

# **Hope Deferred, Humanity Diminished?**

*An ethnographic enquiry into the improvement of pastoral care  
offered to those serving an indeterminate sentence of  
Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP)*

by

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## **Abstract**

This thesis represents research undertaken as part of a professional doctorate programme by a prison chaplain employed in Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service. A pressing pastoral challenge at the time of fieldwork was the increased risk of self-harm and suicide amongst people in custody. This was especially true of those serving an indeterminate sentence of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP).

The on-going deferral of the hope of release experienced by many IPP people in custody was identified as a significant factor that led to harmful levels of despair. An ethnographic enquiry was undertaken to ascertain how hope might be maintained amongst those serving this sentence. Qualitative data analysis of participant interviews identified seven meta-themes, with 'relationality' playing a key role in the maintenance of hope.

As an exercise in Practical Theology this research offers a model of pastoral care that is broad and inclusive. The principles and practices enumerated here, whilst rooted in traditions of Christian theology, are offered in service of secular and plural discourses that constitute modern penal practice. In the field of Practical Theology this research provides a contribution to inter-disciplinary conversation and reflexive practice undertaken beyond ecclesial confines and at the margins of civic life.

## **Dedication**

This work is dedicated to the memory of the [REDACTED] man found dead in his cell on the [REDACTED] 2015 at the prison where research fieldwork was undertaken. His tragic death and the texture of the last conversation the author had with him inspired this pastoral enquiry.

## Acknowledgements

This thesis represents the culmination of a part-time doctoral programme of study undertaken over six and a half years. Throughout the period I have been astounded at the level of interest shown in my work by many people from various fields of practice. This has been matched also by their support and encouragement. Early in my research Dr Harry Annison's personal encouragement, as a criminologist specialising in IPP matters, strengthened my resolve to undertake this interdisciplinary endeavour. From the field of forensic psychology Dr Nikki Carthy provided inspiration and guidance on the *Life as a Film* interviewing method.

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As critical readers of an early draft of this work Dr Sarah Lewis (Criminology) and Reverend Canon Dr Nigel Rooms (Practical Theology) provided a thorough critique so any surviving theological or criminological short-comings remain the author's responsibility alone.

I am grateful for the assistance offered by many of my former colleagues at the [REDACTED] prison where I conducted fieldwork. Governors [REDACTED]

██████████ provided both their permission for this research to be undertaken in their establishment and also personal encouragement. Although fieldwork was undertaken when resources in the Prison Service were particularly stretched the support of the Offender Management Unit staff in providing participant demographic and sentence data was invaluable. Their co-operation was greatly appreciated. As was that of my immediate colleagues in the Chaplaincy Department who 'held the fort' many times in my absence (for fieldwork or University commitments).

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This thesis was proof read for conventions of grammar, spelling and language by Mr Les Robertson. In addition to this practical task he also provided invaluable feedback on my thesis from a 'coalface' perspective as an Offender Manager who has much experience working with numerous men serving an IPP sentence.

Last but absolutely not least is my wife, Julie. It was in a bedtime conversation some years ago that she suggested I choose the “IPP issue” as an area to research. Subsequently she has been unflagging in her practical and financial support. Especially in the personally most challenging elements of my research journey, her presence, love and care for me has embodied beautifully the profound humane regard described in this work.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

ACCT	Assessment, Care in Custody, Teamwork (a safeguarding procedure)
ACEs	Adverse Childhood Experiences
DPT	Doctorate in Practical Theology
DRF	Detrimental Relational Figure
EI	Epistemic Injustice
FG(s)	Focus Group(s)
FN	Field Note
FP	Found Poem(s) or Found Poetry (context dependant)
HM	Her Majesty's
HMP	Her Majesty's Prison
HMPS	Her Majesty's Prison Service
HMPPS	Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (from February 2017)
ID	Identification number for participants (IDS for staff)
IPP	(Sentence of) Imprisonment for Public Protection
JE	Journal Entry
LAAF	Life As A Film (interview method)
LHI	Life History Interviewing
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MQPL	Measurement of the Quality of Prisoner Life

NOMS	National Offender Management Service
NPS	Novel / New Psychoactive Substance ('street' name Spice or Mamba)
OB	Offending Behaviour – usually in relation to OB courses or programmes
PC	Pastoral Care
PCy	Pastoral Cycle
PS	Prison Service
PT	Practical Theology
PIPE	Psychologically Informed Planned Environment
PRF	Positive Relational Figure
RP	Reflective Practice
TBS	The Buffalo Statement
TC	Therapeutic Community



## **INTRODUCTION**

Come now into the cell with me and stay here and feel if you can and if you will that time, whatever time it was, for however long, for time means nothing in this cell (Keenan 1992, 63).

These words have haunted me from my very first reading of Brian Keenan's account of his captivity as a hostage in Beirut. They evoke a negation of temporality that many incarcerated people feel and which I frequently encountered in pastoral encounters after I entered the Prison Service (PS) as an Anglican chaplain in 2012. The passage offered an invitation to enter the world of those held captive. It spoke to my then undeveloped understanding of penal pastoral care and a desire to empathically enter the lived experience of those in my care and custody so as to better serve them. The following year I entered the University of Birmingham's Doctorate in Practical Theology (DPT) programme to deepen my understanding of the challenging ministerial context which I had entered. I wished to make my professional practice more pastorally intentional (see Chapter Three for a description of Practical Theology [PT]).

Two years into the programme, the death in custody of a young man I was involved with pastorally became the tragic motivation for the research project that this thesis describes. The [REDACTED] was found hung in his cell. He was serving an indeterminate sentence of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP). The indeterminacy of the sentence meant he neither knew when or if ever he would be released. The last time we spoke he stated his belief that he would only be released "in a body bag". He had lost hope.

## **Research Question**

This dark inspiration led me to formulate a research question:

What form of prison-based pastoral care best mitigates the detrimental effects, especially the loss of hope, that indeterminate sentences can have on human well-being, including staff?

Derivative sub-questions were:

- Can this be explored and determined in a transformative way?
- Can it be done using means that gives voice to a group who are largely forgotten by or unknown to the general public?

The quote from *An Evil Cradling* (above) resonated with the hope diminishing indeterminacy which is a central theme of this research and that led to the young man's death in custody. The passage's invitation evokes Keenan's intention to draw the reader into his incarcerated state. He wishes the reader to study it from the inside out. Keenan's narrative approach inspired the ethnographic methodology I have followed in this research (see Chapter Three). A core aim of this thesis' description of the research context, process and outcomes is to invite the reader to follow me into carceral space and enter the lived experience of those weighed down by indeterminacy.

## **Research Objectives**

The research objectives were:

1. To create a contextualised description of IPP sentences locating them historically and criminologically.
2. To undertake a focused small scale ethnographic exploration of the 'world' of IPP prisoners using a life-history interviewing method.
3. To conduct a targeted assets-based enquiry amongst a sample group of staff identified by IPP participants as modelling good practice in pastoral care.
4. To ethnographically represent (through creative means) the lived experience of the IPP participants so as to help participants articulate their life narratives and communicate those stories to a wider audience.
5. To engage in a critical conversation between relevant aspects of theology and other contextually informative disciplines.
6. To formulate a pastoral response to the hope diminishing nature of the IPP sentence that, whilst shaped by Christian tradition, could speak into the diverse publics of penal practice.

## **Research Context**

The particular location of carceral space my research was conducted within was a Category C (medium security) large male prison in the [REDACTED] region of England. Although abolished in 2012, as of September 2019 approximately 2,400

people remained in custody serving the IPP sentence. The majority are significantly over their tariff (the minimum time in custody they had to serve). My research fieldwork was conducted between February 2017 and April 2018 amongst a group of seventeen men serving the sentence (see Chapters One for more detail around IPP sentences and Three for a description of the research process).

Contextually the fieldwork was also undertaken at one of the most challenging times for prisons across England and Wales (see 4.2.1). Loss of a third of uniformed staff as a result of austerity cuts, alongside the increased smuggling and use of new and highly potent psychoactive substances greatly destabilised prison safety and security. This heightened my concerns around research within a vulnerable group and concentrated my attention on what could safely and feasibly be achieved within the short-term, context-based and practice-focused research project I envisaged. Whilst I will mention limitations to the research in Chapter Seven, the outcomes overall exceeded my initial expectations which had been shaped by the contextual constraints I experienced during fieldwork.

## **Research Outcomes**

The outcomes of this research project can be considered under three headings: Practice, Process and Participants.

### ***Practice***

An action-learning approach underpinned the research process. This was in the form of an adaptation of the Pastoral Cycle frequently employed in enquiries in PT (see 3.2). The enquiry phases of Define, Describe, Reflect and Act were followed

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throughout this context-based and practice-focused project. This approach has identified the principles that guide and practices that embody a form of pastoral care (PC) that will establish or further develop an humane regard (amongst penal practitioners) for those in custody (see Chapter Seven also for what follows). These principles and practices were formulated in cross-cultural anthropological conversation with two models held by some southern African ethnic groups: *ubuntu* (shared humanity) and *sawubona* (I/We recognise you and your humanity). This thesis suggests that such humane regard should be institutionalised across prison departments and not predominantly entrusted to Chaplaincy.

To support this claim I have formulated a working definition of PC that correlates with conventional Christian understandings of the subject (see 7.1.4) but is crafted so as to speak into the plurality of institutional contexts and the variety of personal beliefs staff may hold. This is a deliberately inclusive way of approaching PC, performed in service of institutionalising deep humane regard. In Chapter Seven I will highlight the pastoral value of a “ministry of presence” that embodies humane attentiveness (7.3.1). Theologically this thesis is an exercise in the “apologetics of presence” which seeks “to identify not so much with the ‘non-believer’ but the ‘non-person’ on the periphery of the powers that be” (Graham 2013, 212). As a Christian minister and theologian such an apologetic calls upon me to “give an account of the hope which is within [me]” (Graham 2013, 233 echoing 1 Peter 3:15) – this I do specifically in 2.2 and 2.3 in respect to the humanity and hope diminishing effect of the IPP sentence. This is not to theologise abstractly but to conduct a “kind of theological endeavour [that] potentially helps to make the world a larger, more caring place. Its enactment is

less likely to be in pronouncements than in enacted parables of care and witness” (Pattison 2015b, 126).

This thesis will evidence how I have sought to use pastoral attentiveness as enacted care and witness to inform both the shape and progress of the research process.

### **Process**

In Chapter One’s discussion of the IPP sentence I will consider the concepts of “ethical loneliness” and “epistemic injustice” (1.5). The former describes the sense of social abandonment experienced where individuals or groups feel their plight is unknown or ignored by wider society. The latter relates to instances where people feel their situation is not understood or their testimony is discounted by more powerful social groups. These ideas helped me make some sense of the life landscape of people in custody serving an abolished IPP sentence long after their tariff has expired. The interview data captured a feeling of social abandonment and concomitant frustration amongst the IPP participants (see Chapter Four).

To address this sense of marginalisation I knew that, in the research process, I had to utilise methods that helped me enter into IPP participants’ lived experiences and then describe them from the inside out. I adopted ethnography as the overall approach (for the reasons given in 3.5) and drew upon a number of richly creative methods to assist in the formulation of an evocation of participants’ lives (see Chapter Three). This elicitation provided the material to reflect upon for a pastoral response to the texture of their wounded lives now suspended in the indeterminacy of their custody.

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My interviewing method used the metaphor of a “biopic”, enquiring of the participants: “If your life story was made into a film” – what would the genre be; who would be the main characters; what are the key events you would want including; how would the movie end; and what would feature in the film’s trailer? Adapted from forensic psychology, this method generated extremely rich interview data. This was analysed in accordance with an *In Vivo* approach which stayed close to participants’ narrative through the exclusive use of only their words or phrases for coding purposes. So as to keep participants’ life narratives central throughout the process I developed an analytical method that consisted of three iterations (*Raw*, *Fine I* and *Fine II*) of sifting and sorting the material to bring ethnographically significant interview text to the surface (see 3.9.2).

*In Vivo* coding lent itself to poetic forms of representation (Saldaña 2016, 109). Found poetry (Mears 2009) – also known as ‘poetic transcription’ (Glesne 1997) – proved to be a highly evocative means by which to represent succinctly the ethnographic richness of the life histories disclosed in interview (see 3.9.3). Those with whom I have shared the Found Poems have regularly commented on how moving they are and how they have deepened the reader’s appreciation of the lived experiences of participants in this research. This, thereby, has begun to bridge some of the epistemic gap and ethical loneliness discussed above and further in Chapter One.

Alongside the Found Poems has been the production of movie style posters. These images were created by a graphic artist who works in a prison-based project. The images are not an exact representation of what each of the poems describe but are

based on biographical briefings provided by me to the artist. This briefing was produced after qualitative data analysis of the interviews but before I had quarried for the Found Poems. Nonetheless, the juxtaposition of the textual and visual representations provides further ethnographic depth. Some of these visuo-textual representations provide 'book-ends' to the main body of this thesis (before Chapter One and after Chapter Seven) and the remainder can be found in the Poetic Interlude following Chapter Four. The Interlude is a deliberate attempt to enrich the academic prose and bring the reader back to the flesh and blood experience of the IPP participants as described using their own words. This embodies the overarching *praxis* of this research (see 3.4) that has sought to keep the humanity of the participants present at all times and avoid the over abstraction that would turn them into objects of observation rather than people with whom to relate pastorally.

### ***Participants***

There is a multi-contextuality that is explored throughout this thesis, within which IPP participants are located. They are held in an indeterminate state at a challenging time for the PS (see above). They come largely from backgrounds that feature significant levels of adversity, bringing concomitant developmental and behavioural implications (see 4.2). All this is set in a broader context of public discourse and penal policy out of which, at the turn of the century, the IPP sentence was conceived and under whose terms they continue to be held seven years after its abolition (Chapter One). The narratives they shared referenced all these contextual elements and painted a multi-faceted picture. I was humbled that, despite all these personal and meta-contextual factors, participants so readily volunteered and were willing to disclose

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their life-stories to me, including aspects of them that they were ashamed of or were troubling to them. This is why the outcomes of the research exceeded my expectations as a novice insider-researcher. They entrusted me with rich ethnographic data.

Tangential to the fieldwork, I was, in a sense, a participant observer. As a chaplain at the research prison I could observe and chat with participants outside of formal fieldwork. I inhabited their world, albeit I was differently located within the penal system. I maintained Field Notes during the period of group work and individual interviews so as to record and reflect upon my presence in the field. Additionally, the DPT programme had taught me the value of reflective practice (a Year 3 module was an essay on reflective practice). As a result I had developed strong habits of journaling alongside regular pastoral supervision. Through these practices I sought to monitor the effects of undertaking this project as a researching professional at such a challenging time amongst a particularly vulnerable group.

This personal reflective wrestling is foregrounded in Chapter Six so as to acknowledge the cost of undertaking research in this field. The reflexive work described there also raised my awareness of the need to be pastorally attentive to the effect on staff of developing and consistently practicing deep humane regard in a penal context. Staff who were identified by IPP participants as modelling good pastoral practice were interviewed to flesh out what specifically had been caring and hopeful in their practice. As in other research referenced in this thesis, the quality of relationships between staff and people in custody was vital to humane treatment and the maintenance of hope in carceral space. But there is a personal costliness to the

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'emotional labour' that this form of being present to another person involves (see Hochschild 2012 for exploration of "emotional labour" as well as discussion on 'hope' in Chapter Two and staff's role in its maintenance). The impact on my well-being of maintaining a deep humane disposition throughout my extensive fieldwork highlighted the need to support staff as they seek to develop such pastoral attentiveness alongside other established custodial practices (see Chapter Seven). This is why concern for staff well-being is also referenced in the research question.

Overall, the outcomes addressed well my research question by formulating a pastoral response to the IPP sentence within which attentiveness to hope and humanity was central. This response was devised through careful ethnographic attention to the lived experience of participants which has also produced visio-textual representations and qualitative themes that will allow others to inhabit – albeit second-hand – participants' stories and thereby know something of their humanity. Has it been transformative? Ultimately time will tell but positive participant feedback articulated their deep appreciation of being listened to and their existential pain acknowledged. I have developed creative methods for ethnographically exploring the texture of carceral space and, personally, I have been changed. Not only have I grown in confidence and developed skills as a researcher, my own humane disposition has been deepened albeit at some personal cost. My hope is this work will contribute to the on-going discussion to address 'the IPP problem', remove this "stain on our justice system" (Lyon and Day 2014) and one day be worthwhile to the IPP participants who gave of themselves to this project. More importantly though is my desire to help change mindsets and practices in regard to IPP people in custody at establishment level. The principles and practices enumerated in 7.5 address how

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pastoral attentiveness on every wing and in every department can be deepened. This would be the greatest outcome.

## FOUND POEM ID39 - THE HORROR OF IT

sentenced November 06  
I can't explain it  
a bit of a horror  
I don't mean goriness  
There's no blood spilt,  
it's all like pen and paper.

I still don't think  
authorities know  
what's going on with it.  
It's an absolute joke  
that's the horror of it.  
you just switch off,

a family breakdown  
sent me over rails.  
Trainspotting thing,  
chaotic lifestyle  
alcohol, drugs, women, offending  
until I get my IPP

I'm up for my parole  
to be honest I don't care.  
it's sort of like  
treading on egg-shells,  
you don't want  
to get in trouble,



Figure 1- Movie Poster ID39

## **CHAPTER ONE – THE EVOLUTION OF IPP : A BRIEF SOCIO-HISTORICAL CRITIQUE**

The mood and temper of the public in regard to the treatment of crime and criminals is one of the most unfailing tests of the civilisation of any country (Churchill 1910).

### **1.1 Introduction**

The fieldwork at the heart of this research sought to enter the lived experience of seventeen men serving an IPP sentence using a narrative-based enquiry (see Chapter Three). This was undertaken so as to formulate a pastoral response to the humanity diminishing loss of hope many had suffered – as proven by high risk rates of self-harm and suicide amongst this group (Beard 2017). Whilst the life-history data provided by participants is central to this research, all life stories are located within a grander socio-historical narrative. This chapter will provide a brief genealogy of the IPP sentence to locate the personal narratives of participants into a broader socio-political context. In Chapter Seven I will argue for a less individualistic understanding of PC. One that perceives an individual in a contextualised way and is sensitive to the political, social and relational factors at play in human development or diminishment. At the political level, it is attentive to the grand narratives that personal lives are shaped and often deformed by, as this chapter will demonstrate in regards to the IPP sentence.

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The IPP sentence has been variously described:

“Kafkaesque” (The Guardian 2016).

“Unjust and stupid” (Blunt 2014).

“Arbitrary” (European Court of Human Rights 2012, 37).

“Not defensible” (Strickland 2016, 3).

As an exercise in PT this research seeks to formulate an appropriate pastoral response to the plight of around 2,400 people (September 2019) serving a sentence thus described. The psycho-emotional *affect* of this sentence ripples out beyond the person in custody. Many of their families “find themselves in a liminal state, hopeless but unable to fully abandon hope; hopeful but worn down by constant setbacks” (Annison and Condry 2019, 2) (see 4.2.3 for discussion of *affect*). This sentence is located within the context of wider socio-historical changes that have influenced penological theories. These theories are formulated not in a social vacuum but are shaped by the ideology of the prevailing culture (Mannheim 1960). As Churchill noted (*above*), the way a society treats its incarcerated citizens reveals something of its character and study of it can be a source of social self-understanding. I will show that indeterminate forms of incarceration, although historically conceived with liberal and reformatory intent, have been severely under-resourced and corrupted into a punitive and ill-considered response to a moral panic.

Any appropriate pastoral response to the IPP sentence must take account of the wider context that presses upon those held under its terms. One participant in this research spoke in terms of serving *under* the IPP sentence, evoking a sense of an oppressive psycho-emotional weight upon him (ID18 LAAF Interview 25:01, my emphasis). All forms of incarceration have such ‘weight’ but is multiplied by

indeterminacy (Crewe, Liebling, and Hulley 2014). An empathic pastoral presence must have due cognisance of the contextual freight those serving an IPP sentence labour under. Humanitarian challenges to indeterminate sentences have been made on the grounds of their cruel and unusual effect on human well-being (Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health 2008, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Probation 2010, Jacobson and Hough 2010, European Court of Human Rights 2012, The Howard League for Penal Reform 2013, Prison Reform Trust 2014, Strickland 2016). Yet indeterminate sentences were originally conceived with humane intent.

## **1.2 The Humane Genesis of IPP**

Foucault noted that pre-modern forms of punishment were, to contemporary mores, barbaric and summary (1977). Mass incarceration sought to address what was perceived as a growth in criminal behaviour in the eighteenth century. The penological philosophy of the time was liberal to the extent of tempering the previously barbaric and summary nature of justice. Once colonial transportation became less of an option the Panopticon and the penitentiary were born (Wilson 2014, 45ff.).

Punishments were typically severe to increase their deterrent value but often had the unintended consequence of educating inmates “as criminals and [confirming] them in a bad life” (Warner 1899, 3). This had prescient echoes of “Prison [being] an expensive way of making bad people worse...” (from speech of former Home Secretary Douglas Hurd quoted in Grimwood and Berman 2012, 2). Typical of late nineteenth century socialist utopianism and “the hubris of classical liberalism” the

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indeterminate sentence was formulated in response (Zalman 1977, 937). It was a reformatory approach founded on an innate optimism that “even the condemned felon has in him [*sic*]...the making of a law-abiding man and citizen, if only the state will seek to raise him, instead of crushing him” (Lewis 1899, 30). Whereas a long-term determinate or life sentence offered no reward for reformed character the indeterminate sentence allowed penal authorities to grant release earlier than expected if a person demonstrated adequate change of character.

Philosophically the Victorian reformist was wedded to an unwavering trust in the ability of empirical science eventually to solve all social ills. Criminals, just like “the insane, the sick, the feeble-minded” were to be “put under specialists for treatment” (Warner 1899, 11). The approach was individualistic, seeing the inmate as an object to be modified (Barrows 1899, 23) and morally responsible for his self-reformation (Lewis 1899, 21). The focus on the individual as a dangerous and defective citizen made the system adversarial towards him/her rather than humane.

The admirers of this reformatory approach were dismissive of the later development of a rehabilitative model which perceived individual reform within a more social orientation (Hinkle and Whitmarsh 2014, 122-125). The rehabilitative model emerged due to a growing sense of failure of the reformatory institutions to reduce re-offending and a concern over alleged abuses within the system. The individualistic ‘scientific’ approach to crime, was discredited and more restorative alternative practices were experimented with (Mantle, Fox, and Dhimi 2005).

