correspondence. While there is a clear difference between letter writing, which conventionally is intended for a specific and known recipient, and poetry, which may be intended for an audience of none to an audience of many, Foucault (1997) notes an

important dimension of the act of letter writing that can be equally applied to any form of writing:

> ‘(t)he letter one writes acts, through the very action of writing, upon the one who addresses it…The writing that aids the addressee arms the writer’ (Foucault, 1997: 214-215).

The writer is, in essence, the first reader (Simpson, 2022: 154) and as a result is able to reflect upon themselves from an alternative perspective. This idea is clearly articulated in the concept of defamiliarisation (Shklovsky, 1917/1990), whereby through the act of writing, a familiar object, event or phenomenon is literally ‘made strange’, our habitual perception of the world is shaken and we are able to ‘look again, to see, almost for the first time’ (Gunn, 1984, p. 28). This type of reflective possibility is apparent in Jean’s use of writing, although it appears to be used less to ‘shake her habitual perception of the world’ than to enable her to conduct the necessary ethical work to repair the damage done to her moral world by the injustice she experienced as a child. There are echoes here of Foucault’s (1997) description of self care, in which ‘taking care of oneself became linked to constant writing activity.’ (Foucault, 1997: 232). This opened to the author ‘a whole field of experience…which earlier was absent’ (Foucault, 1997: 233) and this idea is echoed in Jean’s use of writing to enable her to identify her own ‘raging sense of injustice’, to connect it to wider examples and through this ethical work to firstly offer care to herself and then extend that care to others. Certainly, Jean’s highlighting of the space and quietness she finds through writing suggests an act of self care.

Her acts of creative facilitation extend this sense of care to others. First working on a multi-arts project with young people in contact with the criminal justice system:

> “they'd had really damaged backgrounds, if I thought I had a shitty childhood, I didn't, they'd had real tough times and this multi-arts project was just helping them kind of find a way through in their lives…a lot of those young people and I see them out and about now… they've turned their lives around.”

This then leads to Jean’s engagement with prisoners:

> “I thought it might be really interesting to work with people who've actually not had that (youth justice) intervention”

This is the final frame of Jean's storyboard, which sees her enter into the prison for the first time and she concludes with the following sentence:

> "I'm very glad I'm free but..people aren't so it's like... here are the keys, do some unlocking"

Framed in a distinction between individual or social change this reads almost as a rallying cry for prison abolition and a wider appeal for social justice. However, when considered in the context of Jean's journey from moral breakdown to self-care, which is then extended to her work with others, a different tone can be read into the coda or her story; one which includes her personal experience within the walls of the prison. When retelling her narrative she speaks of her struggle to understand the ambiguities of freedom and confinement calling it:

> "my continuing obsession with… being in on the outside, the interior landscape on the outside"

At one level this is an eloquent line of poetry. However, when the same line is viewed as the denouement of a moral breakdown, the resolution of which is attempted through the use of self-writing, a crucial semantic shift occurs. It becomes possible to see the 'interior landscape' of Jean's ethical dilemma concerning injustice as an active presence in the work she undertakes. The unlocking may refer equally to a metaphorical unlocking of prisoners' trauma as it does to revolutionary resistance, which enables a far more complex overlap of processes of social and individual change than is suggested by the wider literature. In this view the notion of the 'therapeutic' is replaced with the concept of self-care, offering the potential for a reciprocal relationship between practitioner and prisoner, rather than a targeted criminal justice intervention premised on a treatment model of rehabilitation in which the prisoner has rehabilitation 'done' to them.

In summary, the application of an anthropology of ethics to Jean's story and, in particular, the idea of writing as an act of self care allows for a more nuanced analysis, which moves away from a purely political understanding of Jean's commitment to social justice and allows a greater understanding of the role of literature (both reading and writing) in her ethical self cultivation; it is an act of care which is first for the self but also, later for others. In this overlap it is possible to see a potential articulation of what other practitioners (e.g. Hopwood, 2001; Brown, 2002) refer to as the therapeutic value of the arts. In the earlier analysis of Jean's story her motivation was understood solely in terms of a political commitment to

social justice and her subsequent engagement in and facilitation of the creative arts as located within the community arts movement. Once an ethical dimension is added, it becomes possible to articulate the relationship between her creative practice and a project of self-care, which allows her to understand and later challenge inequalities she encounters in their various forms. By foregrounding these points, a more balanced and multidimensional appreciation of Jean's journey into prison is possible, one that is able to move beyond the distinctions between individual and social change and between therapy and the therapeutic.