### **1.2.1 From Reform to Rehabilitation**

Rehabilitation and reform are two concepts that are contested in penal discourse and are variously defined (McNeill 2014). The relationship between them is ambiguous, being described by some as a continuity and by others as a total discontinuity regarding the two approaches (Hudson 1987, 11). In Foucauldian terms, reformism is best understood as a “surface of emergence” for rehabilitationism’s science of criminology (Garland 2001, 161). Reformism provided the discursive conditions within which a rehabilitative approach to crime could emerge.

‘Reform’ and ‘Rehabilitation’ can also be thought of as ideal types of approaches to penal practice but absolute distinctions between them will be avoided here. They are shades on a continuum rather than polarities. With the foregoing caveat, the following is set out for heuristic purposes:

<b>Reform Inclinations</b>	<b>Rehabilitation Tendencies</b>
Focussed on individual	Crime understood in social context
Offender to be reformed through discipline	Offender to be restored through community reintegration
Criminal perceived as socially deviant	Offender viewed as a socially maladapted citizen
Offender as a defective object to be corrected	Criminal as a moral subject to be facilitated in self-transformation
Authoritarian	Humanitarian

The arrival of the twentieth century brought with it a growing movement away from reformism and saw the emergence of rehabilitationist penology (Garland 2001, Rothman 2012). Scientism lingered as the undergirding philosophy, with a

concomitant commitment to penal positivism that embraced psychiatry, psychology and sociology in its aspiration to transform individual criminals into law-abiding citizens (McNeill 2014, 3). Acknowledgement of social factors to crime remained attenuated in rehabilitationism's early forms (as it had been in reformism) (Hudson 1987, 11). But by the mid-twentieth-century, sociological factors in determining criminal behaviour came to be increasingly acknowledged, culminating in the Royal Commission's investigation into *The Penal System in England and Wales*. This recommended that the State have a wider role in addressing criminogenic<sup>1</sup> factors (Royal Commission 1967). There was a growing consensus towards imagining rehabilitation as a form of reintegration back into not only a physical community but also a moral one (Hudson 1987, 16).

By the final quarter of the twentieth century political fatigue fostered a weariness about the rehabilitationist agenda and a pessimism emerged that nothing worked in reducing reoffending (Martinson 1974). The penal pendulum once again swung. This was allied to a loss of confidence in the statist ideology that had constructed the welfare state but was increasingly being questioned as it failed to deliver the social utopia once imagined (Zalman 1977). Post-war optimism in a 'brave new world' began to diminish in the face of concern that growing and wider-spread affluence had not been accompanied by the reduction in crime promised by some social theorists (Hudson 1987, 12). This was to drive a 'punitive turn' that played into a long-standing social predisposition towards the punishment of crime, halting the rehabilitationist developments that had begun to venture in a sociological and social constructivist

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<sup>1</sup> Concerning the causes of crime.

direction (Feeley and Simon 1992, Garland and Sparks 2000, Garland 2001, Liebling and Arnold 2005, Bennett 2012, 6-7). This 'punitive turn' to a 'new penology' would see the birth of the IPP sentence.

### **1.2.2 The Birth and Almost Death of IPP**

It has been argued that the punitive predisposition that frequently thwarts the best of rehabilitationist intentions derives from England's Anglo-Saxon, culturally retributive, past – it is atavistic (Cornwell 2013). There is a "popular punitiveness" that frequently has to be satisfied (Harrison 2010, 423). Politically there has been "a continuing drift towards less tolerant and harsher policies" (Johnstone 2000, 161) and the "temper of the 1970s favour[ed] solutions that least tax[ed] the resources, energy and imagination of citizenry" (Zalman 1977, 936).

Driven by this populist punitiveness New Labour introduced the IPP sentence through the Criminal Justice Act (2003) to address the problem of 'dangerous offenders' who had committed a serious violent or sexual offence (or both). The notion of 'dangerousness' immediately posed a problem of definition (Harrison 2010, 424). An amending Criminal Justice and Immigration Act (2008) attempted to provide clarity. Critics argued that the sentence's inception was being driven by social fears, rather than sober judgement about an offender's actions (Harrison 2010, 425). A strong risk paradigm had eclipsed the rehabilitationist mindset (Feeley and Simon 1992).

Those given an IPP sentence had to serve a 'minimum tariff' and afterwards would only be released if they could demonstrate their risk of reoffending was manageable in the community. This, in practice, consigned thousands of offenders to carceral

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limbo, not knowing when they would be released but, initially at least, expectant of it. David Blunkett, the Home Secretary that introduced IPP sentences, acknowledged that the unintended consequences of its implementation weighed on his conscience (Prison Reform Trust 2014). It was abolished in 2012 by which point almost 9,000 people had received the sentence. Those who remain in custody under the terms of an IPP sentence have seen other people who were convicted of the same crimes arrive in custody, serve their time and be released. This generates frustration and anger. In a 2013 survey of prison governors in England and Wales 46 percent of respondents “reported that institutions housing IPP prisoners saw increased levels of indiscipline” (The Howard League for Penal Reform 2013, 4).

In addition to the sense of judicial illegitimacy surrounding the sentence, the requirement that certain courses are undertaken to lower the risk of reoffending causes further resentment amongst those serving an IPP sentence. Based on a model of “coerced correction”, it raises moral problems as a “form of intrusion into the inner world, even identity of the subject” (McNeill 2014, 6). This will be returned to in Chapter Seven. A further challenge is for a person “to *display* the malleability of his or her riskiness, to *perform* the reduction and manageability of his or her riskiness” (McNeill 2014, 12 emphasis in the original). And to *display* and *perform* all this within an environment populated by the “sad, mad and the bad” (Ramsbotham 2012). Many IPP people in custody experience the “soft power” exercised by prison psychologists as “capricious and illegitimate” (McNeill 2014, 11). This was all compounded by an initial general under-provision of many of the courses that feature in the sentence plans of IPP men and women. Even those keen to progress often languished in prisons that were unable to provide the interventions they desired (Strickland 2016,

3). These were deeply frustrating factors that generated resentment that was still strong in the IPP group interviewed for this research project (Addicott 2012).

### **1.3 Folk Devils and *Dangerous Politics***

In the second half of the twentieth century Britain suffered an increase in crime, along with other western nations, which played on the pre-existing punitive social psyche, producing a moral panic around 'dangerous offenders' (see Tonry 2014 for crime rates). Cohen observed how societies experience "moral panics" about perceived threats to social stability, frequently stoked by mass media reporting (2002 (1972)). Types of individuals or groups become "folk devils" in public discourse. This is a point developed extensively in Cohen's 2002 edition of his seminal sociological text and taken up by some criminologists (see, for example, Henry 2009).

In the late twentieth and early twenty-first century the UK and US both experienced a "moral panic" concerning 'dangerous offenders' (Harrison 2010, 423). These were people who were few in number but whose crimes, usually violent or sexual, were high profile. As a result they easily became "folk devils" in the public narrative constructed by the media. Important criminological research into the political genesis of the IPP sentence under New Labour was provocatively entitled *Dangerous Politics*, highlighting the harmful out-workings of a sentence judged by many as generally ill-conceived (Annison 2015a).

Annison's research involved interviewing sixty three key policymakers of the time and showed how the "moral panic" created in the wake of specific high profile crimes motivated a political response that was over-reliant upon the vague and abstract

notion of “risk” (to the public) (2015a, 182). This “risk paradigm” still impacts upon those serving an IPP sentence as they will not be released by the Parole Board until their risk of harm to the public can be demonstrated as being manageable in the community. Adequately demonstrating such a low level of risk within the penal environment, where threats and temptations abound, is problematic and accounts for the seemingly existential “stuckness” that many of the residual IPP population exhibit.<sup>2</sup>

IPP men and women are trapped serving an ill-conceived sentence devised in moral panic, publicly branded in sociological “folk devils” terms as “dangerous offenders” and managed within the conceptually vague parameters of a problematic “risk paradigm”. They exist within a peculiarly socio-historically constructed and constrained carceral space. The resulting penal stress this creates compounds further the mortification already intrinsic to the total institutions that are places of mass incarceration (Goffman 1961). It is unsurprising that rates of self-harm and suicide are so high amongst this group.

#### **1.4 Politico-Pastoral Consequences of Scapegoating**

In the early 1990s Goode and Ben-Yehuda developed Cohen’s sociological concept of “moral panic” in their work around the social construction of deviance. They highlighted the frequent occurrence throughout history of the societal impulse to “scapegoat” perceived deviant groups (2009). Additionally, as Garland observes,

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<sup>2</sup> A forensic psychologist explained to me that in her field there was a growing recognition of how “stuck” an increasing proportion of the remaining IPP men were becoming in their sentence progression after numerous Parole Board ‘knock backs’ (failure to demonstrate a manageable level of risk).

“Moral panic targets are not randomly selected: they are cultural scapegoats whose deviant conduct appals onlookers so powerfully precisely because it relates to personal fears and unconscious wishes” (2008).

Dingwell and Hillier’s *Blamestorming, Blamemongers and Scapegoats* highlights the central motif that scapegoating plays in the criminal justice system, whereby societal ills are attributed to a particular individual or group “thereby relieving the burden on the rest of society” (2015, 14). Accordingly, when faced with heinous crimes or other societal challenges it is easier for political actors to attribute blame than engage with the often highly complex interplay of social factors that create these events or issues.

In the field of cultural anthropology the concept of scapegoating was largely developed by Girard (Girard and Gregory 1977, Girard et al. 1987). He proposed a mimetic theory whereby social actors imitate one another over desired goods which leads to rivalry and potential violence. Girard’s theory, proposed as a founding myth within many societies, argues that a potential *bellum omnium contra omnes*<sup>3</sup> is avoided and social cohesion maintained through the identification of a scapegoat upon which violence is directed, thereby deflecting the destructive force away from the group. Whilst Girard identifies the scapegoating trait as present in many cultures his *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning* shows how this notion is strongly derived from the Judaeo-Christian tradition in his thinking (2001).

Girard notes the distinctive nature of the Judaeo-Christian model of scapegoating in contrast to other cultures’ representation. He highlights that in the Old Testament (Leviticus 16) the victim is an animal and it is not killed but merely driven off into the

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<sup>3</sup> “War of all against all” – a term derived from Thomas Hobbes’ *Leviathan* (1651)

wilderness with the symbolic sins of the people upon it.<sup>4</sup> Girard also points to Christ's crucifixion as an example of scapegoating which is subverted as it is the victim (Christ) who becomes the subject of the narrative (not the purgative value of foundational violence). The resurrection, according to Girard, then establishes the centrality of the victim/scapegoat's perspective in history. As one Girardian theological commentator has noted, through the death and resurrection of Christ "the fate of the scapegoated victim has become the great hermeneutical principle, enabling us to decode all such instances of persecution" (Kirwan 2009, 84).

The logic of my developing argument is that those held in mass incarceration are modern day scapegoats. And, given the socio-political factors already considered, for those serving an IPP sentence this is especially true. Some may find this assertion shocking. Those held under IPP terms have committed some of the most violent and/or sexually criminal offences. How are they *victims*, one may understandably ask? A socio-theological reading helps to formulate an answer.

In his theological reflection "The Prisoner as Scapegoat: Some Skeptical Remarks on Present Penal Policy" Gorringer utilises Girard's theories and asks: "...in the West, why is it that the vast majority of prisoners are from social classes 4 [Working Class] and 5 [Poor]?" (2002, 244). There is a clear, if complex, link between crime and social deprivation. The poorer a person is the more represented their social class in the prison population, disproportionately so for the poorest two groups (Wacquant 2009). This is overwhelmingly true of the incarcerated group of participants in this

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<sup>4</sup> The word scapegoat is derived from the Hebrew 'ăzāzêl (Hebrew: אֲזַזְאֵל) as translated via Tyndale's 1530 bible ("e-scape goat") and the King James version of 1611.

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research. As will be discussed in Chapter Four, many spoke of growing up on large urban estates where from childhood they were exposed to and became part of a ‘criminal *habitus*’ in Bourdieurian terms (Bourdieu 1990). The criminal justice system in the UK and across the world “participates in the aggravation and perpetuation of social disparities by disproportionately affecting the most disadvantaged segments of the population...” (Fassin 2018, 116).

From a global study of imprisonment, Stern observed that large numbers of people in custody “are the neglected children of urban wastelands” (1998, 171). Whilst true of the general prison population, this is especially true of those serving IPP sentences. As will be explored in Chapter Four, a number of participants spoke openly about the abuse they had suffered as children. Before they, through their crimes, made victims of others many participants had been victimised themselves. As Nussbaum posits, “It is perfectly consistent to treat a criminal...as fully responsible for his crimes, and yet to acknowledge with compassion the fact that he has suffered misfortunes that no child should have to bear” (2001, 414).

Applying a Girardian cross/resurrection victim hermeneutic, a Christian faith informed pastoral response to the plight of IPP men and women would foreground their own victimhood, at least as strongly as any focus on their mis-doings. To embody such humane and empathic regard within pastoral penal practice is challenging in a system constructed around a strong cultural will to punish (Fassin 2018). This will be developed further in Chapter Seven.

As a result of the marginalising effect of scapegoating, those banished often feel unseen or unheard by wider society. Two concepts discovered during a review of the

literature around the topic – ethical loneliness and epistemic injustice – have helped deepen my understanding of this marginalisation as a lived experience.

## **1.5 Ethical Loneliness and Epistemic Injustice**

The IPP participants in this research were noticeably keen to tell their stories. As with the young man who died in custody that inspired my research, they were grateful that someone wanted to hear their story. Whilst reflecting on this desire to disclose I came across the concept of “ethical loneliness” (Stauffer 2015). Stauffer’s *Ethical Loneliness : The Injustice of Not Being Heard* opens with a description from Jean Améry, a survivor from Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. Améry describes the experience of a persistent, profound and extreme form of loneliness accompanied by a sense of social abandonment due to the inability of others to truly understand what he had suffered. As Stauffer observes: “Ethical loneliness is the isolation one feels when one, as a violated person or as one member of a persecuted group, has been abandoned by humanity, or by those who have power over one’s life’s possibilities” (2015, 1).

IPP men and women who have served the term of their minimum tariff are now being held in accordance with the problematic “risk paradigm” (see 1.3) and are stalled in their release from custody because of crimes they *might* commit. This seems contrary to the notion of “the punishment fits the crime”. The sentence has now been abolished for eight years. Many of those serving IPP sentences languish with little hope of release. In interviews and focus groups the participants’ frustration was palpable (see 4.2.3 and comments around “The System”). They were keen to tell their stories and vent their frustration because in most penal contexts they feel

invisible or ignored – an ethical loneliness. These are “the prisoners left behind” in the system, a political embarrassment that successive governments have failed to tackle effectively (Annison 2015b).

The experience of this increasingly “stuck” group of “left behind” IPP men and women is a penal embodiment of Fricker’s “epistemic injustice” (EI) which concerns “a wrong done to someone specifically in their capacity as a knower’ (2007, 1). In her 2007 book *Epistemic Injustice : Power and the Ethics of Knowing* Fricker differentiates two types of EI: testimonial and hermeneutical. The former is a prejudice (often unconscious) that “causes a hearer to give a deflated level of credibility to the speakers’ word” (Kidd and Carel 2017, 177). In the world of gender politics the description of women by some men as being overly emotional and irrational is a prime example of testimonial EI whereby a female perspective would not be taken as seriously as a male’s.<sup>5</sup> Hermeneutical EI “occurs when a gap in collective hermeneutical resources puts a person or group at unfair disadvantage when making sense of their social experiences” (Kidd and Carel 2017, 183). One of the disadvantages marginalised groups suffer concerns the lack of means to express – in terms others in society understand – their lived experience. Kidd and Carel address this issue in healthcare where a significant hermeneutical gap exists between a patient’s lay-understanding and articulation of their lived experience (including their pathology) and the techno-medical discourse of healthcare professionals (2017). Their study referred back to research conducted in 1984 that discovered that the

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<sup>5</sup> A chaplaincy male colleague once explained to me that he could never take seriously a woman managing him in the workplace for these very reasons and, without any embarrassment, attributed the problem primarily to their menstrual cycles.

average time between a patient beginning to speak and an attending doctor first interrupting was eighteen seconds (2017, 172).

IPP men and women suffer both testimonial and hermeneutical EI daily. Because of their problematic status (serving an abolished sentence), sometimes challenging behaviour and the stigma associated with being a “dangerous offender”, their testimony is given less credence than that of others in the penal system. There is also the general suspicion held by many prison staff that residents in their care and custody are, by default, never to be trusted or believed. One of the participants (ID18) described the battle he had to have a negative entry removed from his prison record that actually referred to a man with the same name serving in a totally different prison. It was assumed his testimony was untrue even though the records proved he was not at the prison in question at the time of the incident described in the negative entry.

There is also the hermeneutical issue at play in the lived experience of the research participants. I found one of the IPP interviews particularly challenging in this regard. Participant ID27 used a lot of Caribbean and gang-related language as he shared his life story. I frequently had to ask for clarification of terms he would use casually. But beyond the linguistic challenges was also a deeper and more troubling divide that I reflected upon in my Field Notes afterwards (FN2017\_06\_14). Throughout the interview he regularly referred to gang-related violence that he had witnessed from childhood onwards. Some of it described extreme forms of assault, including murder. He recalled all this whilst smiling and laughing, doing so in a way that suggested little remorse and some delight in having been part of this threat-encoded lifestyle.

I wondered how much of this was bravado. To what degree was he deliberately trying to shock me or just be honest about the habitual violence that had been part of his life from childhood? As I reflected upon the disconnect between our life-worlds I became conscious of a communicative gap created by the different cultures we had inhabited. I was disappointed at myself for being unable to bridge the void. I later visited ID27 in the solitary confinement unit where he was being held due to a serious assault on another resident. He was scarred from his fight and sheepish, expressing exasperation that he had self-sabotaged, which he confessed was a pattern of behaviour for him. When conditioned by life in a brutal fashion it becomes increasingly difficult to be seen and heard in ways that foster compassion for oneself in others. This is one of the greatest challenges for IPP people whose credibility is severely compromised and who often express themselves in ways that challenge understanding. There is an hermeneutical task within PC, one that seeks an understanding of another human being that goes beyond perceptions shaped by forms of EI. In a penal context EI can make practitioners more attentive to the deformation of a person's character (e.g. dysfunctional behaviour, offensive language or threatening demeanour) than the humanity easily lost from pastoral sight by these things.

## **1.6 Summary Conclusion**

This chapter has been a contextualising prolegomenon to my research. In narrating the genealogy of the sentence, I have highlighted the contested nature of modern mass incarceration, through which punitive and rehabilitationist societal inclinations have vied with one another for centuries (the former consistently being predominant).

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Individual men and women on IPP sentences are trapped in this socially-constructed and historically determined carceral space. The principles and practices I formulate in Chapter Seven are framed within this meta-contextual social reality and in the conviction that appropriate pastoral responses should always be cognisant of the impact socio-political factors have on people, in this case leaving those in society's care and custody feeling scapegoated, unseen and unheard.

Chapters Four and Seven will highlight the crucial role inter-personal relationships can play in humanising this state of being. But what do I mean by "humanising" and its connotes? Additionally, in what sense are human well-being and hope related? Hope and humanity will be the foci of the following chapter to provide the definitional framework within which the research process was designed and undertaken.

## **CHAPTER TWO – SEEKING HOPE AND HUMANITY**

Through a process of alienation and demonisation we establish the ‘otherness’ of those who deviate and (re)assert our own innocence and normality (Jewkes 2004, 201).

### **2.1 Introduction**

Her Majesty’s Prison Service’s (HMPS’s) Statement of Purpose declared an aspiration to “look after [people in custody] with humanity” (Coyle 2003, 10). But Liebling has observed that, in a penal context ‘humanity’ is particularly “open-textured: it can have many meanings to many people” (2004, 204). Helpfully elsewhere she provides a definition of humanity in a penal context: “An environment characterised by kind regard for the person, mercy, and civility, which inflicts as little degradation as possible” (Liebling and Arnold 2005, 226). Liebling acknowledges her indebtedness to Christian Smith’s (2010) critical realist personalism for her understanding of what it is to be human (Liebling 2016,62). As Smith observes:

Personalist theory insists that human persons possess an inherent dignity by virtue of the properties of their existent personal being. Simply by being the kinds of creatures they are ontologically, persons are characterised by real dignity (2010, 434).

This anthropological model resonates with the dignity intrinsic to *imago Dei* which I will discuss in 2.2.1. Later, in 7.3.2, I will explore the African anthropological notions of *ubuntu* (shared humanity) and *sawubona* (I/we recognise the humanity we share). I will critically appropriate these to describe a pastoral attentiveness to address the

hope diminishing *affect* of the IPP sentence (see 4.2.3). This will be further elaborated into principles and practices that embody and express a deep humane regard contextualised by the lived experience of those serving an IPP sentence (Chapter Seven).

However defined, it can be demonstrated that the moral purchase of any vague sense of a shared 'humanity' is easily weakened in contexts of tight control and abuse of authority, as the experiments of Milgram and Zimbardo reveal (Milgram 2010, Zimbardo 2009). These experiments showed how 'ordinary' people can become perpetrators of degrading or dangerous treatment towards others within controlling structures. Compounding this propensity, how human beings treat one another is very much influenced by how a person or group views another. In its extreme form, this can be institutionally, socially or politically manipulated, leading to the dehumanisation of 'others' (Volpato and Andrighetto 2015). This tendency of 'othering' is particularly strong in respect to prevalent societal views of 'prisoners' and more acutely so with high profile ones (Drake 2011). A robust inclusive understanding of what it is to be human – an inclusive anthropology – is a necessary antidote to this othering.

## **2.2 A Theological Anthropology**

Anthropology seemed the most exciting theological topic because it is the topic at which theology most directly bears on practical matters (Kelsey 2009, 7).

In this section I am being theologically reflexive by foregrounding the anthropological suppositions that informed the conduct of my research, were further developed in

response to the data outcomes and that give shape to the pastoral practices enumerated in Chapter Seven. I am not attempting to create a systematic theological anthropology, important as one might be. My focus is practical and pastorally so. As Kelsey observes, all anthropological questions “are asked from some ‘where’” (2009, 3). The three practical questions I am seeking to answer in my contextualised anthropology are:

1. *Why* treat people in custody with dignity (given what some of them have done)?
2. *How* should they be treated such that they not be diminished by incarceration?
3. *What* theological resources can Christian traditions provide for this pastoral endeavour?

### **2.2.1 Imago Dei**

An anthropological tradition that provides an ethical basis for treating people with dignity is based on the doctrine of *imago Dei* (image of God). This has been developed in Christian theology from the Book of Genesis:

Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness...So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them (1:26-27 NRSV).

What precisely is meant by this brief passage is contested and unclear (Kelsey 2009, 922-36). But there is broad theological agreement that what is implied by the notion

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of *imago Dei* is that humans are granted a special status within the order of creation. It is not a possession or quality but a distinctive relationship with God and “this special distinction is given...to all human beings” (Schwöbel 2006, 50). On that understanding it is “this relationship with God which ‘defines’ human nature and makes us different from all other creatures. It is also the foundation of the inviolable dignity of human life” (Sachs 1991, 16).

As argued in Chapter One and above, attitudes of scapegoating and othering are revealed in much public discourse regarding those engaged in criminal activity. The humanitarian disposition towards people in custody I follow in this thesis may be challenged by proponents of Right Realist theories of crime. Many are influenced by the “underclass” model of Charles Murray (2001, 1990). This view perceives crime as being largely the actions of a feckless and feral group on the fringes of society that lack moral values or good role models. This group exists due to...

...growing up surrounded by deviant, delinquent, and criminal adults in a practically perfect criminogenic environment – that is, one that seems almost consciously designed to produce vicious, predatory unrepentant street criminals (Bennett, Dilulio, and Walters 1996, 13-14).

Such ‘delinquency’ spills out into the physical environment, as is addressed by the Right Realist “broken windows” theory (Wilson and Kelling 1982). This has politically motivated the ‘zero tolerance’ and ‘three strikes’ policies premised upon a “rational choice theory” of crime (Clarke and Cornish 1986). The latter presumes all human beings have a rational capacity to weigh up the pros and cons of criminality. This, it is

argued, is why most people do not commit crime, because they deduce that even if they are tempted to do so the consequences (punishment) outweigh the benefits. These interrelated criminogenic models have been a well-spring for 'tough on crime' political discourse and the "punitive turn" in policy that underlay the conception of the IPP sentence (see 1.2.1).

The picture that Right Realist views of criminality paint contains "delinquents", "deviants" and "vicious predatory street criminals". It is one from which white collar crime is absent. This is unsurprising given its neo-liberal agenda (Wacquant 2009). At an experiential level the Right Realist representation of those convicted of crime is not one I recognise. Those I ministered to and researched amongst were sometimes socially dysfunctional and many were often violent. But they were always more than their behaviour or previous actions. Right Realist narratives of criminality are flat, lacking the texture that takes account of a humanity that is behind the anti-social behaviour.

The causes of crime are complex. In this study a number of participants spoke of close family members as being "law-abiding" in contrast to their own propensity towards criminality (see 4.2.5). In this work I will argue that adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are significant criminogenic factors (Chapters Four and Seven). I will present research from other fields to support this assertion. To propose that there are social aspects to crime is neither to condone nor excuse the criminal acts participants disclosed in interview. But to focus solely on the crime or offending behaviour fails to take account of the humanity of the person in custody who is often

themselves wounded by life and carrying unresolved trauma or other psycho-emotional life-distorting burdens.

From my theological perspective, the language of right realism discomforts me. The labelling language of Right Realist discourse is suggestive of an anthropological violation of the intrinsic dignity conferred by *imago Dei*. Schwöbel observes:

“If the relationship to God is no longer the foundational relationship for all human life, then human dignity becomes something that is conferred or withheld by other finite entities” (Schwöbel 2006, 53).

I would not go so far as to argue that a moral commitment to the dignity of all people has to be theistically premised. But outside of faith-based narratives, how and to whom inviolable dignity is applied is more contestable (Rosen 2012). Premised upon *imago Dei*, “the innate dignity and worth of each person is not negotiable”, regardless of who they are or what they have done (Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales 2006, 4-5). In Chapter Seven I will argue for a pastoral attentiveness which honours a shared humanity that is inviolable. *Imago Dei* has been a theologically construed ethical anchor both in my chaplaincy practice and in the conduct of this research. Ethnographic engagement with the life-wounded men at the heart of this research deepened my appreciation of the importance of recognising and holding fast to their intrinsic human worth despite the many negative connotations often associated with “IPP”.

The way others are described determines how humanely predisposed a person may or may not be towards them. In this work I avoid “prisoner” and “offender”, preferring “person in custody” as this is a reminder that their humanity is the primary

determinant of the relationship of pastoral care I will formulate. *Imago Dei* “stands resolutely against any social systems which demeans or despises human beings...” (Forrester 2005, 26). But, beyond this abstract assertion, other theological means are required to flesh out the practicalities of honouring this innate dignity. A second element to my anthropology provides this practical framework.

### **2.2.2 An Holistic Anthropology**

...a [religious] lawyer stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” [Jesus] said to him, “What is written in the law? What do you read there?” He answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.” And he said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live” (Luke 10:25-28 NRSV).

In this exchange an expert in the Jewish religious law enquires of Jesus what he is required to do as a person of faith to live a life that will have eternal significance. Jesus paraphrases and conflates two passages from Jewish scripture in reply: Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. There are three elements to the anthropological wisdom Jesus draws upon: Love of God, Love of Neighbour and Love of Self.

Firstly is the giving of a person’s whole self in the service (love) of God: heart, mind, soul and strength. This suggests that to *be* human is to be a dynamic existential interplay of heart (relational/emotional), mind (intellectual/psychological), soul (spiritual/transcendent) and strength (physical/material). For a person to flourish

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attention should be given to the four aspects of their being: the relational/emotional; intellectual/psychological; spiritual/transcendent and physical/material.

Within the penal context all four aspects are strained. Mental health issues are much more prevalent amongst people in custody than within the general population (Prisons and Probation Ombudsman 2016, 8). The indeterminacy of the IPP sentence further compounds this, with a concomitant increase of self-harm and suicide risks (Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health 2008). A third of participants spoke about current or childhood religious affiliations and practices, referring to their faith as providing them with a basis for hope (see 4.2.4). Religious provision in prison was generally good but personal experience as a chaplain made me aware of its precarious nature in a secure environment. Attendance for worship, prayer or study could easily be disrupted by staff shortages or competing regime demands.

Material deprivation is one of the 'five pains of imprisonment' that has been acknowledged for over fifty years (Sykes 1958). However, it has been noted by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons in his latest report that deprivation is currently of an unacceptable type and scale:

...far too many prisoners still endure very poor and overcrowded living conditions...[and] as we have said in the past on many occasions, broken windows, unscreened lavatories in shared cells, vermin and filth should not feature in 21st century jails (2019, 11).

The central importance of the relational/emotional aspect of human being has been especially foregrounded in the outcomes of this research (see Chapters Four and Seven). But this is not to imply it is the only element in need of addressing if human

beings are to be less diminished by incarceration. Like all human beings, people in custody have emotional, psychological, physical and spiritual needs that require attention if they are to flourish.

The second aspect of the holistic anthropological model under consideration is the neighbour-regarding love that is parabolically illustrated by Jesus in the conterminous section from Luke's gospel: the story of The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37). In response to the lawyer's follow-up question "Who is my neighbour?" Jesus tells a parable illustrating deep humane regard, one that crosses cultural boundaries and is at the heart of this research. As it applies to those cast to the margins of society (i.e. IPP sentence-servers), such attentiveness will be explored further in Chapter Seven.

The last element – "Love of Self" – might cause unease in an age when concerns are raised about the prevalence of cultural narcissism in the western world (Lasch 1979). This element of the tri-fold love Jesus describes is not of the self-indulgent type. It is the application of the same level of pastoral regard to myself as I seek to offer to another. But, as Kelly observes, in "caring for others, it is often easier to be more gentle and forgiving with them than we are with ourselves in our own private and working lives" (2012, 19). It is therefore imperative for those offering pastoral care "to develop self-awareness about his or her own spiritual, emotional, psychological and physical well-being" (Litchfield 2006, 105). As Parker J. Palmer observes: "Go far enough on the inner journey, they tell us – go past ego toward true self – and you end up not lost in narcissism but returning to the world, bearing more gracefully the responsibilities that come with being human" (2000, 73). Chapter Six explores this form of self-care in more depth in regard to my own well-being during fieldwork. In

Chapter Seven I will highlight the importance of self-care for staff who seek to maintain an humane attentiveness in carceral space. This has arisen directly from the ‘self’ element of my holistic anthropology. A theological imperative to self-care was operative for me prior to undertaking this research but has developed through my encounters with staff, especially in interviews, who have helped me appreciate the “emotional labour” (Hochschild 2012) involved in the polarity of custodial compassion. Whilst my focus has been on the plight of IPP participants, the relational basis of the PC I formulate in this thesis requires that staff care is also given due attention.

The last aspect to my theological anthropology is ontological. In Christian thinking a link is made between the nature of God, our relationship with God and how these shape what it is to *be* human.

### **2.2.3 “*Being-in-Communion*” – *Faith In Love***

We are relational beings called first and foremost to give and receive love...As the ancient African concept of *ubuntu* (‘I am because you are’) affirms, and as much contemporary philosophy emphasizes, we discover the other as constitutive of our self-awareness as persons; we are essentially dialogical, interrelational, and dependent on the other. (International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue 2015, 19-20).

Talks in 2015 between two Christian traditions produced “The Buffalo Statement” (TBS) which was entitled *In The Image and Likeness of God: A Hope-Filled Anthropology*. This quote (above) refers to an African concept known as *ubuntu*,

which I will draw upon later when formulating a pastoral response to the hope-diminishing indeterminacy of the IPP sentence (7.3.2). TBS theologically employs the notion of 'being-in-communion'. 'Communion' is not easily defined. In the vocabulary of the Christian faith it can refer to different things, including a sacrament (Holy Communion) or a shared ecclesial tradition (the Anglican Communion). TBS also uses the word loosely across a number of meanings but in its Christian anthropological sense refers to the "divine-human" dimension whereby to be human is to be in relationship with others and also with God (2015, 7). This echoes the tri-fold love of God/neighbour/self discussed in 2.2.2. As will be considered later, 'sin' can be conceived according to this 'being-in-communion' model as "relational rupture" (7.4.1).

'Communion' refers to a profound human need to relate to God which makes human flourishing dependent upon this relationality. As Augustine prayerfully describes: [Oh God] "you made us for yourself and our hearts find no peace until they rest in you" (1961, 1.1.1). How precisely human beings can be in a relationship with God is far from straightforward, as suggested by Kelsey's protracted wrestling with the notion of "relational being" in his Christian anthropology (2009, 371ff.). Nonetheless, in the late twentieth century there was a theological renaissance that conceived God in social terms, which some claimed to refer back to an earlier and more Eastern (Orthodox) understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Moltmann 1981, Volf 1998, Boff 2000, Zizioulas 2004). Within this current exercise in *practical* theology it is not possible to critique this school of thought without retreating into abstract consideration of, for example, *perichoresis* (the nature of the intra-trinitarian relationships) and the difference between economic and immanent models of the

Trinity (for my previous exploration of these see Beedon 1992). But it is valuable to reflect theologically upon the trinitarian shape of God's loving intent toward humanity and draw out the pastoral implications that arise.

The argument that derives from a social understanding of the Trinity is that God in Godself is relational. Therefore, if human beings, as argued in 2.2.1, are created in the *imago Dei* there is something deeply relational woven into human being that is derived from that relationship to a trinitarian God (McFadyen 1990). As TBS declares: "Theology understands this relationality precisely as a reflection of the divine image" (2015, 20). How we read this "reflection" can be problematic and has been criticised as a form of human projection (Kilby 2000). That acknowledged, it is my contention that, if critically appropriated, a relational understanding of the Trinity can remain anthropologically heuristic (McFadyen 1992).

Whilst avoiding speculation concerning the inner-life of God, the outward threefold divine operations of creation, redemption and sanctification through the 'Father', 'Son' and 'Holy Spirit' are attested in Christian scripture and doxologically affirmed in the faith's prayer and worship. This provides a trinitarian theological grammar for Christians to talk about God in a way that that informs their life-in-faith without falling foul of anthropocentric projection (Kilby 2000, 443). This grammar construes God as having loving intent toward humankind. Faith in this God invites a reciprocal affection. As John the Evangelist observes: "So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them" (1 John 4:7 NRSV). Such love is not of the mawkish type for faith, as spiritual participation in the life of God, has strongly practical, pastoral and political

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consequences (Fiddes 2000, Owens 2010). Within Christian thinking God's loving intentionality toward humankind is most clearly embodied within the Incarnation – the belief that divine love was uniquely en-fleshed and out-worked in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Gerkin 1990, Melloh 1990). Accordingly, this...

...revelation of God in Christ puts divine love into human history, imbues it with *human emotion* and *vulnerability*, and locates it with the weak, outcast, and despised (Campbell 1990, 667, my emphasis).

My earlier theological interest in the Social Trinity explored its anthropological implications for parochial ministry and ecclesiology (Beedon 1992). When I encountered the strained nature of incarcerated humanity as a chaplain I wished to test under more extreme conditions my pastoral hunch that relationships were still key to human flourishing. Whilst my prior trinitarian thinking was more speculative and deductive the IPP research's humane focus has developed my theology in a more embodied and grounded direction. I witnessed and experienced levels of "human emotion and vulnerability" (above) that demanded more than theological speculation about the inner-life of God. It demanded a "*being there*, occupying a shared bodily space with another even though this close proximity [was at times] uncomfortable" (Fiddes 2000, 296).

The relational model of the Trinity described here provides a theological bridge between the holistic and *imago Dei* anthropological elements explored earlier. If something of the divine nature is written into human being and God has loving intent towards humankind, to be fully human is to be relational. Accordingly, rupture of that relationality – to God, neighbour or self – is diminishing of humanity (see 7.3 and

7.4). Hence the importance of paying attention to the emotional/relational element of the fourfold holistic anthropology. The emotional/relational aspect of this research was to feature much larger than I had initially anticipated and has shaped my self-understanding (see Chapter Six). The research experience provided a context out of which I have ministerially developed a pastoral theology of deep humane regard – a ‘custodial compassion’ – which I will now explore further (see also 7.3).

#### ***2.2.4 The Prodigality of Compassion***

This is a personal truth I have recently learned. To bracket him off beyond the bounds of humanity (that would otherwise call for deep humane regard) is less challenging than meeting the monstrous way he has acted with a face of unconditional love (JE 2016\_06\_14).

These words, from a reflective journal entry I wrote, refer to a newspaper report concerning a person convicted of numerous rapes of a young girl. It was an historic child abuse case and the perpetrator was a wheelchair-bound elderly man when convicted. Predictably, whilst in custody he was seriously assaulted, requiring hospitalisation in intensive care. After being declared fit to return into custody he was transported back to prison. It was reported that, although thought to be asleep in the prison car and handcuffed to two officers, on arrival back at prison he was found to be dead (Walker 2016).

I have reflected numerous times in my journal about “stretching the bounds of compassion” (JEs 2019\_06\_14; 06\_03; 2018\_06\_10; 2017\_11\_09; 12\_14).

Compassion is a contested notion that is not easily defined (Jones and Pattison

2015, Pattison 2015a). It is frequently and wrongly thought synonymous with empathy. Whilst compassion and empathy are closely related:

Empathy is feeling-with the suffering person through an imaginative projection into her inner world of pain and distress. Compassion is also feeling-with, but this affective component leads to a desire and a decision to alleviate the suffering. What this means is that empathy is the driver or precondition of compassion (Pembroke 2019, 141).

Compassion is therefore dispositional. It is central to the pastoral attentiveness necessary for places of incarceration to become more rehabilitative. For a Christian practitioner this disposition may be understood as an outworking of *agape*, the mode of love embodied in the Incarnation (Kelsey 2009, 703ff.). It thereby “is a commitment to extend oneself in acting in a loving, kind, and beneficent way towards one’s neighbour [read each and every person in custody]” (Pembroke 2019, 134).

Jesus used illustrative stories (parables) for didactic purposes. One of the most resonant for people in custody and those ministering amongst them is that of The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32). A large framed poster of Rembrandt’s painting *The Return of the Prodigal Son* visually dominated the chapel where I served. I ran a study course based on Nouwen’s extended meditations on the parable in which incarcerated men engaged in an animated and thoughtful manner – it clearly engaged them (Nouwen 2008, 2009). As I have observed elsewhere:

“The narrative contains foolishness, waywardness, hardship, and resentment, besides the promises of forgiveness and reconciliation. It

is obvious why those who are incarcerated can so easily inhabit the story imaginatively” (Beedon 2016b).

The parable tells of a father who, despite his youngest son’s wilfulness longs for his son’s return. Having squandered all his money, at the point of starvation the son turns for home to seek mercy. As he is nearing home the story relates how “while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him” (Luke 15:20 NRSV). The Greek word translated ‘compassion’<sup>6</sup> “taken literally, refers to a disturbance of the bowels! The bowels at the time were believed to be centre of the emotions. Care, as compassion, is a form of relationality that moves a carer deeply” (Beedon 2017, 50, Strong 1980c).

In Hebrew the word translated ‘compassion’<sup>7</sup> is derived from one meaning “the womb” and refers to a deep disposition of care (Pembroke 2019, 143, Strong 1980b). Although the juxtaposition of bowels and wombs in this discussion might be unfortunate both metaphors suggest a deep and visceral aspect to compassion. In my journaling I noted visceral sensations I experienced when reflecting on issues or events and frequently resorted to poetic forms of expression to evoke what I had experienced (see Chapter Six). The psycho-emotional expressiveness of poetic form that I had discovered led me to explore Found Poems (3.9.3). A hunch arose that a poetic medium had the capacity to evoke an empathic response that might provide the embryonic stirrings of compassion. When one of my supervisors stated that reading the Found Poems always moved him my hunch was confirmed. Regularly in my research, as I was exposed to the lived experience of the IPP participants, I found

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<sup>6</sup> Esplanchnisthai (ἐσπλαγχνίσθη)

<sup>7</sup> Racham (רַחַם)

myself deeply moved and this has remained a well-spring for action, a commitment to 'see this through' and tell their story.

The contention I am formulating is that compassion fosters hope and feeling alone in distress diminishes hope. Having the compassionate presence of another/others in adversity can provide a resource for hope. In the next section I will consider the topic of 'hope' and the importance of Positive Relational Figures (PRFs) to maintain hopefulness in the midst of indeterminacy (this will be returned to in Chapter Seven).

## **2.3 Hope**

The main title of this thesis is derived from the Hebrew Bible: "Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life" (Proverbs 13:12 NRSV). Hope is a concept anthropologically central to this research. Alongside 'faith' and 'love' (see 2.2.3), it is one of three abiding Christian virtues identified by Paul of Tarsus (1 Corinthians 13:12-13). It is my contention that a hope whose fulfilment is repeatedly postponed becomes corrosive of human being – it "makes the [human] heart sick" because hope is "a fundamental condition of human living" (Lewis 1987, 115). Its presence, or lack thereof, impacts human experience at both a political and a personal level.

### ***2.3.1 Political Hope and Its Theological Counterpart***

Many events over the last hundred years have challenged the Victorian liberal hope in inevitable social progress (Stivers 2008). This mood change gave birth to the 'Theology of Hope' movement which embraced thinkers from different Christian traditions. Moltmann (1967), Pannenberg (2004), Metz (1969) and Rahner (1997)

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were key advocates of this approach. A secular Marxist interlocutor in the formulation of this theology was Bloch (1986). Although committed to “thorough-going Marxist dialectical materialism” he was “open to all the greatest riches of the Western philosophical and literary tradition” including religious sources (Roberts 1987, 90). Bloch became, especially to Moltmann, a critical conversation partner who was sympathetic to the religious aspect of hopefulness.

Echoing Christian eschatology, Bloch recognised that hope is central to humanity’s existence but we are “caught ‘*zwischen zwei Zeiten*’ – between two ages of human experience, a phase of human development between the past that was and the future that is not yet” (Meissner 1973, 10-11). Therefore we “are forced to live and exist in a condition of radical expectation and anticipation” (Meissner 1973, 11). The theologians of hope described a future oriented disposition that eschatologically envisaged a consummation of all that has been divinely brought into being whilst holding this vision in tension with, at times, deeply contradictory present conditions of profound human diminishment. The hope rooted in Christian faith is one that is not paralysed by the discomfort of this “eschatological tension” (Phillips 2015, 287). It is the sustaining of “hopefulness in the ‘not yet’ of the ‘now’ of borrowed time” (Kelsey 2009, 519).

For Christians, the now/not yet eschatological tension is theologically signified in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Easter hope that Christians proclaim is not “expectant because it supposes that Jesus’ resurrection eliminated the oppression that crucified him, but because Jesus’ resurrection inaugurated the end time in the midst of such oppression” (Kelsey 2009, 502). It also holds out a hope for

ourselves – the personal incompleteness which is often the root cause of our hopelessness and lack of courage. For...

...hope is our mode of recognizing our *distensio*, our experience of tantalizing incompleteness that we confess we exist in at present, yet proclaim will be healed in the eschaton – and we must recognize both our own incompleteness, and the way that it tantalizes us (Mathewes 2007, 256).

### **2.3.2 Institutional, Systemic and Structural Hope**

The temporal tension expressed by this now/not yet dynamic of hope resonated with my experience of prison ministry and the lived experiences shared with me by IPP participants. Suspended between the two worlds of aspirations and reality, daily incarcerated life and work existed in a conflicted space where many actors were caught in the tidal undertows of hope and despair. This was exemplified in a 2017 report on Prison Officers who were described as “enthusiastic for change and want to play a role in helping people turn their lives around” whilst at the same time their morale was deemed to be “very low...and few see a long-term future for themselves in the prison service” (The Howard League for Penal Reform 2017).

Consideration of the philosophical and theological aspects of political hope may seem remote from the immediate pastoral concerns of IPP people in custody. Yet research has shown that “Staff [having] hope” is a primary pre-requisite for the fostering of a prison wide “rehabilitative culture” (Mann, Howard, and Tew 2018, 4). For hope to be fostered, “staff themselves need to have hope that the people in their care can make it” (Mann 2019, 4). Many staff demonstrate the skills of ‘custodial

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compassion' I enumerate in Chapter Seven. But I have also witnessed how quickly staff can become demoralised and cynical due to the demands and extremes of the carceral workplace. Therefore attentiveness<sup>8</sup> to the pastoral needs of persons in custody must not lead to the neglect of staff's well-being nor to the ignoring of systemic factors that lead to loss of hope in those whom I would wish to see the skills of 'custodial compassion' deepened rather than erased in their daily practice.