Discussion:

The narratives of the seven creative practitioners considered in this article enable a more nuanced appreciation of the ways in which these practitioners cultivate ethical selves inside and outside the environment of the prison and the potential contributions they may make to the ethical projects of the prisoners they work with through the facilitation of other's writing . The older binaries of therapy v the therapeutic and individual rehabilitation v social change, along with the disciplinary Foucaldian model seem lacking in the light of these findings. However, what remains unclear is whether the more complex relationships practitioners have, both with the disciplinary hierarchy and issues of mental wellbeing have long been the case in custodial settings and simply remained un/under articulated in a Foucauldian critique, or whether there is a new sensitivity to these issues as a result of the emergence of the wider therapeutic turn (Wright, 2008; Lasch, 1979) and its impact on prisons. Prison's are porous institutions (Ellis, 2021) and as Fassin (2015:) notes there has been a 'humanising' of disciplinary processes at the heart of the prison (though not the core principle of punishment), which appears to be in line with the development of therapeutic culture (Wright, 2008).

There have been two key manifestations of such a softening of power in prisons in England and Wales in recent decades. From the late 1990s to 2006, the prison system saw the transfer of healthcare provision (including mental healthcare, though not forensic services) from the Home Office to the National Health Service (NHS) (Forrester et al., 2018), the intention being to treat offenders experiencing mental health issues, first and foremost as patients, rather than as offenders. This move appears to humanise the prisoner, shifting the disciplinary gaze to a more humane focus on counselling and support, which are intended to find an equivalent in mental health services encountered in the community. However, a Foucaldian argument may suggest that rather than a reversal of the disciplinary mechanisms of coercion, that these policy changes represent a move to an even 'gentle(r) way of punishment' (Foucault, 1995 see also Crewe, 2011 on 'soft power). A second and

interrelated development has been what Auty et al. (2022: 1) describe as a ‘trauma-turn’ in custodial settings. This work, initiated by Kubiak and Covington (2017) in US corrections has been more recently rolled out across specific parts of the prison estate in England and Wales (Auty, 2022; Petrillo, 2021; Jewkes et al., 2019) and sets out to recognise the prevalence of trauma across an organisation, in both workforce and client group, and to respond to the impacts of this trauma in ways that minimise triggers or further traumatisation and incorporate collaborative working with victims in order to achieve this (Kubiak and Covington, 2017: 92).

It is neither possible or even, desirable to arrive at a definitive statement about the order in which these processes occurred; that is, whether creative practitioners were already framing experience of moral breakdown in terms of mental health episodes, as is seen in Jean’s case study, or whether this vocabulary develops alongside the emergence of later therapeutic culture (Wright, 2008). However, Jean’s choice of adjective when describing the ethical moment as ‘traumatising’ is perhaps telling and resonates with the more recent conceptualisations of the role of mental health in work with offenders through trauma informed practice (Kubiak and Covington, 2017). Fassin and Rechtman (2007: 2) have written on how trauma increasingly is ‘becoming established as a commonplace of the contemporary world, a shared truth’. The meaning of trauma now extends and oscillates between a precise clinical definition as ‘traces left in the psyche’ to a popular, metaphorical understanding which views trauma as any ‘tragic event’. There is often a lack of distinction between the two meanings and this blurring further extends to the imbrication between offenders and victims, ideas which are particularly germane in a discussion of the work of creative practitioners in prison, where there appears to be considerable overlap with trauma informed practices.

As already stated, the discovery that a number of creative practitioners experience mental ill health leads to a challenge to the carceral hierarchy in which prisoners are pathologised and staff hold a superior, disciplinary status. These ideas are also reflected in the work of Kubiak and Covington (2017: 92) who make clear that trauma is a common experience for both employees and prisoners. Once the boundary between the pathological and the healthy is breached, this also opens the way to other conceptual transgressions, not least, as already mentioned, between the perpetrator and the victim and also, as illustrated in Rebecca’s narrative, between the counsellor and the counselled, which in turn enables the experience and addressing of trauma to be a shared or common experience between prisoners and practitioners. In terms of trauma informed practices, this also ties in with the idea of ‘bearing witness’ (Anderson, 2016), whereby the role of the practitioner is not to resolve or treat

trauma directly, but provide a safe space that minimises the risk of retraumatisation (ref and check). These ideas run contrary to the rehabilitative regime and the disciplinary instruments of forensic psychology, which are based not only on fixed notions of the clinical expert and the offender, the observer and the observed, but also on an underpinning moral economy, which presents certain behaviours as good or bad, right or wrong, based on the juridical principles of the law (Fassin, 2015: ?). Key figures in the trauma-informed movement have made ambitious claims for the employment of these methods, suggesting they are capable of creating 'cultural change in the criminal justice system' (One Small Thing cited in Auty et al., 20?: 3). However, to make such a claim for the disruptive influence of this initiative, may be to overstate the significance of this work in the prison environment (Jewkes, 20?), whether in terms of the organised roll out of trauma informed practice or the transgressive actions of creative practitioners. While the prison estate has sanctioned the piloting of trauma informed practice, there has also been a more sustained roll out of forensic interventions, for example the Dangerous and Serious Personality Disorder programme (Duggan, 2011) and Psychologically Informed Planned Environments (Preston, 2015) and as previously referenced (Warr, 2019) the development of actuarial risk assessments and interventions based on the principles of What Works still underpin the whole regime. In the balance, it appears that the presence of more humanising forms of interaction between practitioners and prisoners pose little challenge, certainly at an institutional level, to the disciplinary regime.