As I have argued, loss or persistent deferral of hope is a highly detrimental factor for persons in custody serving an IPP sentence. Whilst hope is important across the prison population it is crucial that particular attention is paid to the cultural, systemic and structural factors that enhance or corrode such a disposition amongst or towards this vulnerable group. The 'reciprocity of hope' required in the staff/resident relationship, as described in work on "Rehabilitative Culture", is highly consonant with what I argue for here (Lewis and Robertson 2019). It will be of immense value so long as it achieves greater institutional traction than many other laudable initiatives I witnessed during my time in the PS which were launched with fanfare but eventually petered out unacknowledged. Such deep change is not a 'quick fix' but will, in the long-term, bring transformative benefits as it fosters a hope-full environment (Mann 2019, 3).

I now shift attention from hope considered in the general, political and institutional sense to the more personal and relational level of penal interaction. Whilst the inter-

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<sup>8</sup> I prefer "attentiveness" to "attention" in this pastoral context as the latter has too many negative connotations with the disciplinary and hyper-surveilled nature of the malopticon (see 6.3). Attentiveness denotes a disposition deeper than procedural observation.

personal level is the most immediate locus of pastoral care in a penal context I do not want to lose sight of the important role the meta-contextual level (socio-political and institutional) plays in the flourishing or diminishment of human beings. The foregoing has arisen directly from the meta-contextualising prolegomenon in Chapter One. Whilst despair is felt at a deeply personal level its source is often historic and systemic in nature. But it is to the personal and relational aspect of hope I now turn.

### ***2.3.3 The Tone of Personal Narratives – Hope or Despair?***

The most fundamental relationship between the personal myths we fashion in adulthood and the first two years of our lives may be expressed in what I call narrative tone. While some life stories exude optimism and hope, others are couched in the language of mistrust and resignation (McAdams 1997, 47).

In the Introduction to this thesis I briefly described a pastoral encounter I had with a young man serving an IPP sentence who expressed deep despair and soon after was found dead, hung in his cell. The dark narrative tonality of the story he had shared with me prompted a research interest around what form of PC could realistically, appropriately and, perhaps, transformatively sit in the shadows with those dealing with the despair fostered by indeterminacy. Strong negative narrative tonality would be later reflected also in this research's participant interviews – see 4.2. In carceral space some forms of resignation are a self-survival mechanism to moderate the frustration that might otherwise be destructively expressed towards self or others. In pastoral practice “authentic hope begins with this courageous

recognition of the way things are...[and pastors] will listen with receptivity and solidarity to the articulation of despair” (Lewis 1987, 116).

So what can be done to try and ensure that a healthy resignation does not evolve into a personal belief in being “doomed to deviance” (Lebel et al. 2008, 136, Maruna 2001)? I am working towards articulating a *pastoral* response so a caveat must be made: Not all forms of hopelessness can be addressed through pastoral care. Some forms of hopelessness need more specifically therapeutic approaches. Guidance for clergy on pastoral care warns: “Ministers who are not trained as counsellors should be careful not to confuse their pastoral ministry with that of counselling or psychotherapy” (Litchfield 2006, 16). Many IPP people in custody have suffered sometimes multiple ACEs leaving them psycho-emotionally in need of psychotherapeutic interventions (Chapter Seven). The form of support I propose is no substitute for this type of therapeutic work but, coordinated alongside it, can contribute to overarching rehabilitative outcomes.

#### **2.3.4 The Reciprocity of Hope**

Hope is defined as a cognitive and motivational state that involves a mutual interaction between goal directed energy (agency) and a planned roadmap to meet a goal (Lewis and Robertson 2019, 19).

In the psychology of hope it is noted that “hopeful relationships...enhance hope” (Lopez et al. 2000, 137). Relationships with those who believe in a person’s future most likely increases their self-confidence to realise that envisaged outcome. Hope can be understood as having three components: a *goal* (to strive for), a *roadmap* (to get to the goal) and *agency* (personal capacity and commitment towards the goal)

(Snyder 2000). Positive relational figures (PRFs) – sometimes role models – help an individual identify a proximate or life goal. Through personal conversations with PRFs, a goal-oriented roadmap can be formulated and revised along the way to its fulfilment. The investment of time and relational energy of a PRF can help maintain or even boost a sense of agency in a person (see the ‘Belief’ and ‘Presence’ themes in 4.2.7).

A substantial number of people in custody come from backgrounds with few PRFs. In the IPP research group many (not all) spoke of significant characters in their imaginary film script who had influenced them in ways that were ultimately detrimental. These Detrimental Relational Figures (DRFs) had introduced them to criminality or substance abuse, often at a young age. Some had been exposed to domestic violence, models of toxic hypermasculinity or suffered sexual abuse in childhood. Incarcerated life compounds this by presenting few opportunities to form healthy relationships as many residents “construct an inauthentic identity that masks the true self” (Jewkes 2012b, 46).

I have personally witnessed the relational quality of some heroic and outstanding staff and its transformational outcomes in the lives of deeply life-wounded people. This is also borne out in IPP interviews (Chapter Four). But there is also within penal discourse...

...the sometimes pathologizing language of risks and needs; an epistemic framing of practice that may serve to undermine people’s resources for desistance and to construct and cement their identities as ‘hopeless offenders’ (Burke, Collett, and McNeill 2019, 70).

Because of the socially constructed nature of identity “securing long-term change depends not just how one sees oneself but also on how one is seen by others, and on how one sees one’s place in society” (ibid., 63). IPP people in custody were perceived socially as ‘dangerous offenders’ and many, after numerous parole ‘knock backs’, have lost self-belief in ever achieving release. A number of participants spoke of a sense that ‘the system’ was set up to make them (and even wanted them to) fail (see 4.2.3). Whether this perception was true or not, it informed their often non-compliant behaviour.

Due to the nature of the prison population, there are high rates of failure to comply with rules and regulations. They are not in custody for being innately compliant. For the sake of good order and discipline in a prison this misbehaviour cannot be ignored. But how is it addressed without constantly reinforcing a sense of personal failure amongst those who might be trying to change or those, such as IPP sentence servers, for whom the stakes are high if they fail? How is the reciprocity of hope restored whereby the belief of staff instils some personal belief that outworks in improved behaviour that increases the social reserves of hope around a person in custody? This will be explored in Chapter Seven.

## **2.4 Summary Conclusion**

In this chapter I have explored the related notions of ‘humanity’ and ‘hope’. Throughout this thesis a picture of humanity is presented using an anthropology derived from elements of the Christian tradition. If, as *imago Dei* posits, human beings are created in God’s image, there is an inherent dignity to be recognised regardless of what they have done. Much political rhetoric violates this dignity,

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preferring scapegoating and othering to support increasingly punitive responses to crime, as symbolised by the conception of the IPP sentence. The holistic understanding of humanity discussed in 2.2.2 recognises the emotional, psychological, spiritual and physical needs of people in custody and the strain incarceration puts upon human wholeness. “Communion-in-being” suggests that human beings are ontologically relational. Whilst my research outcomes have highlighted the centrality of the relational element of the holistic anthropology it is important to acknowledge all four are necessary for well-being. Whilst the emotional aspect of human wholeness is most easily identified with this ontological relationality it impacts upon all elements. Relationships affect people psychologically, spiritually and physically as well as emotionally.

A contention I am exploring is that to flourish, human beings also require hope. There are political, institutional and systemic aspects to hope to be attended to, as I have discussed. Personal hope cannot be divorced from these contextual elements. Additionally, at the personal level, the role of staff in fostering hope is crucial, something that will be defined further in Chapter Seven. Compassion in custodial form is rehabilitative as it is hope-generating.

In the next chapter I will introduce the adapted action-learning approach that underpins this research (Define > Describe > Reflect > Act). Having defined my research interest as the diminishment of humanity due to deferred hope amongst IPP people in custody (Introduction), I described the macro-contextual factors of the sentence in Chapter One. In this chapter I have fleshed out what I mean by

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'humanity' and 'hope' and the interdependency of the two notions. In the next chapter I will describe my research design and the process I followed to explore the lived experience of IPP participants as the basis from which to formulate a pastoral response.

## **CHAPTER THREE – RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCESS**

*...verstehen* denotes...a degree of sympathetic understanding between social researcher and subjects of study, whereby the researcher comes to share, in part, the situated meanings and experiences of those under scrutiny (Ferrell and Hamm 1998, 27).

### **3.1 Introduction**

The conceptual framework I constructed in Chapters One and Two provides a theoretical understanding of meta-contextual factors impacting upon IPP people in custody, such as scapegoating (1.4), othering (2.1), ethical loneliness and epistemic injustice (1.5). As a desktop exercise, the review of literature had given me models to develop some appreciation of the social plight of those serving the IPP sentence. This chapter will concern itself with describing the methodology and methods I employed to go beyond the abstract and inhabit the lived experience of IPP participants. This was undertaken so as to be able to represent ‘from the inside out’ the social world of actual people living within indeterminacy.

At the outset of this research’s fieldwork (February 2017) there were forty-three men serving an IPP sentence at the research establishment. All were contacted by letter with an invitation to participate (Appendix 1) and this was followed up with a personal visit to gauge their interest in being involved in the research, stressing there was no benefit nor penalty from either participating or not (Appendix 2).

Thirty-one men initially indicated they wished to participate and twelve declined outright. Before the first Focus Group met in late March 2017 seven of the potential

participants had been transferred or released. Of the remaining twenty-four, eight absented themselves before taking any part due to changing their mind or prison related pressures. After the Focus Group phase one participant became self-isolating due to personal safety issues (unrelated to the research) and dropped out. Another person serving an IPP sentence who had initially declined taking part (due to being under threat and self-isolating) asked if he could participate and was interviewed under special protective conditions.

The heart of this research has been the seventeen men aged between twenty-four and fifty-six (with an average age of thirty-eight) of different ethnicities (65 percent white).<sup>9</sup> They were willing to share their stories that I might be able to represent their lived experience and formulate a pastoral response to it. The following sections describe how I went about designing this process, the issues I encountered and the research pathway decisions I made along the way.

### **3.2 Practical Theology and the Pastoral Cycle**

The research described in this thesis was undertaken as both a pastoral endeavour (as a practitioner) and an academic contribution (as a student in the field of PT).<sup>10</sup> PT is “critical reflection that places experiences, lived assumptions and actions in dialogue with religious belief, tradition and practice for the sake of transformation” (Goto 2016, xix). The variety of topics discussed in disciplinary compendia reveal a focus on context-based and practice-focussed studies (Woodward, Pattison, and

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<sup>9</sup> One participant was profoundly deaf and I am grateful to a volunteer from the Nottingham Deaf Society who signed for the LAAF interview.

<sup>10</sup> For more on what is meant by ‘pastoral’ see 7.1.

Patton 2000, Miller-McLemore 2012b, Cahalan and Mikoski 2014, Miller-McLemore and Mercer 2016). Human flourishing, as a primary purpose of pastoral care, is also central to PT (Cameron 2012). PT's humane and practical foci suggested it would be an appropriate approach for my enquiry into a pastoral response to the human diminishment associated with the IPP sentence.

My initial interest was in the generic area of 'the humanising of incarceration' (Beedon 2016a, 2017). A key method of enquiry for many students and researchers in PT is the Pastoral Cycle (PCy). Adapting and employing this method helped me become more focussed as I sought to identify a specific research topic that was potentially transformative of penal practice and would contribute to the relevant body/bodies of knowledge associated with my context. The research project needed to be feasible within the constraints of short-term, context-based and practice-focussed fieldwork. The PCy provided a clear hermeneutical process that I could follow amidst the demands and distractions of part-time work-based research.

Due to PT's interest in 'practice' in its various forms (e.g. ministerial, ecclesial, pastoral, social and political) many practitioners have embraced the PCy's action-learning approach to research (Ballard and Pritchard 2006, 81ff., Cameron 2012). The PCy is derived from late twentieth century action-learning methods (Kolb 1984, Schön 1983). In theological circles it has also found expression in the dialectical method for *conscientization* and *praxis* via Liberation Theology's hermeneutical circle of ideological critique and theological reflection (Segundo 1976, 7ff., Freire 1985, Pattison 1997, 61, Thompson, Pattison, and Thompson 2008, 50-71, Cameron 2012,

3-9, Bennett 2013, 102). PCy's politically-informed and practice-based approach offered transformative potential in the IPP context.

Although other terms may be used (e.g. Browning 1991, Osmer 2008), at the simplest level the cycle consists of *context, theory, reflection* and back to context via *practice*. Each of the four elements to the cycle are phases with a particular interrogative focus but they are

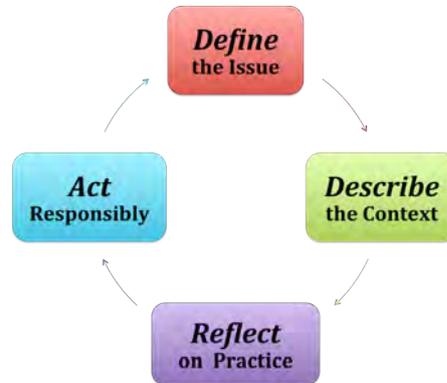


Figure 2 : The Pastoral Cycle (Own design)

best not approached as independent stages to the exclusion of the other three foci. Aspects of the other elements are always present in each phase of the cycle but one is cognitively privileged momentarily in the dynamic. The adapted cycle I have designed and used in this research consists of the *Define, Describe, Reflect* and *Act* phases (see Figure 2).

The PCy it is not without its critics (Lartey 2000, Ward 2017) but was a valuable tool that offers an heuristic process for undertaking research which helped me cognitively unpick an appropriate research issue from the overwhelming experiential ravel that I was confronted with at the time (Ballard and Pritchard 2006, 87). The *Definition* and *Description* stages also helped me develop a political attentiveness around the IPP issue that kept me honest about what my research could achieve and helped me avoid generating false hope amongst participants.

Beyond its usefulness in the initial exploratory stages of research the PCy also provided me with means by which to maintain focus and commitment over the long-

haul of fieldwork, data analysis and beyond. Whilst the PCy is a *reflective* cycle it is not circular, but intentionally iterative, deepening the practitioner's understanding and informing their *praxis* (see 3.4) with each cycle. In the *Define* phase of the cycle I used my journaling to reflect upon a number of issues that were worthy of my research attention. The tragic death in custody of the young man serving an IPP sentence that I was pastorally involved with (see Introduction) brought a brutal clarity concerning a pressing need.

Situations such as this have great psycho-emotional weight to them. There is a deeper psychological *affect* in the sense of a change in mood and perception (Feldman Barrett and Bliss-Moreau 2009). The *affect* of the death in custody I experienced was defining for my reflections and I knew this was an area of research whose worth could carry me through the inevitable moments of deep fatigue and self-doubt I would face on the long road of description, reflection and action. I was also aware there could be dangers to undertaking research motivated by a tragedy that had personally affected me. I found further encouragement soon after this epiphany from the political theologian Anna Rowlands. In an address she gave at the 2016 British and Irish Association of Practical Theologians' Annual Conference she suggested researchers need a passion for their area of interest so as to be thoroughly dedicated to the important work of responsible enquiry in the field of PT.

I was confident I had such a passion and an heuristic overarching approach to keep me focussed. But I also needed to find the methods to help me *describe* the detrimental factors impacting upon those serving an IPP sentence, *reflect* upon the

pastoral consequences of these contextual factors and formulate how to *act* in a more pastorally responsible way.

### **3.3 A Typology of Methods in Practical Theology**

The PCy provided me with procedural clarity in the challenges of a context-based and practice-focussed enquiry conducted within my workplace, but it did not provide specific methods for defining, describing, reflecting or acting. Underlying the matter of choosing methods to employ were more fundamental questions, as Bennett *et al* observe:

The choice of research methods...was not simply a matter of choosing the best tools for the job...beliefs about existence (ontology) predicate which ways of knowing are judged valid (epistemology) and these shape the research approach and design (methodology) that eventually constructs our picture of the world (2018, 26).

Graham, Walton and Ward (2005) suggest a sevenfold typology of methods in theological reflection found in PT. Two (Corporate Theological Reflection and Local Theologies) are not represented in my research as they are approaches specific to communities of faith and the participants I worked with were not an homogenous faith group. The other five types are present in a variety of forms – see the sections following this one for more specific detail on actual methods utilised. What follows immediately is the mapping across of elements from my research to Graham, Walton and Ward's methods typology: The Living Human Document; Constructive Narrative Theology; Canonical Narrative Theology; Correlation; and Praxis.

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The humanising *praxis* of this research demanded that I paid close attention to “interior life” of the participants as a disclosive locus of material out of which an appropriate pastoral response could be formulated (see 3.4 for more on *praxis*). The Life History Interviewing approach I employed, supplemented by the triply iterative *in vivo* data analysis, kept me close to the ‘living human documents’ at the heart of this research (2005, 18ff.). The narrative quality of their experience has been creatively captured in the *Life as a Film* interviewing technique and the artefacts of this research’s *poiesis*<sup>11</sup> are the visio-textual Found Poems and movie posters in this thesis’ phase segues and appendices (2005, 47ff.). In seeking to formulate a pastoral response to the IPP issue that would be of practical value in the secular plurals of penal practice I have avoided being heavily reliant upon Judaeo-Christian scripture in my justification of the principles and practices I formulate. But some of the teaching of Jesus as mediated through the Gospels has strongly informed this research both anthropologically and pastorally (especially Luke 10:27 and John 10:14-15). My theological reflection on these texts, in conversation with Christian theological traditions of *imago Dei* and “community-in-being” (Chapter Two), has provided me with the means to make my theological defence of the hope that is in me (I Peter 3:15) for those held under the IPP sentence (2005, 78ff.).

The correlational method (2005, 138ff.) is central to this research which draws context relevant secular thought into critical conversation with my faith-shaped anthropology as it applies to the IPP predicament. The *theoria*<sup>12</sup> at play here is not concerned with grand theological narratives abstracted from lived experience and

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<sup>11</sup> The art of making or bringing something into existence.

<sup>12</sup> Theoretical or contemplative knowledge.

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speaking in terms incomprehensible to most penal practitioners. What I am undertaking puts my understanding of God-in-relation-to-humankind in the service of those trapped in humanity-diminishing deferred hope. It is a theology primarily concerned with *phronesis* (practical wisdom) of a pastoral form and a *praxis* that embodies humanising transformation (Chapter Seven) because “talk about God cannot take place independent of a commitment to a struggle for human emancipation” (2005, 170, for a discussion of 'theoria' in relation to 'phronesis' see Bass et al. 2016).

The theology underpinning this research is not concerned with observing an abstracted orthodoxy for “the truth is truth only when it serves as the basis for truly human attitudes” (Segundo 1976, 32). The *practical* theology operative here is a faith-informed mode of discourse that seeks “to witness to the truth in a world of fragments” through *orthopraxis* (Forrester 2005, 11). Whilst the *ecclesia* and its practices tends to be the prime domain of enquiry for PT, the research undertaken here has been at the borderlands of civil society amongst a vulnerable group of men with a high risk of self-harm or suicide. My concern is a pastoral one, so I employ theology in the service of the humanising of incarceration in the contextual particularity of a hope-diminishing form of sentencing. I am not arguing against more theoretical forms of theology as I am aware, in drawing out notions of *imago Dei* and “community-in-being” (Chapter Two) from heritages of theological insight, I am appropriately reliant upon such *theoria*. But, as a pastoral endeavour, my operative theology is a diaconal one employed in the service of those whose humanity is being diminished and is addressed to a realm of discourse lacking theological literacy but receptive to rehabilitative practices.

The ethic that was central to this enquiry required that the means of conducting the research was congruent with the ends of humanising incarceration. The *praxis* of my research – particularly the methods used in fieldwork – needed to serve my humane purposes.

### **3.4 The *Praxis* of Research**

As I began to sift through the various methods and approaches in PT I became aware that I held to a particular research ethic which I had derived from previous studies in theology. Central to this ethic was the notion of *praxis*. Whilst nowadays it is frequently presented in epistemologically flat terms as “action informed by correct analysis of the situation” (Thompson, Pattison, and Thompson 2008, 23) this sells short *praxis*’ potential value for shaping responsible research.

Anderson helps add depth to the concept when he observes that: “Aristotle defined *praxis* when you distinguish between *poiesis* as an act of making something where the *telos* lay outside of the act of making and *praxis* as an act which includes the *telos* within the action itself” (2001b, 164, see also 2001a, 49). Thus understood, *praxis* becomes not merely a synonym for well-informed action but a mode of practice intended to embody within itself the end towards which it acts. This Aristotelean “interpretation is a profound understanding of the more than instrumental nature of *praxis*”, it introduces ethical regard into the conduct of practice (Ganzevoort and Roeland 2014, 93).

Following this understanding of *praxis*, I was clear that there was a personal ethical requirement for me to identify and employ approaches and methods in fieldwork that

embodied humane regard. The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) research application process and the academic Application for Ethical Review procedure had ethical standards I was required to meet. Additionally I had a personal commitment to ensuring, as best I could, that an enquiry concerned with care amongst and for a vulnerable group embodied the type of humane regard that the *telos* of the pastoral practices to be explored would exemplify. The methodology and methods utilised needed to match the ethic of this enquiry.

### **3.5 Ethnography: Accessing ‘Lived Experience’**

Part of the re-humanising of incarceration I sought to embody in this fieldwork was through the honouring of the shared humanity of myself and participants by following an “humanistic, not ‘scientific’; and creative and intimate, not objectifying and distant” approach (Liebling 2015, 18-19). A qualitative approach seemed best suited to this endeavour as it offered research methods that remained focussed upon the humanity of the participants held in a system often blind to their individuality.

I was then faced with a range of options concerning approaches. Creswell’s exploration of the five main qualitative approaches was a helpful guide at this stage of the research design (2013). Of the qualitative methods considered the Life History Interviewing (LHI) approach seemed the best fit for an humanistic approach seeking to access the lived experience of participants (see following section). Of the alternative approaches seriously considered, the phenomenological, Grounded Theory and general ethnographic ones were the strongest contenders. But phenomenology’s abstract epistemological and philosophised basis felt overly sophisticated for the specific penal context I was seeking to access. Whilst the

inductive approach of Grounded Theory correlates well with PT's practice-based and context-focussed interests it required that research was entered into without an *a priori* theory. It would have been disingenuous of me to adopt this approach as my pre-research pastoral experience already suggested there could be transformative potential in the attentive practice better embodied in a LHI method.

In the general sense that ethnography is the attempt to “represent the social reality of others” this research falls within that category (Van Maanen 2011, xiii). Ethnography has been employed by practical theologians in the study of church life (Scharen 2012, Ward 2012). Some theologians have been criticised for doing so in a superficial way that betrays ethnography's capacity for thick description of collective human experience (Phillips 2012a). Ward has noted that “what is meant by...‘ethnography’ is not always clear” (Ward 2012, 6). Jones and Watt argue that despite definitional vagueness ethnographic approaches share a set of core values (Jones and Watt 2010, 7ff.). These values reflect the principles that I followed whilst immersing myself in the lived experience of the seventeen participants so as to deepen my understanding of the texture of their lives and then formulate an appropriate pastoral response. A consideration of Jones and Watts' (2010) seven core values to ethnography will help introduce my approach to this research:

1. Ethnography is participative. As a researcher already present in the field I was attuned to penal culture and was able to transition quickly into a participant observer role. There were tensions and conflicts associated with my insider positionality (see following chapters). But my cultural acclimatisation facilitated

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a rapport with participants that would have been more difficult to establish if I had been new to the context.

2. Ethnography is immersive. It seeks to enter another person's life-world – to “get up close and personal” (ibid., 8). I had not anticipated how disclosive participants would be prepared to be in their interviews. I was humbled by their willingness to share even the dark and troubling aspects of their life stories. Over a year since I left the field, their stories still vividly accompany me.
3. Ethnography is reflexive. There is a costliness to such immersion which I explore reflexively in Chapter Six. Reflective practice (including journaling) and regular pastoral supervision mitigated a great deal of the *affect* of fieldwork. These practices also assisted in my ‘use of self’, whereby I sought to be conscious of and constructively process my psycho-emotional responses to elements of the research (6.3). In this reflection I found my poetic voice and examples from my journal are provided in the following chapters.
4. Ethnography is thickly descriptive. Such “thick description” (Geertz 1993) goes beyond merely giving an account of a culture and “aims to give the reader a greater depth of understanding by fully contextualizing what the researcher has observed or experienced” (Light 2010, 177). A narrative approach employed through life history interviewing, data analysis using an *in vivo* method and ethnographic representation in the form of Found Poems have provided creative avenues to enter and thickly describe participants' life-worlds.

5. Ethnography is actively ethical. This is the *praxis* of research (see 3.4). Throughout this research I have sought to embody the end (*telos*) I was striving towards (the humanising of incarceration) within the means by which I conducted the work. The underlying ethic I held to was: “Does this or that method/approach treat the participants humanely and as persons to relate to or objects to study?” I constantly reflexively wrestled with the implications of my conduct as a researching professional in such a context (see Chapter Six).
6. Ethnography is empowering. Part of the vulnerability of this group was a deep-seated mistrust of “the System” (4.2.3). Many had suffered multiple disappointments in life. Ethically I was committed not to further compound this mistrust. The only promise I could make confidently was to tell their story. I made a commitment to them to do so and the willingness of the participants to share even the most unflattering elements of their stories to an “authority figure” is testimony to an increased confidence within group members.
7. Ethnography is hermeneutical. From my experience as a chaplain (and previously as a parish priest) I knew that to care pastorally for a person entailed having some understanding of them that was more than superficial. It is crucial for pastoral attentiveness to have a sense of what it is like to ‘walk in their shoes’. The interviewing method employed facilitated the inhabiting of participants’ life narratives.

I knew ethnography to be an approach often employed in criminological research (Ferrell and Hamm 1998, Bosworth et al. 2005, Drake, Earle, and Sloan 2015, Treadwell 2019), PT enquiry (Moschella 2008, 2012) and prison-based research in

the field of PT (Phillips 2013, Anderson 2015). Early group work with participants hinted at a shared 'IPP experience' therefore my aim was to develop an empathic inhabiting or *verstehen* of the lived experience of IPP participants, something "ethnography at the edge" (among marginal groups) does well (Ferrell and Hamm 1998, 27).

As a sub-category within the ethnographic field, autoethnography offered a reflexive approach to research amongst a vulnerable group (Jewkes 2012a, Adams, Jones, and Ellis 2015). I will discuss autoethnography in 6.2.1 where I will explain why, although initially appealing, this was not the approach I followed.

An ethnographic study emerged as the best fit for a qualitative approach to my research question concerning an appropriate pastoral response to the lived experience of men in custody serving IPP sentences. Having decided upon the methodological field from which to draw, I then needed to sharpen how I was going to utilise the Life History Interviewing approach to best effect.

### **3.6 Method 1 - Life History Interviewing (LHI)**

LHI is an humane approach to research (Plummer 2001). It offers heuristic potential as a narrative based form of enquiry because of the important role story-telling plays in creating meaning, purpose and identity in the representation of human life (Gergen and Gergen 1988, Polkinghorne 1988, McAdams 1997, Atkinson 1998, Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, Riessman 2008). LHI approaches also provide creative and potentially transformative means "for researchers studying human experience" (Kara 2015, 93f.) through the humane recognition of "the unique value and worth of each

life” (Atkinson 1998, 5). Its focus on personal narratives lends itself to the exploration of vulnerable human lives through its close attentiveness to the psycho-emotional texture of participants’ representations of their lived experience (Liamputtong 2007).

Life history forms of interviewing require no specialist knowledge or competence in participants other than an ability to articulate their story. LHI resonates strongly with the humanistic focus of this research in its person-centred approach. A LHI approach offered close alignment of the method of interviewing with the theoretical assumptions and pastoral concerns of the research (Roulston 2010, 86).

The criminological importance of narrative as a means of accessing the lived experience of participants and the role self-narratives play in forming and maintaining criminal identity is well documented (Crewe and Maruna 2006, Presser 2009, 2010). Arising from this is the recognition that desistance – the ability of a person who is habitually engaged in criminal behaviour to break that pattern – can be greatly influenced by the narratives (s)he is shaped by in making daily decisions (Maruna 2001, Maruna, Wilson, and Curran 2006).

The criminogenic role self-narratives play and desistance theory’s discovery that attentiveness to the stories people tell can be potentially transformative correlates strongly with the therapeutic benefits of personal story-telling that have been acknowledged in the fields of counselling and pastoral care (Jacobs 1988, Lynch and Willows 1998, Payne 2000, Pattison and Lynch 2002). Gerkin, an influential early figure in PT, recognised that “the self maintains its sense of being a self primarily by means of the interpretation of life as a story” (1984, 112). Attentiveness to personal stories is central to the pastoral care chaplains offer (Newitt 2011, 105f.).

Approaching this theologically from the perspective of the Christian faith, in “one way or another human stories are connected with stories of and about God” (Ganzevoort 2012, 214). Whether through the use of scriptural stories or participation in liturgy/ritual the interrelationship between narrative and faith is deep, to the point that God is significantly mediated in storied form (Anderson and Foley 1998).

These interdisciplinary correlations that clustered around narrative as a means to provide an heuristic representation of lived experience gave me increased confidence in a life-history approach to this enquiry. The next problem to address in my research design was the best specific interview instrument to employ within a narrative approach.

### **3.6.1 *Life as a Film (LAAF)***

In scoping a range of possible interview methods I came across ‘Life as a Film’ (LAAF) that has been used in prison-based research. It is described as an “innovative technique [that] generates meaningful and psychologically rich material on the details of the narratives that run through offenders’ understandings of themselves, their relations to others, and their possible futures” (Youngs, Canter, and Carthy 2016, 252). At the heart of the approach incarcerated participants are asked: *If your life were to be made into a film, what type of film would that be and what would happen?* Follow up questions are:

- Tell me more, what would happen?
- Who would the main characters be?
- What would the main events be that might happen in the film?
- How do you think it might end? (ibid., 252)

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Having been formulated in the field of forensic psychology the LAAF method had a scientific rigour that was not wholly appropriate to my ethnographic approach, including multi-page questionnaires and psychological protocols to analyse “emotions”, “narrative roles” and “life trajectories” (Carthy 2013). Whilst such precision was fitting for a psychological enquiry it was unnecessary for my ethnographic task of accessing the lived experience of participants. My aim was not thorough psychological analysis of participants but an exploration of their lifeworlds. Yet the film-based model for life-history interviewing was highly suitable with a slight adaptation of the questions. Knowing the research context and having established some rapport with participants before interviewing I was able to modify the LAAF questions to be comfortably accommodated within the one hour time windows that the research prison’s regime offered (see Appendix 3 for interview questions).

The LAAF method provided a creative means to connect to participants’ self-narratives and hopes as well as eliciting the ‘epiphanies’, ‘significant life-events’ or ‘nuclear episodes’ that were symbolic for the participants, providing meaning to and being formative of their self-narrative (Denzin 1989, McAdams 1997, Atkinson 1998, Plummer 2001, Cole and Knowles 2001). LAAF is not merely concerned with past and present lived experience but invites an imagined future. It is unconstrained by a formalized Question/Answer approach that would be likely to elude responses lacking the descriptive texture that human lives require for adequate ethnographic representation. A screenplay approach to data generation offered both a creative way into the lived experience of IPP participants and also one that was culturally resonant, as was demonstrated by the readiness of all but one participant to engage in the interview method. Film is a media familiar to the participant group and the

LAAF approach offered a creatively oblique means by which to seek to inhabit and represent the life-worlds of participants.<sup>13</sup> This was helpful in a context where many experiences defy simple explanation or easy description but, for justice's sake, demands evocation (see 6.2 and 6.4.3 for further discussion on oblique approaches).

### **3.7 Method 2 – Staff Interviews: Appreciative Inquiry**

The overarching research question concerning appropriate forms of pastoral care invited consideration of examples from participants' experiences of good pastoral practice. In the LAAF participant interviews the fifth question (Who would the main characters be?) was always asked with a supplementary one as to whether any prison staff – uniformed or civilian – had shown up in their story in a particularly supportive way. Unsurprisingly, given the deep sense of aggrievement encountered in the LAAF interviews concerning the injustices of the sentence, only six members of staff were identified in seventeen hours of interviews.

Prior to undertaking fieldwork I had been part of a staff team at the research prison involved in a PS-wide project called "Every Contact Matters" (ECM) which promoted better staff attentiveness in the care of those in their care and custody (NOMS 2014, 15). The method of staff engagement used by the external ECM consultant was Appreciative Inquiry (AI), which I had used in other church-based contexts. AI has been used widely as an action research and organisational change method (Watkins

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<sup>13</sup> I am grateful to a former colleague on the Birmingham DPT programme, Dr Jo Whitehead, for drawing my attention to the quote from Emily Dickinson: "Tell all the truth but tell it slant." She helped me appreciate its epistemological resonance with the ethnographic task of accessing another's lived experience and the need, often, to attempt this obliquely.

and Mohr 2001, Cooperrider and Whitney 2005, Zandee and Cooperrider 2008, Ludema and Fry 2008). Within the field of criminal justice it has established research credentials noted for its relational focus (Liebling and Arnold 2005, Liebling, Price, and Elliott 1999). AI's strengths-based and "empathetic approach" lessened the chance of generating unintended and unwarranted negativity amongst staff (Liebling, Price, and Elliott 1999, 75). Pastoral experience of the fragility of staff morale at that time predisposed me towards an affirmatively inclined process of enquiry. Again, the *praxis* of my research around humane regard required a method that would be pastorally sensitive whilst also investigative.

The intention was to use AI to draw out the experience of IPP participant-facing staff and quarry the best pastoral practice that they have witnessed or practiced in the system. This positive core was extracted through formal AI interviewing which was then brought into critical conversation with the IPP participants' life-history material in the latter stages of qualitative data analysis. The interview protocol used for the six staff interviews can be found in Appendix 4. The questions posed covered vocational, pastoral, institutional and relational (staff/resident) topics.

### **3.8 Method 3 – Focus Groups**

Focus Groups (FGs) were an established practice within the research prison and were employed in my research prior to LAAF individual interviews. They are useful means by which to gather data amongst prison residents whose average literacy rates are significantly lower than the general population. FGs "do not discriminate against people who cannot read or write and they can encourage participation from people reluctant to be interviewed on their own or who feel they have nothing to say"

(Kitzinger 1995, 299). They can provide respectful and non-judgemental space where discourse is facilitated (Krueger and Casey 2015, 4). This contrasts creatively with the frequently conflictual and hierarchical experience of prison life for the participants.

Four IPP participant FGs were arranged prior to any 1:1 interviews taking place. The aim of each group was fourfold, as explained to the participants at the outset. Firstly, my research interest was reiterated, reminding them of the information provided in the research information and consent material they had already received. Secondly, we explored their initial thoughts on 'best practice' regarding any relevant pastoral care/support they had received. Thirdly, they were invited to nominate or give further thought to staff who had demonstrated such practice (to become staff participants in the fieldwork – this was followed up in the 1:1 LAAF interviews for the IPP participants). Finally, the LAAF interview method was explained and the genre illustration material was circulated (Appendix 5). Throughout the FGs an assistant moderator was present and was invited to provide feedback to me after each session concerning any issues that may have arisen.

As with all the interviews and group meetings, digital recording took place and transcripts were prepared. The transcript from each individual interview – staff and IPP participants – were provided for each person except the two (one staff and one IPP participant) who expressly stated they did not want a personal copy.

### **3.9 Finding Participant Voice**

Whilst conducting the seventeen IPP participant LAAF and six staff AI interviews, which produced transcripts for over twenty five hours of recording, I sought to identify

a method for qualitative data analysis that was true to the *praxis* of my research. I referred to Saldaña's *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* as a comprehensive study of all the main approaches (2016). According to Saldaña, the *In Vivo* coding method was highly suited for "studies that prioritize and honour the participant's voice" (2016, 106). This was an important element of my research *praxis*.

### **3.9.1 Participant Voice**

Responsible research amongst vulnerable participants required that I paid due attention to the storied lives of the incarcerated participants to access "prisoner voice" (Crewe and Bennett 2012, 144). In situations of injustice, systemic disregard deepens the hurt suffered through the creation of ethical loneliness and epistemic injustice explored in Chapter One. Facilitating the 'giving of voice' to those usually marginalised, ignored or silenced is an act of justice which had transformative potential. The IPP participants were keen to tell their stories. Regard for their lived experience, through attentiveness to their stories, embodied both pastoral care and justice. The *In Vivo* method of coding was highly suited to facilitating participant voice.

### **3.9.2 In Vivo Coding**

*In Vivo* coding uses "the direct language of participants as codes rather than researcher-generated words and phrases" (Saldaña 2016). I subjected each IPP participant LAAF interview transcript to three iterations of coding which I named *Raw*, *Fine I* and *Fine II* respectively (see Appendix 6 for a graphical representation). I

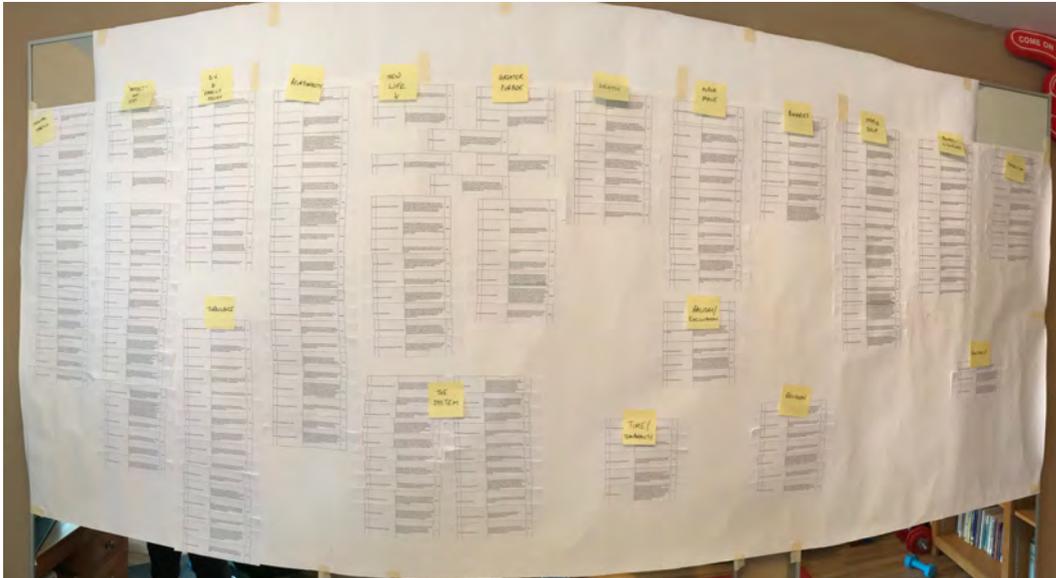
## *Hope Deferred, Humanity Diminished?*

conducted the qualitative data analysis using QSR NVivo™ software. The *Raw > Fine I > Fine II* approach I developed held the participants' narrative data central throughout the 'sifting out and surfacing' of the coding process. It allowed me to apply humane regard to the psycho-emotionally significant elements of participants' spoken narrative.

The *Raw* coding stage consisted of excising the textual elements that were ethnographically superfluous (such as my introductory contributions) whilst drawing out sections of each participant's data that I identified as key due to their significance concerning the lived experience being described. The *Raw* codes were usually a number of lines of text in length. *Fine I* and *Fine II* levels of coding were a sharpening of the focus within the *Raw* material, honing it down to sentence or phrase length portions of participant speech that were felt especially significant. This analytically foregrounded elements of the interviewee's story that were particularly disclosive of ethnographically important aspects of their lived experience. The *Fine II* stage was broken down into three phases (A,B and C) and a master codebook created using a Microsoft *Excel*™ spreadsheet. During this coding stage I began to cluster *Fine I* codes into groups around a central code that could succinctly encapsulate a thematic element of the lived experience described using the participant's own words.

This stage of data analysis identified a total of 213 *In Vivo* (*Fine II*) codes from across the seventeen interview transcripts. These were printed off and cut into individual code strips which were manually sorted into themes using a wall sized sheet of paper. The paper had been coated with 3M Spray Mount™ which allowed for code

strips to be attached and re-arranged as necessary during the sorting process. This was carried out over two days and eighteen themes emerged (see Figure 3).



**Figure 3 – Manual Thematising Stage**

The final phase of the data sifting took the eighteen themes and looked for natural connections between them in relation to the research focus of a pastoral response to the lived experience of men serving IPP sentences. The following seven meta-themes were identified and these will be considered in depth in the next chapter:

- **Behaviour**
- **Development**
- **The *Affect* of IPP**
- **Hope**
- **Thinking**
- **Time**
- **Relationality**

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The data analysis process had been one of stripping down the narrative layers and paring the text back to a handful of words used in each of the 213 *In Vivo* codes. As a result, at the conclusion of the process I felt distanced from the life-histories the codes represented. I recognised a need to return to the actual narratives to both re-connect with the lived experiences the codes and themes represented as well as to self-check that the seven meta-themes were textually present and not notions the data analysis procedure had conjured. I went through all seventeen transcripts and created a Microsoft *Word*<sup>™</sup> document for each of the meta-themes containing illustrative quotations that were more narrative in form. I did the same with the four FGs' and one Member Checking Groups' transcripts. I found this to be an excellent means by which to re-inhabit the narratives as well as ensuring the themes and meta-themes distilled from the life-histories by the data analysis process had an actual basis within these stories.

#### **3.9.3 Found Poems**

Saldaña's guidance about the *In Vivo* coding method (see 3.9.2) also introduced me to "poetic transcription", otherwise known as "found poetry" (FP – also for "found poem"). FPs are a means of textually representing the interview data and the life-histories contained therein (Saldaña 2016, 109). *In Vivo* coding lends itself to poetic representation, possibly as a result of the textual paring described above. An analytical stripping away of the text to expose its ethnographic heart creates poetic 'pearls' of lived-experience that can be strung together in an evocative fashion. These 'pearls' are snippets of text that are freighted with psycho-emotional elements that helped me understand and communicate to others the texture of lives lived

within indeterminacy. I prefer the expression “found poetry” to “poetic transcription”. It does better justice to the notion that, as I discovered, the analyst’s role is to allow the lived-experience contained within the data to find its own voice.

FP’s representational method had been developed by Mears drawing upon the earlier work of Glesne (Glesne 1997, Mears 2009). Mears’ PhD was a study into how communities deal with collective trauma and was conducted following the high school shooting in Columbine (Colorado, USA) in 1999. Mears’ son had been a student in attendance at the school on the day of the massacre. In conducting her research amongst traumatised survivors and their families (of which she was part) she observed that:

I felt that my voice and the voices of others in the study had been silenced, our personal interpretations of our own experiences negated. That encounter on the other side of the microphone made me committed to preserving each narrator’s voice and meaning in my research (Mears 2009, 49).

Honouring ‘participant voice’, the poems are crafted through the selection and arrangement of short sections of text, always using interviewees’ own words (apart from minor grammatical improvements). In my research the sections were selected from the data distilled out of the *Raw* phase of the *In Vivo* process (see 3.9.2). FPs can be found after the Introduction, in the Poetic Interlude following Chapter Four and before the Final Reflection. This placement is to periodically re-connect the reader’s attention to the ‘flesh and blood’ lived experience that is at the heart of this research.

The FPs, and the accompanying images, are for the “enlightened eye” that sees the texture and quality of the lives represented (Eisner 1998). Telling the truth on “the slant” (see 3.6.1 n.11), FP’s representation of lived experience “as a poem models a way of telling that creates in its readers and listeners an emotional response in addition to cognitive knowing” (Mears 2009, 59). The documents at the centre of this research were not transcripts but human beings (Gerkin 1984, Plummer 2001). Found poetry offered a medium via which readers might come to know about the IPP lived experience not only cognitively but also emotionally. I knew the FPs that had emerged from the data had achieved this when, during one supervision meeting, my supervisor confessed that he always felt moved by the poems and that he found there was something rightfully disturbing about them.<sup>14</sup>

### **3.9.4 LAAF Movie Posters**

Around the same time I came across FPs as a representational medium, discussion with two colleagues on my DPT programme suggested another, more visual, means could be used in parallel to poems. It was an alternative way of representing the life-story that was deeply resonant with the metaphor central to the LAAF interview method: movie posters.

Example movie posters had been used in the FG film genre material to illustrate the different types of stories represented in movies (Appendix 5). I had been inspired by Kara’s work around creativity in research methods and recognised how heuristic

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<sup>14</sup> Additionally, the reader who proofed this thesis is an experienced Offender Manager (Probation Officer) who has worked with many IPP people in custody. Having proof-read my work he described the FPs as “profound and insightful” and commented that they greatly resonated with his experiences in the field. (Personal emails from Les Robertson 20 February 2020 and 3 March 2020.)

such approaches have been in contexts similar to my fieldwork environment (Kara 2015). My study colleagues suggested I might create a visual representation in the style of a movie poster for each of the LAAF participants. I am not being modest when I state I am not an artist, so there was an immediate problem with my colleagues' suggestion.