Another key similarity between trauma informed practice and the work that creative writing practitioners facilitate with prisoners concerns the matter of story itself. As Petrillo (2019) notes:

> 'The power of sharing stories has long been recognised in trauma-informed practice…(and)...is associated with healing across different cultures' (Petrillo, 2021: 237)

This also links back to Foucault's (1994) ideas on writing as an act of self-care. It has already been shown that practitioners use their engagement with reading and writing as a means to care for the self, however the trauma-informed literature highlights the relevance of extending this technology to prisoners. Petrillo (2021) suggests a number of ways in which storytelling can be used to address some of the experiences encountered by women in the criminal justice system, which include the overcoming of shame and isolation, expressing of emotions and self empowerment. These features of stories offer insight in how individual change and social change can be intertwined, firstly through addressing difficult emotions

and then through developing understanding of how societal and cultural structures may instigate and/or further compound trauma. By comparing the commonalities between the work of creative practitioners with research on trauma informed practice it becomes possible to move beyond the binary of individual and social change and to understand how the work of creative writing practitioners can create opportunities for both in their work with people in prison. This is alluded to in Jean's narrative when she refers to 'doing some unlocking', however the current analysis enables a clearer articulation of what this might look like in practice.

Finally, the use of Foucault's concept of care of the self can prove instructive in offering a clearer articulation of the attempt to separate out therapy from the therapeutic (Hopwood, 2001; Brown, 2002). As established previously, this distinction appears to be motivated by an attempt to distance professional creative practice from forensic arts therapy, however the distinction lacks clarity. Care of the self, arguably, offers a better description of the intentions of creative practitioners in their work with prisoners, particularly when contextualised using research on the benefits of trauma informed practice. In contrast, the second concept of 'knowing thyself' identified by Foucault (1994) in his analysis of technologies of the self used in early Greco-Roman culture offers a fitting definition for therapy-based arts interventions. In the earlier tradition, according to Foucault, 'know thyself' was a technical instruction to those consulting the Delphic oracle which admonished them to know their station, to 'not suppose yourself to be a god' (Foucault, 1994: 226). Over time, self knowledge 'takes on ever-increasing importance as the first step in the theory of knowledge' (Foucault, 1994: 228) and it is this combination of hierarchy and power-knowledge (Foucault, 1995) that aptly describes the disciplinary instruments of psychology in general and art therapy in particular with a greater precision than is possible by merely splitting the noun of therapy from the related adjective of the therapeutic.

Conclusion:

This article has identified and raised questions about two key distinctions claimed about the role of creative writing practitioners in prisons. The first concerned the separation between art therapy interventions based on psychological theories as opposed to the therapeutic benefit of the arts as delivered by professional creative practitioners. This in turn led to a second distinction between the purpose of creative writing to either affect individual reform based on the moral economy of punishment, or social change, underpinned by an ethical commitment to social justice. It was argued that these distinctions lack clarity, nor are they representative of findings from the original narratives of 19 creative writing practitioners who

have spent significant time working in prisons. The empirical data contained far greater nuance in which practitioners were seen to both engage with and reject the disciplinary instruments of psychology. This was made visible by applying two key concepts taken from an ethnography of ethics to the material; moral breakdown and care of the self. In seven out of 19 narratives practitioners were found to have their own experiences of mental ill health, which challenged Foucault's hierarchy of the 'disciplinary gaze' and the superiority of the practitioners over prisoners and with it the healthy/pathological binary of offender psychology. Further to this, all of these practitioners identified their own reading and writing as important to their mental wellbeing, although only one practitioner described this creative process as 'therapeutic'. It was suggested that the notion of therapeutic benefit be reconceptualised using Foucault's notion of care of the self, which was better able to articulate the practitioners' experiences of creativity. Based on a case study, it was also argued that the ethical project of self care was better able to engage with the imbrication of individual and social change for both prisoners and practitioners. Finally, a consideration was offered of the development of trauma informed practice and how a comparison with the work of creative writing practitioners could shed further light on the role of creative writing in work with prisoners.

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