On my research journey I have discovered many serendipitous factors that have assisted my work. One such was having worked briefly (in another context) with a visual artist who has a role in a prison-based rehabilitative arts programme.<sup>15</sup> I therefore had someone I could approach whom I knew would be open to taking on the movie poster commission and do so at a charitable rate. I briefed the artist largely using the outcomes from Question 5 (Film Trailer Scenes) with a little anonymised background material where I thought necessary for the sense-making of the data. Juxtaposed with the FPs the combined material provides a good medium for the ethnographic evocation I discuss in 3.11.

### **3.10 Member Checking**

I had hoped that the FPs and LAAF movie posters would have served as data analysis outcome material for participants to engage with as a member checking exercise. Member checking (Clair 2012, 115-117) or respondent validation (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, 180f.) is an attempt by a researcher to ascertain the degree to which the representation(s) of lived experience depicted is recognised by the participants themselves. It is a contested practice in ethnographic enquiry (Birt

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<sup>15</sup> Ralph Mann. See <https://www.prodigalarts.org>

et al. 2016). Its appeal was an ethical one which recognised the right of participants to know the public outcomes of what they have shared and to be provided with the opportunity to respond to what is reported. Difficulties arise around the extent to which participant feedback is accepted uncritically. As Hammersley and Atkinson observe: “Whether respondents are enthusiastic, indifferent, or hostile, their reactions cannot be taken as direct validation or refutation of the observer’s inferences” (2007, 183).

Auerbach and Silverstein note that “subjectivity, interpretation, and context are inevitably interwoven into every research project” and assert that “these elements of research practice are essential and should not be eliminated even if it were possible to do so” (2003, 77). Due to the high level of transfers (and some releases) that affected IPP participants the opportunity to do a face-to-face member checking exercise was limited to just one group meeting with a handful of participants. In addition to reviewing with them their experience of the research process, the four remaining participants were shown all the LAAF posters, asked if they could guess which one was theirs and for any responses to the images.<sup>16</sup>

Half the group identified their movie poster. The group size was not substantial enough for anything significant to be gleaned from this data. However, in explaining to the participants what they were looking at I described the posters in terms of “representations, of representations of self-representations”. I have subsequently reflected upon this and realise that this description captures the art of ethnography.

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<sup>16</sup> All participants received a professionally printed full size version of their own poster.

Digital recording omits body language and speech can be garbled. Transcription veracity can be problematic (Poland 1995). Qualitative data analysis methods are inherently subjective. Finally, only a naïve researcher would believe that everything a participant discloses is 'true' or recalled with fidelity. Ethnographers conjure representations of self-representations.

### **3.10.1 *The Flux of Fieldwork***

A final attempt at member checking was carried out early in 2019. At this point only two of the seventeen participants were at the original research prison. Having resigned from the PS in May 2018 my access to contact addresses was not straightforward. Although permission from the Governing Governor was readily forthcoming it took another two months from my initial enquiry for the contact information to be made available. Also, for security reasons, it was not wise to give my personal contact details on the stamped addressed envelopes enclosed for participants to return completed survey forms. A PO Box address was organised so the process was further delayed as I could not send out the return addressed material until the PO Box was set up.

Due to these difficulties it would have been easy for me to give up on any hope of further contact yet I felt a desire to make one last attempt. The purpose was threefold:

1. To thank the participants and provide assurance that the research was progressing towards the public telling of their story.

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2. To seek one last act of participation. As a participant group their contribution to my research and willingness to share of themselves had humbled me. I wanted to offer them a final opportunity to inform the outcomes.
3. To close off the researcher/participant relationship whose psycho-emotional connection I felt had been interrupted by circumstances (theirs and mine).<sup>17</sup> My on-going *In Vivo* engagement with their stories had, surprisingly, embedded these narratives within my own 'lived experience'. They remained present to me and this evoked a desire to communicate my on-going deep humane regard one last time. (I had sent them a New Year best wishes card as soon as the updated contact addresses were available.)

My final act of outreach was to forward to all contactable participants the member checking survey form (see Appendix 7), their FP and an A4 version of their LAAF movie poster. Only four responses were received. Whilst this final act of outreach to participants met my acknowledged (above) psycho-emotional need not a great deal otherwise can be derived from the experience. Given the vagaries of the prison mail system and the frequent relocations of the participants a 'non-response' cannot be read as data.

This was a disappointing outcome but a lesson learned. Prison-based research is undertaken in a context of high population fluctuation. Part-time research is challenging amongst such flux as the issue of member-checking has shown. With

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<sup>17</sup> In one field of psychology this is referred to as an interruption of the *gestalt* of a piece of work or relational contact (see Perls 1947 and Siminovitch 2017).

little participant feedback data to work with, how is the 'truth' of my visio-textual and thematic representations gauged?

### **3.11 Narrative Truth or Ethnographic Evocation?**

LAAF's screenplay approach invites a degree of 'poetic licence' with concomitant dangers of responses being so fictionalised as to be judged "bullshit" (Silverman 2013, 119-145). Others point out that "fictionalization has long been used as a narrative strategy by social scientists in the representation of their work" (Roulston 2010, 170 citing, Krieger 1983). This issue is further complicated by incarcerated participants being regarded as more inclined to fabricate than other research subjects. But "the suspicion that offenders' stories are strategically pitched and thus potentially inauthentic belies a view of stories as social artefacts for some, when they are social artefacts for all" (Presser 2009, 181). Stories are always fabricated. Lived human experience is too complex and nuanced ever to be adequately described in textual or dramatic form to the satisfaction of thoroughgoing realists. As Presser observed, "concern with stories as inauthentic reflects a conception of narrative as data on human experience—as valid or invalid only insofar as the stories equate to what really happened. It is only one of the ways that narrative may be conceived" (2009, 181).

The interplay of storyteller, writer (of the account), the text or performance produced and the audience/reader response creates a dynamic more complex than answering the question: "Is this a true account that describes what really happened?" Co-creation of the narrative begins with the storyteller and the writer and the choices they make in what is disclosed and how it will be represented. Narratives are

mutually created within this interplay (Connelly and Clandinin 1990, 4, Presser 2009, 193). Therefore, the 'truth' of this research's textual representations needs to be judged by a criterion other than correspondence to an objective reality. As Denzin has noted: "The truth of these new texts is determined pragmatically, by their truth effects, by the critical, moral discourse they produce, by the 'empathy they generate, the exchange of experience they enable, and the social bonds they mediate'" (Denzin 1999, 514 citing Jackson 1998, 180).

Moschella notes: "an ethnographic narrative may be a beautiful and telling representation of the social life of a group, yet it always remains a construction, a story about the author's experience of the group" (2008, 29). This is not to discredit into uselessness the ethnographic enterprise but to be honest about its intent and limitations, as the researcher's "final account is more than just a description – it is a *construction*" (Denscombe 2014, 81 - original emphasis).

The basic building blocks of the ethnographic edifice I have constructed have remained the *in vivo* fragments of participant voice. The outcomes of this enquiry have been narratively traced back to the interview transcripts to check for plausibility. I therefore have confidence enough that the textual picture I have drawn from the lived-experiences shared by participants will help readers empathically inhabit – as best any observer can – the lived experience of men serving an IPP sentence. Such empathic accessing of another's situation is central to the humane attentiveness this research has highlighted as inspiring good pastoral practice. In addressing the question "What is truth?" in the context of ethnographic enquiry, Denzin argues that it "is always personal and subjective. An evocative and not a representational

epistemology is [to be] sought" (Denzin 1997, 266). The FPs that have emerged from this research are artefacts of such ethnographic evocation.

### **3.12 Summary Conclusion**

In preparation for writing this chapter I reviewed my NOMS research application and university Application for Ethical Review to remind myself of the journey I imagined I would be taking during fieldwork. As someone who is temperamentally a perfectionist it is a healthy sign that this review exercise made me smile with amusement rather than wince with a sense of personal shortcoming. The research design and process as imagined in 2016 bear strong resemblances to the actual enquiry landscape explored. But there have also been by-ways that turned into dead-ends and unforeseen circumstances along the way.

I have learned that the research design and process must evolve as it seeks to remain true to the *praxis* of the enquiry. The design is not a road map but an orientation on an exploratory quest. The process is not an itinerary to follow inflexibly but a guidebook companion through which to investigate purposefully the contours of the research landscape. The creative discoveries along the way of LAAF movie posters and FPs, as forms of deeply evocative ethnographic representation, could not have been envisaged at the outset, but clarity about design and process meant what these methods offered could be quickly recognised and embraced.

Through all the challenges one concern remained central: to access the lived experience of participants serving an indeterminate sentence and to represent the stories those lives contained. The willingness of the participants to share their stories continues to humble me. It was a privilege to work with and learn from them. The

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positive outcomes from this fieldwork owe as much to the richness of the qualitative data participants were willing to share as to research design or process. To the degree to which the process or design facilitated the elucidation of that rich data they served their purpose.

In the next chapter I will explore the thematic outcomes from this data in some depth.

## **CHAPTER FOUR – FINDINGS**

...it wears you down, day by day, week by week...doesn't seem that you are making any progress, you are not living you're just, you existing and you know you are just there. (IPP Participant ID22 LAAF 27:11)

### **4.1 Introduction**

Prior to fieldwork, years of pastoral practice as a chaplain and casual conversations with men serving IPP sentences had made me curious about the role that relationships – or lack of quality ones – had played in their lives. I was interested in exploring how relationality might be a source of pastoral support within which hope could be fostered amongst a group of men for whom prospect of release was frequently deferred.

In this thesis' introduction I referred to the pastoral encounter I had in the [redacted] of 2015 with a young man serving an IPP sentence that inspired this research (for the purposes here, AB). Pastoral demands in places of mass incarceration can be overwhelming but on that occasion I found opportunity to sit and chat at length with AB. His young life had been less than ideal and included a period in care as a child. This is not unusual as nearly “one in four adults in prison has spent time in care” (Prison Reform Trust 2016, 119). In December 2008 he had been given an IPP sentence with a minimum tariff of two years for a serious violent offence. It was his first time in prison. AB was five years “over tariff” and confessed to me, with flat

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affect, that he believed the only way he would leave prison “would be in a body bag”. A few weeks later he was found hung in his cell at morning unlock.

My encounter with AB was a chance one. I had been on his wing for other business but he seemed keen to talk when our paths crossed. We sat at the communal lunch/dinner table and chatted at length. Re-reading my journal reflection about that encounter (written after his death) I noted I was struck by the quality of the conversation. Because of his ADHD<sup>18</sup>, he laughed at the end of our chat and apologised for being “a talking head”. There was an honesty to his uninterrupted and almost frenzied telling of his story. He acknowledged his behaviour could be problematic and made no excuses for his poor decisions and bad actions. But he stated he had lost hope after a number of Parole Board ‘knock backs’. There was profound pathos in the way he described his situation – an existential bleakness. As we parted he shook my hand and thanked me for listening, explaining that he rarely got chance in the prison environment to sit down with someone who was prepared to just listen to his story.

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<sup>18</sup> Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Subsequent reflection, alongside engagement with the IPP interview data, has helped me tease out what I was sensing about the transformative potential of such encounters. AB was highly appreciative of the level of humane regard he had felt in our meeting. I was curious to know about the human being behind the problematic behaviour. This

### Themes

<b>time</b>	<b>behaviour</b>	<b>development</b>
Fatalism Death Temporality	Penal Culture Criminal Habitus	Turbulence D.V./ Family Issues Racism / Exclusion
<b>Relationality</b>		
Binaries Fantasy Alpha Male Stupid Self	New Life Greater Purpose Religion	The System <i>Affect of IPP</i>
<b>thinking</b>	<b>hope</b>	<b>affect</b>

Figure 4 “6+1” Meta-Themes

is a relational focus whereas in the correctional environment a person’s behaviour largely becomes the focus of attention and intervention. My desire to keep the relational at the centre of this research is why I have chosen to conceptualise the seven meta-themes as “6 + 1” and depict them as in Figure 4. This also best represents a key finding from the data: the relational elements present in the participants’ life-histories significantly influence the other six meta-themes. For example, whilst the detrimental psycho-emotional “*Affect of IPP*” was present in all participant interviews the one participant that was still “under tariff” was least affected by it because of a strong and stable bond with his family which provided the *rationale* and encouragement to progress through his sentence in a timely manner. This mapping exercise can be carried out from “Relationality” to all the other meta-themes because of its centrality. As will also be argued in Chapter Seven, the quality of pastoral relationships is central to the hope-fostering care that could be offered to

IPP men and women. This finding concurs with the recognition in other research that “questions of interpersonal treatment are among the most important matters of being human as well as the most important aspects of prison life” (Liebling 2011, 544).

This introduction to my findings has been personal in nature. When I was notified of AB’s death I wept. In Chapter Six I will reflexively engage with the opportunities and dangers presented by the ‘up close and personal’ nature of insider research. I have begun here with a story that affected me personally so as to anchor the following process and its abstracted outcomes in the visceral reality that this research engaged with daily. These findings are offered with the intention of making a transformative contribution to this reality and are appropriately shaped by my experience of it.

## **4.2 Meta-Themes and Commentaries**

As discussed in Chapter Three (see 3.9.2), sifting and sorting of the interview data consisted of three iterations (*Raw*, *Fine I* and *Fine II*). I wrote Coding Memos for each of the 213 *Fine II* codes to assist with remembering the gist of what each phrase referred to in participants’ lived experience (see Appendix 8 for examples). With the aid of an assistant (to provide an additional ‘pair of eyes’) two days of sorting produced eighteen themes from this stage of analysis. I then worked my way back to the original narratives to check that the outcomes of this coding process were grounded in the interview data. No significant contradictions were found although, unsurprisingly, there was variation around the strength of presence of some themes in the narrated lived-experiences of different participants. For example, under the “Family Issues” theme, not all participants had experienced a “troubled childhood” (ID43 LAAF 09:11), but many had.

Whilst textually re-inhabiting participant narrated lived-experiences I identified relevant interview quotations that were expressive of each theme. A review of the eighteen emergent themes revealed that it was possible to sort them further into seven *meta*-themes for which I wrote in-depth commentaries explicating further these ethnographic elements that had been painstakingly distilled from interview data. (I use the term *meta*-theme to denote the seven overarching themes that emerged in the analytical clustering of the eighteen initial themes that emerged from the data.) Whilst “relationships” was a general theme that had run through many of the interviews, at this stage of analysis I was able to draw a sharper focus to it. Re-visiting the interview texts identified four clear sub-components to the “Relationality” meta-theme (see below), taking the emergent themes to twenty-one. The meta-theme commentaries provide the basis for the following sections (which also contains a handful of illustrative *In Vivo* codes/quotations).

The initial eighteen themes (which included ‘Relationality’) that emerged from the IPP interview data plus the four that emerged from ‘Relationality’ when revisiting the data were re-configured into the following meta-themes:

### **Behaviour**

- Criminal Habitus
- Penal Culture

### **Development**

- Domestic Violence / Family Issues
- Turbulence
- Racism / Exclusion

**Affect**

- *Affect* of IPP
- The System

**Hope**

- New Life
- Greater Purpose
- Religion

**Thinking**

- Binaries
- Stupid Self
- Alpha Male
- Fantasy

**Time**

- Fatalism / Apathy
- Temporality
- Death

**Relationality**

- Belief
- Belonging
- Presence
- Family

These meta-themes will now be explored in detail. Illustrative *in vivo* quotes are provided with the relevant participant identification number and LAAF interview time stamp (minutes : seconds format). Time information will be primarily provided in the following tables and only in the body of the text where not previously stated.

**4.2.1 Behaviour – “the normality of things” (ID38 16:40)**

<i>Criminal Habitus</i>	<i>Penal Culture</i>
aspects of crime (ID22 10:05) associates with crime (ID10 09:02) Dad was a criminal (ID04 50:14) just a way of life (ID40 11:50) just your childhood (ID43 67:00) product of the environment (ID17 12:15)	in and out of prison (ID40 42:30) like any other jail (ID02 13:31) prisoner story (ID31 06:10) spent in jail (ID04 30:25) too old for prison (ID05 49:31) you don't grass (ID35 14:35)

The Criminal Justice Act of 2003 (CJA 2003) created the “Imprisonment for Public Protection” sentence (“Detention for Public Protection” for those under 18 years of age). Schedule 15 of the Act specified 65 violent and 87 sexual offences that would warrant the sentence being passed. The scope and gravity of the offences highlight that the legislation was deliberately targeted at those deemed “dangerous” and, in the case of those with no prior convictions, courts were directed to “take into account any information which is before [them] about any pattern of behaviour of which the offence forms part” (§229 (2)b). Therefore this sentence was frequently passed on offenders with patterns of criminal behaviour that had been well-established in childhood, as the research interviews revealed.

Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus* is helpful here (1990). *Habitus* can be understood as “the way society becomes deposited in persons in the form of lasting *dispositions*, or trained capacities and structured propensities to think, feel and act in determinant ways, which then guide them” (Wacquant 2011, 318, emphasis in the original). The background that many people in custody come from provided the social environment within which the attitudes and behaviours associated with criminality became

ingrained as habits, skills and dispositions. This behaviour became the “normality of things” (ID38). Whilst this is true of a significant proportion of the prison population, those serving an IPP sentence represent a concentrated embodiment of this criminal *habitus*. Given the IPP’s aim to identify and socially neutralise people deemed to be “dangerous offenders” the attitudes and behaviours associated with this group and described in interviews were often extreme and attributed to being a “product of the environment” (ID17).

Exacerbating the behavioural issues acquired pre-custody is the impact of penal culture. Current re-offending rates are high (nearly 48% of adults re-offend within a year of release) (Prison Reform Trust 2018). IPP interviewees often spoke of how frequent spells of incarceration (and some of care homes as children) provided further opportunity to develop their criminal ways. One spoke of how moving around the country in various jails allowed him to draw upon different expertise concerning house burglaries and modes of entry (ID22 11:30). Whilst children “in the care of the local authority, or ‘looked after children’, are overrepresented within the custodial population” I do not cite this correlation in a deterministic way (Summerfield et al. 2011, 9). It is merely illustrative of a known childhood factor in the lived experience of many people in custody, as with this participant group. Prisons seem poor at rehabilitation, especially amongst those with deep patterns of criminal behaviour. The criminal dispositions often acquired in childhood and developed further in custody are not easily shaken when released into communities where the *habitus* described here is the “normality of things”.

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This research was undertaken at a time when prisons in England and Wales were in crisis compounding further their rehabilitative failings. At the 2018 Prison Governors' Association Conference a former Chief Inspector of Prisons stated the causes: "I saw week by week what was happening. A lethal...combination of staff cuts, population pressures and misguided short-term policy changes" (Hardwick 2018). IPP participants spoke of the deterioration in prison conditions as compared to past sentences. The psycho-behavioural problems caused by the prevalence of synthetic psycho-active substances had dramatically compromised levels of safety. One participant disclosed he had used his time prior to an imminent return into custody "to prep [him]self to take things in which [he] wouldn't be allowed to take into the prison" (ID40 13:30).

As the ill effects of staffing cuts became only too apparent attempts were made to recruit new prison officers. In 2018 21% of prison officers had been in post less than one year (Prison Reform Trust 2018, 5) . But retention has been poor – 39% of uniformed staff who left the service in 2017 had served less than a year (ibid.). Only half of wing staff have ten years' experience or more (ibid). This situation is mirrored in reverse by the lived experiences of a number of IPP participants who had been in and out of the system for a long time and were much habituated to penal culture. The contextual change and increased instability was noted by numerous participants (see especially ID17 21:17ff regarding increased officer inexperience).

People labelled by the IPP sentence as "dangerous offenders" are unlikely to respond positively to these challenges. However, unlike their determinately sentenced peers, if they misbehave they can be 'knocked back' and effectively have

years added to their time served. The current penal context and culture has made it increasingly harder for IPP people in custody to demonstrate effectively their risk to the public can be managed in the community. Under these pressures the penal environment has become less rehabilitative, especially for those most deeply embedded in a criminal *habitus*.

**4.2.2 Development – “troubled childhood” (ID43 08:55)**

<i>Family Issues/Domestic Violence</i>	<i>Turbulence</i>	<i>Racism/Exclusion</i>
didn't listen to me (ID30 09:55) early years (ID03 51:45) fighting quite a lot (ID10 15:30) got the belt (ID43 16:10) hit me (ID38 11:10) sexual abuse we suffered (ID30 10:30)	hated the world (ID30 10:15) always in disagreements (ID38 07:25) all or nothing (ID40 20:37) got kicked out (ID22 11:39) the chaotic lifestyle (ID39 12:10) very turbulent (ID43 07:15)	beat up a lot (ID10 10:00) mixed race (ID10 11:02) on the edge (ID22 06:00) only deaf person (ID05 33:18) sound like travelling travellers (ID04 30:29) slave whips (ID27 13:39)

This meta-theme is closely related to “Behaviour” (4.2.1). As discussed, a number of the IPP group had experienced spells in care and the juvenile prison estate prior to adult incarceration. Whilst criminal behaviour was, for many, the “normality of things” (above), their home lives were also un conducive to healthy childhood psycho-emotional development. This concurs with the research findings from the Ministry of Justice’s Analytical Services that found a strong link between problematic childhood backgrounds and the likelihood of offending behaviour leading to imprisonment (Williams, Papadopoulou, and Booth 2012). Issues disclosed during interviews and consonant with wider research are:

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- witnessing and/or being a target of domestic violence (e.g. “hit me” [ID38]).
- sexual abuse (e.g. “sexual abuse we suffered” [ID30])
- a sense of exclusion – including from school (e.g. “got kicked out” [ID22])
- poor affect regulation encouraging extremes of behaviour, especially involving violence (e.g. “all or nothing” [ID40])
- exposure to drugs, sometimes early in childhood and substance misuse by teenage years (e.g. “took my drugs” [ID30 24:17])

Prevalent in the transcribed narratives are early years and adolescent experiences that are known to be detrimental to life outcomes. A whole body of research and national health care initiatives have focussed upon what have been identified as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Much of this has been undergirded by the developmental theories of Gabor Maté (Maté 2012, 2019a, b, Maté and Neufeld 2019). ACEs are defined as exposure to:

- Parental separation
- Domestic violence
- Physical abuse
- Verbal abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Mental illness (of family member)
- Alcohol abuse
- Drug abuse
- Incarceration (of parent)

An early study demonstrated the link between ACEs and illicit drug use (Dube et al. 2003). Further research has shown direct links between ACEs and adult criminality

(Reavis et al. 2013). Early intervention social-health care initiatives in Scotland and Wales have sought to target at-risk youngsters as well as develop more “trauma informed” approaches to ‘delinquent’ behaviour in education (NHS Health Scotland 2019, NHS Wales / GIG Cymru 2019). Public Health England has also sought to raise awareness in health care of ACE factors and notes that those exposed to four or more ACEs are eleven times more likely to be incarcerated than those more fortunate (Reid-Blackwood 2019, 16). The social data concerning persons in custody are disturbing (see "Social characteristics of adult prisoners" in Prison Reform Trust 2018, 20). A trauma-informed approach to people in custody is not without its challenges given the punitive climate and staffing levels that are currently present in carceral space (Vaswani and Paul 2019).

This IPP research raises the question of appropriate pastoral care for a group within which these ACE factors are high and are perhaps present in a peculiarly concentrated form (further research would need to be conducted to test this theory due to small sample group). How might care be offered that could mitigate some of the detrimental effects of ACEs? At the very least, I will argue, having a pastoral awareness of the often severe and detrimental developmental experiences suffered by many people in custody during childhood can foster an empathic regard amongst staff (see 7.3.2 for more on an ‘empathic presence’).

Many prison staff avoid thinking in simple binary terms of “offender/victim”, as many recognise that those in custody were themselves victims in another context. But amongst a group labelled as “dangerous offenders” in public discourse, who now seem behaviourally locked into patterns of parole ‘knock backs’ or release/recall, a

pastoral and empathic stance can easily be eroded by frequent disappointments experienced by staff who have hope invested in people in custody. The maintenance of the empathic regard argued for here is supported by the “person-centred social science” approach as promoted by the Prison Research Centre as well as related notions such as “intelligent trust” (Liebling et al. 2015, O’Neill 2017, see also Armstrong 2014). This will be discussed further in Chapter Seven.

**4.2.3 The Affect of IPP – “the emotions” (ID37 39:15)**

<i>Affect of IPP</i>	<i>The System</i>
a horrible sentence (ID17 16:55) being tortured (ID31 40:25) Groundhog Day (ID31 34:45) I am depressed (ID02 25:30) it's been crap (ID30 33:15) shocked me (ID37 06:20)	all lied to me (ID38 31:10) ain't trusting no one (ID30 33:14) because of probation (ID04 71:14) hatred for the system (ID31 09:20) Human Rights (ID18 12:30; ID31 28:45) playing the system (ID43 43:55)

In the field of social psychology there has been a conceptual turn to “affect” to deepen understanding of the phenomena of social interaction and lived experience (Wetherell 2015). Whilst “Affect Theory” remains contested in both psychology and sociology (Wetherell 2015, Figlerowicz 2012, Gregg and Seigworth 2010) many social psychologists find it heuristically useful in the sociological exploration of the role power plays within experiences that generate resistance to social control (Hynes 2013).

Affective elements (“the emotions” [ID37]) were described throughout the interviews providing the psycho-emotional ‘texture’ of participants’ lived experience “underneath” the IPP:

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- shock – “shocked me” (ID37 )
- a sense of “being tortured” (ID31)
- depression – “I am depressed” (ID02)
- hopelessness – “false hope” (ID22 27:05)
- anger – “just angers me” (ID02); “pissed me off” (ID02)
- loss – “got nothing now” (ID35); “baby momma” (ID27); “out there” (ID18)
- apathy – “Couldn’t be bothered” (ID30)
- abandonment – “out of sight” (ID31)
- confusion – “can’t explain it” (ID39)
- recurring personal disappointment – “Got a knock-back” (ID40)
- aversion- “It’s been crap” (ID30); “a horrible sentence” (ID17)
- resignation – “you don’t know when” (ID18); “every single day” (ID18); “Groundhog Day” (ID31)

It is my contention that the experience of the IPP sentence constructs a phenomenological state of being that is psycho-emotionally freighted in a way not so acutely present in other forms of incarceration: “Persons on whom such sentences are imposed have no guarantee of ever being released. Their fate is fully in the hands of the state” (Prison Reform Trust 2018, 6). One research participant spoke of being “sentenced underneath” the IPP (ID18 25:01) and another as “I fell under this IPP” (ID35 00:55), as if their experiences were of being crushed by an overbearing existential weight or hazard.

This was especially true in the IPP’s early years when those serving under it were often held in or even transferred to prisons where the offender behaviour (OB) courses they needed to undertake as a requirement of their sentence plan were

unavailable or for which the waiting list was significant. This undoubtedly delayed their release. One participant spoke of living with the prospect in the early years of his sentence of being “on tour” around the country on OB courses (ID38 38:45).

Compounding the frustrations of sentence management has been the abolished status of the sentence (“throw away sentence” [ID35 36:00]). Ended over seven years ago, almost 90% of IPP people in custody are “over tariff” and 459 people serving IPP sentences were given less than a two year minimum tariff (Prison Reform Trust 2018, 8). These factors, frequently referred to in individual and group interviews, generated “hatred for the system” (ID31). Common across the lived experience of incarcerated people and strongly represented in this research was a lack of trust in “the System” (of justice, care, education, etc.) and “authoritative figures” (ID40 22:30). There was a strong sense of pre-custodial betrayal that was compounded by the perceived injustices of the sentence and its on-going administration (“all lied to me” [ID38]; “ain’t trusting no one” [ID30]; “because of probation” [ID04]; “Human Rights” [ID18 & ID31]). Some stated an instrumental aim in “playing the system” (ID43).

Some of this *affect* is also true of determinately sentenced people, but amongst those serving under IPP there is an increased psycho-emotional intensity due to the indeterminate nature of their custody – they do not know how long they have to exist in this affective state of being. Compounding this was a sense that many staff did not know which of those in their care and custody were serving an IPP sentence (ID39 64:20ff.). Even those who did know might not understand what ‘IPP’ meant for the person in custody. One interviewed member of staff confessed as to having to

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Google™ what “IPP” was before participating in the research. This, I believe, fosters a sense of isolation and “ethical loneliness” within the IPP group (see 1.5). The isolating sense of frustration at this systemic lack of insight was most strongly expressed in the Focus Groups. One participant expressed it thus:

...if you are not an IPP then you can't understand what it is that you are going through so people then turn to NPS [illicit drug] or whatever drugs or alcohol or whatever it is to then have that little bit more escape, do you know what I mean? (ID17 in FG3 02:22)

**4.2.4 Hope – “better must come” (ID35 76:45)**

<i>New Life</i>	<i>Greater Purpose</i>	<i>Religion</i>
a normal life (ID43 62:45)	a good reason (ID18 36:45)	believe in God (ID27 09:50)
changing lives (ID10 39:00)	choose the path (ID40 39:25)	day of judgement (ID35 17:20)
changing my ways (ID04 06:05)	don't call it a cell (ID37 49:53)	got demons (ID27 43:00)
family (ID40 48:24)	for a reason (ID17 24:15)	going to mass (ID03 11:40)
happy ending (ID39 50:10)	greater purpose (ID40 39:25)	it's symbolic (ID35 18:22)
live with hope (ID22 27:57)		true religion (ID37 09:10)

Hope, as was explored in Chapter Two, is necessary for human flourishing. This is because human beings are meaning-making creatures that seek to find purpose even in the most dire of circumstances (Frankl 2004). Yet the *affect* of IPP (4.2.3) is corrosive of hope. That is why self-harm and suicide risks have been identified as high amongst the group (Beard 2017). Although this can be partially accounted for by high pre-custodial risk factors, as suggested by the biographical “turbulence”

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contained in the “Development” meta-theme (4.2.2). The prevalence of safeguarding risks across the prison population is highlighted in the findings of earlier and wider research (Liebling 1992, 2001, Centre for Mental Health 2011). Even if some acts of self-harm and self-inflicted death can be partially attributed to pre-custodial factors, this still highlights the vulnerability intrinsic to this group (see ACEs discussion – 4.2.2) who are then exposed to the *affect* of IPP. The compounded risk, fostered through a sense of hopelessness, is a cause for custodial concern already raised elsewhere (Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health 2008). The themes of “Fatalism”, “Death” and a negative experience of “temporality” (see 4.2.6) arise largely from a sense of despair.

The LAAF interview method included the question: “How do you see the film ending?” This was to explore the degree of hope present in the lived experience of the participants. Despite many ‘knock backs’, most participants had experienced, there remained hopeful elements to their stories. There were both present and future focussed elements to this theme as well as references to religious practices that fostered hope. The ‘Greater Purpose’ (from ID40) theme referred to a present understanding whereby the trials and tribulations experienced in the IPP sentence were integrated into a wider narrative in which they had been suffered “for a reason” (ID17) / “for a good reason” (ID18). The IPP experience could even be thought of as a cause for gratitude, giving an opportunity to reach a significant life-changing crossroad (“a point in my life” [ID43 47:05]; “choose the path” [ID40]).

There was only one research participant who was under tariff (ID37). Throughout the fieldwork his presence in the group was noticeably different. He was positive in

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regard to the efforts and support of his internal probation officer, engaged with his sentence plan and committed to being released on schedule. He had hobbies and interests that kept him occupied during incarceration (“have a passion” 12:15) and was keen to carve out a personal space within which he could occupy a degree of normality (“don’t call it a cell”). He had strategies for negotiating carceral space. He also made no reference to elements of lived experience described in the “Behaviour” or “Development” meta-themes. Neither did he, apart from the inevitable adjustment trauma of being first-time in custody (on a long sentence), disclose much about the detrimental *affect* of the sentence. In a sense he was a ‘model’ IPP person in custody for whom, as he suggested, the sentence would ‘work’. His lived experience was atypical of the general IPP participant narrative. The lack of “Behaviour” or “Development” elements in the narrative of this exemplary incarcerated person reinforces the importance of these factors in relation to sentence progression (as discussed above).

The importance of others’ belief in person’s ability to change for generating hope was highlighted by ID10:

She...gives me a bit of hope where I’ve not had hope for years...’cause she actually believes in me. When I’ve told my goals and my plans to all these other probation officers...they have all been kind of negative towards it...If anything that’s making me feel like [they] are trying to set me back and make me go back into my old ways; why would they do that? (38:18ff.)<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Shortly after his *LAAF* interview ID10 achieved release on licence.

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The trajectory of “greater purpose” (ID40) leads to a sense that “better must come” (ID35) and the achievement of a “happy ending” (ID39). The latter consisted of restored relationships (“build a relationship” [ID04]; “family” [ID40]) and leading “a normal life” (ID43) where they could “forget about [their] past” (ID05 36:58). A key element in the “greater purpose” was to do something positive and rehabilitative in the lives of others (“changing lives” [ID10]; “changing people’s lives” [ID17 43:45]; “go and help” [ID18 37:35]; being a “big brother” [ID35] figure to youngsters tempted by crime). This correlates with Maruna’s “redemption script” theory of desistance which posits that criminogenic elements of the life narrative are integrated into an identity-shaping script whereby out of “bad” comes forth “good” (2001).

Participants spoke of reaching an age, or reaping the benefits of time to reflect, whereby they began to see themselves as less likely to re-offend (“see myself” [ID38 44:01] leading a ‘normal’ life; “started understanding why I’m here” [ID17 24:45]; “live with hope” [ID22]; “too old for prison” [ID05]). The temporal textuality of IPP participants’ lived experience will be explored in 4.2.6. The stalled state of being that indeterminacy fosters distorts the sensation of time. Yet timing – what happens when – is all important in both rehabilitation and the choosing of a life-path of desistance.

A study on the timing of restorative justice interventions has highlighted the usefulness of the ancient Greek concept of time that made a distinction between *chronos* and *kairos*. Whilst *chronos* denoted linear mundane time, *kairos* referred to an opportune time latent with new possibilities (Crawford 2015, 473). *Kairos* time has a more qualitative nature to it than *chronos* and requires a discerning eye to spot opportune moments. The qualitative temporal character of *kairos* invites a relational

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understanding as such discernment is best acquired over time and in relationship with another. Desistance theories have recognised that rehabilitative moments have a *kairotic* (my term) aspect to them. Psycho-emotional and social conditions have to be right and the forces pulling back to criminal ways have to be weaker than positive factors supporting desistance (Deuchar 2018, 79f.). This has pastoral implications as it suggests a pastoral need for high levels of empathic discernment and patience amongst supportive staff whilst awaiting such *kairotic* moments.

Religion has been recognised as playing a role in rehabilitation (Maruna, Wilson, and Curran 2006). Personal faith can foster meaning and hope even in the most desperate penal conditions (Hallett et al. 2016). Participants had a broad range of religious experience prior to and during custody. Some of this was non-conventional or a conflation of beliefs ranging from the supernatural interpretation of life events and their deeper significance (“it’s symbolic” [ID35]) that might, to some, seem “far-fetched” (ID27 05:32). One participant explained how his mother warned him against associating with a gang leader because he had “got demons” (ID27). Other participants had more traditional forms of involvement with faith-groups (“going to Mass” [ID03]; attending a weekly “Jehovah’s Witness” [ID04 06:15] study group for scriptural guidance from a/the “true religion” [ID37]). There was also a sense of divine recompense for past wrongs (e.g. “day of judgement” used not as a metaphor [ID35]).

**4.2.5 Thinking – “it’s just stupidity” (ID04 21:11)**

<p><i>Binaries</i></p> <p>a negative side (ID03 11:45)  all or nothing (ID40 20:37)  bad side (ID35 47:45)  law abiding people (ID04 20:05)  manifest the bad (ID35 76:45)  side of things (ID40 32:40)</p>	<p><i>Alpha Male</i></p> <p>alpha male thing (ID38 19:15)  big disrespect (ID40 24:09)  get a reputation (ID04 43:05)  hot potato (ID31 06:36)  I’m high risk (ID05 53:25)  male role models (ID03 32:05)</p>
<p><i>Stupid Self</i></p> <p>everything crashed down (ID37 15:20)  mess up (ID03 51:52)  stupid little trouble (ID27 08:20)  stupid things (ID35 20:35)  the regrets (ID22 27:57)</p>	<p><i>Fantasy</i></p> <p>I’m thinking about <i>Goodfellas</i> (ID43 61:50)  interested in the story? (ID05 33:55)  feels like that film <i>Source Code</i> (ID35 71:51)  me going on holiday (ID27 50:10)  lots of drawing (ID05 44:01)  real life drama (ID03 06:53)</p>

Three participants referred to their criminal behaviour as ‘stupid’ or ‘stupidness’ (IDs 04, 27 and 35) and another spoke about his innate and frequent capacity to “mess up” (ID03). One spoke poignantly about “the regrets” he had (ID22). In the “Stupid Self” theme there was a degree of remorseful responsibility-taking (“I take responsibility” [ID03 16:35]; also “I was a terror” [ID30 24:15] was not said proudly but with shame/regret and a recognition of the hurt he had caused to others, especially loved ones). Related to the “Binaries” sub-theme, this stupidity was attributed to almost a separate/parallel part of ‘self’ (as suggested by “the madness” [ID04 38:56] and “my head went” [ID30 28:25]) in contrast to a perceived better self (“heart of gold” [ID04 20:25]).

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OB courses run by Programmes Departments in prisons (e.g. the *Enhanced Thinking Skills* course) seek to address criminal and risky behaviours by examining an individual's past actions in the context of, frequently, their impulsivity and poor reasoning skills – the “stupidness” raised by research participants. Some people in custody also require specialist psychological interventions. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is more prevalent in the prison population than outside of custody (Goff et al. 2007). The type of childhood backgrounds described in the Development meta-theme can be the environments within which PTSD is developed and this is known to cause erratic behaviour and impair reasoning (see 4.2.2). Pre-custody traumatic brain injuries have also been proven to be predictive of a likelihood of dangerous and violent behaviour and should, it is argued, be a factor in considering appropriate rehabilitation approaches (Williams et al. 2010). The prevalence of domestic violence in the childhood scripts of some participants suggests PTSD and/or brain injury could be an issue. Similarly, some of the risky and dangerous conduct described in the Behaviour theme suggests levels of adult personal violence for some participants that could have left them with a degree of brain damage. Whether through the trauma of childhood domestic abuse or subsequent (and possibly related) injuries sustained through high levels of dangerous or violent conduct it is likely that some IPP people in custody have impaired reasoning due to largely developmental and lifestyle factors. I am not medically or psychologically qualified so I do not claim any of these factors definitely apply in this research's participant group. These are circumstantial observations based on the wider research mentioned, the statistical probabilities that arise from it and the lived experiences of the participants. A pastoral implication from this is that the possibility should always

be entertained as to whether the anti-social behaviour encountered in prison work is the out-working of malice and wilfulness or a symptom of trauma.

A binary way of thinking amongst some participants emerged from the data. One (ID40) used the phrase “side of things” in his description of his lived experience, as if there was an element of it distinct from a more ‘normal’ (i.e. non-criminal) way. He applied this binary thinking to his family, especially his two grandmothers (good nan/bad nan) and his father’s (criminal) side from his mother’s more law abiding side. This normal/abnormal: good/bad binary thinking emerged through discourse around “a negative side” (ID03) and one participant’s description of an inner battle not to “manifest the bad” (ID35) – violent/angry/vengeful – side of his persona. This polarised mode of thinking also came through participants’ contrasting of themselves (criminal) with their families (“law abiding people” / “it’s only me” [ID04 69:17]; in interview ID22 [31:30] also separated his behaviour off from his family’s law abiding nature). ID04 contrasted his “heart of gold” altruistic (inner) nature with his attitude when someone “fucks about with [him]” (20:20) – a Jekyll and Hyde model. ID40 similarly disclosed in interview how his friends commented on his kindnesses when, in contrast, he was known to many in his area as a “monster” due to extreme violent tendencies when feeling disrespected or provoked (20:37ff.). It is unclear to what degree this personality splitting/dissociation is a means of distancing or minimising personal responsibility. A pastoral response to this might be to encourage a more nuanced and integrated understanding of self that recognises that all human beings are a mixture of good and bad intentions.

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A minor theme I have labelled “Fantasy” came through one participant in particular but was also a low level factor across much of the group. It relates to their cognitive understanding of themselves. Throughout his interview ID05 shared a great deal of information that, from my background knowledge, was a misrepresentation. Partly this was to enhance his criminal persona (see “Alpha Male” theme, below) but also, I suspect, to delude and deceive. In a parallel conversation with a member of the prison’s psychology department he was described to me as a “fantasist”. Another participant’s (ID03) self-description of his *Life As A Film* was in terms of a “real life drama” and disclosed how he had already begun to write his autobiography. He has a serious personality disorder which raises questions around the self-representation of narratives in interview and during pastoral conversations.

“Fantasy” as a thematic label may seem pejorative. It is not intended to be dismissive. I have chosen it deliberately to denote the imaginative elements of participant interviews. These elements range from what might be judged “flights of fancy” (or delusional) through to the creative use of actual films as illustrative metaphors of their lived experience (*Goodfellas* [ID43]; *Source Code* [ID35]; *Groundhog Day* [ID31]). A human being is “essentially a creature who hopes, who fantasizes, who imagines and dreams the future” (Meissner 1973, 11). Hope “builds on fantasy and desire” but “it is more than these” (ibid.). Those participants who resorted to levels of imagination far removed from their current reality were only doing, possibly in an extreme form, what human beings do, especially when faced with the skewed temporality of the lived experience of an IPP sentence. Appropriate pastoral support for those dealing with protracted deferment of hope, particularly when factoring in mental health issues, needs to navigate carefully around fantasy

upon which hope is built and that which is unhealthily divorced from current reality or possible future outcomes.

Studies in masculinity in prison have begun to take an interest into its extreme form that is encountered in male prison culture and described as “hypermasculinity” (Jewkes 2005). This is defined in terms of a persona that is both assumed (e.g. enculturation into machismo attitudes) and manufactured (e.g. body-building / affected swagger) which relies upon dominance, physicality and the threat of violence. A recent study of masculinity behind bars has questioned the notion of hypermasculinity and argued for a more complex understanding of the variety of ways being male within penal culture are manifested (Morey and Crewe 2018).

Within the IPP research group there was reference to the “alpha male thing” (ID38) and “male role models” being “big bawly men” (ID03 31:55) denoting stereotypical male figures. Some participants spoke openly of the importance of gaining respect and the consequences if they felt disrespected (IDs 40 and 04) as well as the importance of being single-minded in their designs and unintimidated by elders (“my own mind” [ID17 34:30]). One participant, with a fascination for military matters, appeared keen to emphasize his dangerousness (“I’m high risk” [ID05] was said with an air of pride).

Forms of penal masculinity are various and complex, as well as being both inherited pre-custody and further adapted during incarceration. This was reflected in the participant group as was revealed in interview and on the wings during everyday non-researcher duties. But this study had come at a time of increased public debate around the topic of masculinity which has heightened my awareness of the “Alpha

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Male” theme. Given the IPP sentence was aimed at a perceived (overwhelmingly male) “dangerous offender”, who had committed crimes of a violent or sexual nature, issues of masculinity must be addressed. A recent international study amongst members of extreme gangs (embodying “toxic hypermasculinity”) has shown that few are ‘beyond redemption’ in terms of rehabilitation (Deuchar 2018). Pastoral practices such as mindfulness and meditation can begin to address the ways of thinking that produce the behaviours likely to lead to re-offending (for further see Chapter Seven).

**4.2.6 Time – “the illusion of time” (ID17 24:37)**

<i>Fatalism/Apathy</i>	<i>Temporality</i>	<i>Death</i>
don't really care (ID02 20:43) false hope (ID22 27:00) fall into that way (ID40 05:15) falling through it (ID43 44:05) just switch off (ID39 38:10) put my hopes up (ID10 23:48)	when does this ever end (ID03 50:05) every single day (ID18 43:10) time away (ID37 21:50) time didn't matter (ID43 40:15) you don't know when (ID18 44:10)	ill and old (ID04 55:00) I lost her (ID31 18:25) loving figures (ID03 29:10) loved my sister (ID30 16:17) two brothers (ID43 22:30) waiting for death (ID27 52:36)

This meta-theme should be contrasted with the Hope meta-theme (4.2.4). Whilst the degree of residual hope in the IPP participants was higher than expected this was in thematic tension with elements of fatalism, apathy, morbidness and a context heightened experience of the passing of time. From anecdotal evidence gleaned as a chaplain, many people experience time during incarceration as having a different texture to that experienced pre- and post-custody. There is a different *affect* (psycho-emotional weight) to the time they are serving that requires particular agentic

strategies to address (Johnsen, Johansen, and Toyoki 2018). Inmates often describe themselves as “doing” or “killing” time behind bars and they perceive their real life to be on hold until release (“time away” [ID37 22:05] from a parallel existence).

Whilst this is also true amongst the wider prison population, the temporal textuality of carceral space takes a different form amongst IPP people in custody. Determinately sentenced people know that each dawn brings them a day closer to release. For one serving an IPP sentence each day is pretty much the same as the last, as it will be compared to tomorrow (“every single day [ID18]). Hence one participant (ID31) described his lived experience as like the film *Groundhog Day* whose main character is trapped in the constant repetition of reliving the same day over and over, unknowing when or whether his nightmare will ever end.<sup>20</sup> Time, for some participants, has become an “illusion” (ID17) or “didn’t matter” (ID43) anymore. Even the regular cycle of parole hearings were problematic and unpredictable in their scheduling (“a year late” [ID10 19:43]) and the possibility of release a mystery (“you don’t know when” [ID18]). Each new day was fraught with the potential of receiving a “negative write” up that would lead to another ‘knock back’, further extending their sentence. One participant described his daily existence as being like “walking on egg-shells” (ID39 11:09 – See image accompanying FP ID39).

Unpredictability around the scheduling of parole hearings, combined with deep uncertainty for these participants of a positive outcome, understandably evoked a degree of fatalism (“false hope” [ID22]; “put my hopes up” [ID10]; “just switch off”

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<sup>20</sup> At the time of writing ID31 had been granted an “executive release” by the Secretary of State for Justice.

[ID39]; “when does this ever end?” [ID03]; “don’t really care” [ID02]). Some of the ‘pathos of inevitability’ encountered in interviews suggested elements of this fatalism existed pre-custody (“from a young age” and “fall into that way” [ID40 24:15 and 05:15]; “my stigma” [ID35 58:15]). Tied in with this fatalistic view and possibly the well-spring for it is a perceived lack of agency. If outcomes seem to be frequently beyond their control and often contrary to their own wishes it is understandable that an experiential sense of depleted agency is developed (see 7.4 for discussion of ‘agency’).

Of the seventeen research participants five (29%) had been sentenced whilst teenagers. One participant (ID03) spoke in interview of how, in his early twenties in custody, there was an eighteen month period where three close family members died, including his mother (“loving figures” 28:25). Another confessed that he was anxious concerning his adverse reaction should he one day call home to find his mum has died (and if he ‘kicks off’ how that will affect his chances of release) (ID35 75:35). One participant (ID43) referred to an especial closeness to a sibling who died of an overdose (32:30ff.). His mother had also died when he was eight years old (of a brain haemorrhage – 17:25). “I lost her” (ID31 18:20) denoted the loss for one participant of both his mother and his partner whilst serving his sentence. Another spoke of domestic sexual abuse he and his sister suffered and how she took her own life (ID30 – he later attempted to take his own life using the same method). One participant, speaking of the gang related killings he witnessed in his homeland as a child, described feeling that he was “waiting for death”, not knowing when he would be the victim of a fatal attack (ID27 52:36).

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One of the older participants shared his belief that he was too old for prison (ID05 [57:05]) and ID04 expressed an almost superstitious fear that, because other members of his family had died in their early 40s, he would die relatively young and in prison (he couldn't imagine becoming "ill and old" 55:15). Most of the participants were present at the research prison in 2015 (or had been informed about it) when there had been an abnormally high number of deaths in custody. Anxieties around death in custody were understandably raised.

Risky lifestyles prevalent among the prison population and their families probably explain much of the higher than expected rates of serious injury (e.g. stabbings/shootings) or ill-health (e.g. comorbidity), disability (due to poor health or, for example, reckless driving accidents) and premature death (e.g. overdoses) (Williams, Papadopoulou, and Booth 2012). These lived experiences clearly infuse inmates' perceptions of the future with a morbid hue. The shadow of death may have a greater significance for the indeterminately sentenced for whom time has stalled and they are held in a form of suspended non-animation. People in custody, especially long-term ones, feel an increasing sense of the mortality of their loved ones and the loss of family members whilst incarcerated brings particular pastoral challenges (Lane 2015). These issues are exacerbated for the indeterminately sentenced for whom time has a particularly heavy psycho-emotional texture.

**4.2.7 Relationality – “they still love me” (ID30 16:20)**

<p><i>Belief</i></p> <p>believes in me (ID10 38:18)  big brother (ID35 44:20)  father figure (ID03 39:30)  good support team (ID37 17:55)  they actually cared (ID30 32:15)  this is what I need to do (ID43 60:15)</p>	<p><i>Presence</i></p> <p>around my nana (ID40 51:25)  being there (ID17 43:10)  dad wasn't around (ID10 11:20)  didn't listen to me (ID30 10:05)  giving us an ear (ID43 60:10)  It's just listening (ID30 35:25)</p>
<p><i>Belonging</i></p> <p>a part of it (ID22 08:45)  don't want you here (ID39 32:40)  isolated off (ID40 06:15)  keep yourself to yourself (ID02 12:30)  never wanted me there (ID30 16:17)  socially weird (ID43 21:30)</p>	<p><i>Family</i></p> <p>build a relationship (ID04 55:05)  got a lot better (ID30 16:05)  just my father (ID05 28:17)  loving figures (ID03 29:10)  my family (ID02 17:50; ID40 44:15)  my mom (ID35 20:40)</p>

For this meta-theme the implied and intrinsic polarities of the component themes should especially be borne in mind. During the seventeen interviews IPP participants spoke of “Family” in both positive and negative terms (the latter covered in 4.2.2):

- as forces for good and bad in their lived experience (“they actually cared” [ID30 – referring to “in laws”]; “got the belt” [ID43]);
- despite the presence of ACE factors (see 4.2.2) in a number of life narratives there was still significant positive regard towards families (“my family” [ID02]; “loving figures”[ID03]);
- others deliberately created distance between themselves and their loved ones to make the emotional cost of the IPP sentence seem less (“don't want you here” [ID39]) or to protect them from the perceived ‘taint’ of IPP (ID18 spoke poignantly about this in interview – 32:03ff.);
- “Family” for some was a source of regret around the harm their behaviour has caused their relatives (“the regrets” [ID22]);

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- but others longed to restore or re-establish lost or broken relationships (“build a relationship” [ID04]).

Participants also gave some examples of the transformative effect of those who had believed in their capacity to change and of others who diminished that confidence (“giving us an ear” [ID43]; “it’s just listening” [ID30]; “didn’t listen to me” [ID30]). Their seeking for a sense of belonging was sometimes satisfied in the shadowland of gang activity or shared criminal enterprise (“a part of it” [ID22]; “goes on body count” [ID27 15:11] refers to the demonstration of affiliation to and strength of a gang by the number of killings undertaken on its behalf). The power of personal presence was contrasted with experiences of deep relational absence (“never wanted me there” [ID30]; “dad wasn’t around” [ID10]; “isolated off” [ID40]).

For almost two decades the main factors that largely determine the probability of re-offending have been recognised. Usually referred to as the *Seven Resettlement Pathways* they are sometimes extended to nine or ten dependent upon the study or social change group involved, but they always recognise “relationships” as a key factor in desistance (Social Exclusion Unit 2002, Home Affairs Committee 2010). The better the quality of and the stronger the relationships a person in custody has the less likelihood there is of re-offending. Whilst generally respecting the wishes of IPP people who desire to maintain relational distance from their families for positive (emotional *affect*) or negative (they are not a supportive presence) reasons, pastoral regard should seek to encourage the fostering and maintaining of family contact.

Studies into gang culture have highlighted that a sense of respect and belonging are key drivers to membership (Deuchar 2018). The work of Homeboys Industries in the USA has been outstanding in providing parolees with a network of relational support

(Boyle 2019). This assists those seeking to gravitate away from gang and criminal affiliation or as an alternative to an unsupportive family. Within penal culture (see Behaviour meta-theme) the difficulties in resisting the wrong sort of “belonging” amongst other persons in custody are obvious. How might alternatives be provided for IPP men and women for whom the stakes for misbehaviour are disproportionately higher than for a determinately sentenced fellow contravener of Prison Rules? Some participants suggested the setting up of specialist IPP units run on the model of a Therapeutic Community that seeks to create a “social climate which promotes positive relationships, personal responsibility and social participation” (Ministry of Justice 2019a). This was mentioned a few times in interviews and focus groups, although some hesitation was also expressed as it was thought this could further isolate IPP people from the prison population. They are already perceived in some respects as ‘different’, being neither “lifers” nor serving a determinate sentence.

Two participants spoke highly of the *Kainos* programme that ran a “Challenge to Change” intervention that ended at the research prison around the time fieldwork began (Kainos Community 2019). Initially a faith-based programme of personal change that originated in Brazil in the 1980s it has become a global enterprise (Burnside 2005). In the UK it evolved away from its explicit Christian roots into “a hybrid programme using cognitive behavioural work in a therapeutic community setting within the prison” and was independently assessed as an intervention with rehabilitative outcomes comparable with other programmes (Ellis and Shalev 2008, 1). ID43 spoke about the *Kainos* volunteers “giving us an ear” – providing a non-judgemental listening ear – and he expressed his admiration they were willing to give up their time and come and talk with the community members about “normal” (e.g.

non-criminal / penal culture) matters, reconnecting them to the world beyond the wire and promoting 'normalisation'.

A tension within such therapeutic communities, especially if embedded in a mainstream prison, concerns trust. If members are to be encouraged to take and share responsibility this requires the giving of trust (even to 'fail' and learn from it). As a chaplain I was privy to conversations amongst prison staff that were openly unsympathetic to the *Kainos* community's ethos. Trust is not an issue that will go away and is central to this research's polarity of 'custodial compassion' that maintains the creative tension between appropriate 'hard' custodial practices (security/ discipline/etc.) and 'soft' (relational/pastoral/etc.) ones (see Chapter Seven).

### **4.3 Attentiveness – Regard for the Lived Experience of Others**

The majority of IPP participants expressed anger and aggrievement about the injustice of their sentence. It was therefore unsurprising that in over seventeen hours of interviews only six members of staff were identified as having a positive pastoral influence on their lived experience. Of these, three were uniformed officers. Humane regard requires attentiveness to the lived experience of 'another' and this is the well-spring for quality PC. It is disappointing that many wing staff are unaware of who in their care and custody are living under this psycho-emotionally freighted sentence, or even understand what the IPP sentence's lived reality might be.

Given the levels of ACEs disclosed in interviews and discussed above (4.2.2) it is understandable that a number of participants' prison records have noted behaviour

typical of poor affect regulation. There is a demonstrable correlation between the experience of traumatising childhood adversity and adult violent behaviour (Ford et al. 2019). Three of the participants shortly after the interview stage of research spent a spell in solitary confinement prior to being transferred to other prisons due to poor behaviour. Studies around affect regulation have shown the link between adverse early years experiences and an impaired ability in adulthood to regulate emotions appropriately (Bowlby 1969, Schore 2009, Hill 2015). How then might penal pastoral practice best support therapeutic strategies to develop improved affect regulation? This issue will be addressed in Chapter Seven where a pastoral response will be formulated.

#### **4.4 Summary Conclusion**

The findings enumerated in this chapter were not identified through a process of Grounded Theory whereby a thesis emerged *de novo* out of the iterative analysis of data. A pastoral hunch concerning the role relationality has played in the lives of incarcerated people guided this ethnographic enquiry (see 2.2.3 for the source of this hunch). The ethnographic enterprise explores “a given group's conceptual world, seen and experienced from the inside” (Sobo 2016, 297). It is an attempt to inhabit the lived reality of another as best anyone can second-hand. My fieldwork was an attempt to enter the life-world of indeterminately sentenced men and provide a narrative sketch of their perceived reality. Through the invitation in the LAAF questions to identify main characters who would feature in their imaginative biographical movie, as well as their description of key life-changing moments, the

impact that relationality – negative and positive – had upon the shape and direction of participants' lives was highlighted.

Ethnography as pastoral *praxis* believes “that deep down, listening is a liberating practice, a practice that validates and honours another person’s experience, insight and soul” (Moschella 2008, 13). Listening to the telling of seventeen life stories expressed through the metaphor of a biographical film was humbling. The data generated by the LAAF interviews, once analytically sifted and sorted, provided a rich picture of the lived experience of the participants. My pastoral hunch around the transformative role relationality plays was contextualised and came into greater focus.

Part of the contextualisation of relationality as a meta-theme was recognising its role within the wider dynamic of the lives of the participants. There was an inter-play between the meta-themes, with relationality central. Relational networks of friends and family members unconsciously indoctrinated them into the criminal *habitus* prevalent for many in their formative years'. Neglect and/or abuse impacted upon their development from boys to men. The social ostracisation of general imprisonment was compounded by the scapegoating of them as a particularly heinous brand of criminal in public discourse. This had psycho-emotionally contributed to a peculiarly diminishing and destructive carceral *affect*.

Healthy family ties and the supportive presence of others were crucial factors in the maintenance of hope and self-belief. This was demonstrated by the successful navigation of the IPP sentence plan by one (and the most positive) participant who had deep ties to his wife, daughter and wider family. Quality relational engagement

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with others in therapeutic contexts (e.g. *Kainos*) helped to challenge constructively and re-shape thinking patterns that had ill-served participants through their adult lives. Multiple experiences of personal disappointment through the actions of significant others in their lives had left some participants locked in a deeply fatalistic and despairing view of life. This had been compounded by the numerous 'knock backs' of the parole review cycle that many described.

A pastoral response to this interplay of meta-themes in the lives of those IPP men I interviewed will be formulated in Chapter Seven. Prior to that (Chapter Six) I will reflexively reflect upon the impact fieldwork had upon me as an insider researcher working amongst a vulnerable group with these challenges seemingly at war in their lives. Whilst this will be a "Health Warning" to others following a similar path of research, the fact I was exposed to these lived experiences bears witness to the level of disclosure I was privileged to be entrusted with at interview. It is also heart-warming to think the *praxis* of the process might have itself been part of the humanising of incarceration to which this work contributes. That this may have been the case is suggested by the following postal feedback:

ID35: Thank you David, at least you reached out and made a difference. Holding onto dark thoughts only makes them a reality as there is no light to find one's way home. Best wishes...

The next chapter will be a poetic interlude in the flow of this thesis' argument. This will allow the reader to pause awhile amidst the FPs of both IPP participants and some staff, so as to feel the texture of their lived experiences and roles more deeply.

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Up to this point these experiences have been explored in a predominantly analytical way. This Poetic Interlude speaks in what Glesne describes as the “third voice”:

Through shaping the presentation of the words of an interviewee, the researcher creates a third voice that is neither the interviewee’s nor the researcher’s but is a combination of both. This third voice disintegrates any appearance of separation between observer and observed (1999, 183).

The next chapter seeks to close further the relational gap between the reader and the participants.

## CHAPTER FIVE – A POETIC INTERLUDE

This thesis' opening contained an invitation:

Come now into the cell with me and stay here and feel if you can and if you will that time, whatever time it was, for however long, for time means nothing in this cell (Keenan 1992, 63).

I repeat the invitation, asking the reader to pause and further inhabit the incarcerated space of IPP participants, where time is suspended. The journey this ethnographic enquiry has taken thus far has been one appropriate to an academic and analytical exploration. In this Interlude I aim to shift the register of the prose momentarily. In Chapter Six, our attention returns back to an analytic mode where I will interrogate reflexively my lived experience as a researching professional. This Interlude invites a more experiential engagement.

The main purpose of this chapter is to foreground the fifteen IPP participants' found poems (FPs) that are not located elsewhere in this work. Two FPs 'book-end' the main body of this thesis (before Chapter One and after Chapter Seven) so, appropriately, participant 'voices' are heard at its opening and closing sections. This chapter will allow the reader to pause awhile amidst the narrative flow of this thesis and inhabit, albeit third-hand, the lived experiences communicated in interview and mediated by this broader *corpus* of poetic distillations. These experiences will be further contextualised through the juxtaposition of poetic perceptions quarried from the AI interview transcripts of three uniformed officers identified by IPP participants as embodying good pastoral practice.

## **5.1 LAAF Film Genres and Movie Examples**

Understanding the background to the IPP FPs will help deepen appreciation of their content and highlight the creative benefits of the LAAF interview method employed (see also 3.6.1). Prior to interview IPP participants were given examples of film genres as a prompt. These genres were illustrated with actual film titles, accompanied by their movie posters in thumbnail form (see Appendix 5 for examples). This material was handed out and discussed in the four FGs. The film types suggested were: Action; Adventure; Comedy; Crime; Drama; Horror; Romance; Tragedy. Three participants also added a real life Documentary/Biography category. The majority of participants resorted to multiple genres to illustrate the complex nature of their lives: “It’s complicated to be honest...it would have to be bits and bobs of everything in there...” (ID17 LAAF 06:02). Unsurprisingly, ‘Crime’ and ‘Action’ strongly featured as descriptors in many interviews, as did ‘Tragedy’, with one participant poignantly declaring “nowt good’s happened so far in my life, nowt at all, even before prison” (ID10 LAAF 06:01).

Actual movies cited in interview were:

*Groundhog Day* (see 4.2.6); *Source Code* and *The Time Traveller’s Wife* – all featuring motifs of disrupted or repetitive time. *Papillon*, *A Sense of Freedom* and *The Shawshank Redemption* – illustrating the triumph of hope, however long it takes or the difficulties faced. *Goodfellas* – the final scene of this movie was described by ID43 as an image of his desired future, a violent life of crime becomes history as the anti-hero retires into a profoundly mundane life in the Witness Protection Program. The peculiar texture of incarcerated time, maintained alongside a hopefulness in the

face of almost impossible circumstances, are motifs found throughout the LAAF and FG transcripts and creatively highlighted by these movie choices.

## **5.2 Participants' Reception of the LAAF Method**

Overall engagement with the LAAF method was high. My local NOMS research supervisor<sup>21</sup> had forewarned me that those serving an IPP sentence were usually keen to talk about their plight and would do so at length. This reflected my sense that they generally felt silenced, marginalised and forgotten. The participants largely embraced the spirit of reviewing their life as a film, some even preparing written material prior to interview.

There was one exception. In 2007 ID02 was seventeen years of age when he was sentenced, as a juvenile, to Detention for Public Protection with a four year minimum tariff. At the time of interview he had served over ten years. He was open about having mental health issues and had been placed under safeguarding measures numerous times whilst in custody. When approached about being interviewed he declared he was happy to share his story but was adamant he did not want the LAAF method used, saying he felt it trivialised what he and his family had been through and were still enduring.

Whilst the other sixteen participants showed no qualms about using the LAAF method, ID02 was confident enough to reject this means of interview and give account of why he felt this way. I believed this to be an admirable act of agency, something severely limited in carceral space (see 7.4.2). It also raised for me a

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<sup>21</sup> [REDACTED] Head of Regional Forensic Psychology Services

sensitivity around the method. When used within a vulnerable group due regard needs to be given to how it might appear (to some) to trivialise the traumatic elements of a participant's lived experience by seemingly fictionalising it. ID02 told his story using a semi-structured interview format and participated openly. His FP is distilled from this data. Whilst he was wary about the LAAF interview method specifically, he was keen, as with all participants, to have his story heard and told widely. Found poetry has provided a perfect medium for creative evocation of IPP participants' life-narratives.

### **5.3 The Background to Staff Found Poems**

As the method of interview for staff was Appreciative Inquiry (not LAAF) the information disclosed was not about their lived experience generally (as in the case of IPP participants) but concerned specifically with their role as staff (see 3.7). Six staff were interviewed and the FP's provided in this Interlude are from the three prison officers who were identified by IPP participants as embodying good pastoral practice. The privileging of their data over the three non-uniformed staff also interviewed is because, more so than civilian staff, they inhabit the tension inherent to the 'custodial compassion' I will explore in Chapter Seven. As the final verse of IDS01's FP describes (below), officers can be required to switch psycho-emotionally from involvement in chaotic fighting with a recalcitrant person to consoling them in their remorse, all in just a few moments. In prison discourse an aspect of this polarity is often crudely expressed in the "Us and Them" language of 'screws'<sup>22</sup> and 'cons'<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> Prison Officers – from the time when warders were responsible for operating the tensioning screw for the treadmill used for those sentenced to "hard labour".

<sup>23</sup> People in custody – abbreviation of 'convicts'.

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IDS01 described this relational divide in interview when asked for one wish that could transform life at the research establishment:

Maybe to think that from a prisoner's point of view that staff aren't always the enemy 'cause they just see us as us uniforms and we're here to just lock the door and it's not the case really. I mean yeah we're here to do the job but we[re] kind of carers as well...'cause we've got to deal with em when they're really upset or you know they need extra help (33:46).

The psycho-emotional labour involved in maintaining a healthy balance of custodial and caring practices is demanding, especially given the challenges facing the Prison Service at the time (see 2.2.2 and 4.2.1 for the nature of these challenges). The staff FPs contribute a complimentary perspective to the lived experiences evoked in the IPP FPs and help to connect to the wider institutional context people in custody were located within during fieldwork. They reveal a desire from interviewed officers to be an humane 'presence' to people in their care and custody whilst acknowledging an accompanying cultural and contextual undertow of 'absence' that deep staffing cuts had compounded amongst uniformed officers (see Crewe and Liebling 2017 regarding penal 'presence' and 'absence').

So, reader, be present and stay awhile, if you can...

## **5.4 Found Poems**

### **FOUND POEM IDS06 – THE PERSON STOOD AT THE SIDE OF ME**

*(52 year old male Prison Officer with twelve years of service.)*

it's about walking through the gate  
with more than you came in.  
There's always a light  
at end of tunnel,  
even [for] an IPP prisoner.  
Might be a very dim light

And it's about you doing  
everything in...your power  
to make that light get bigger  
it's just about that belief  
that they can get through it  
build slowly and slowly

If you're responsible  
for the decisions you make  
you feel...more in control,  
more humanised  
to dehumanise...is  
[to] take everything away

I think...just being consistent  
a lot of staff are quick to take...offence  
but it's about being bigger than that  
and seeing the bigger picture.  
it's giving people a second chance  
I treat everybody the same.

I talk 'to' them.  
a lot of people talk 'at' prisoners  
people...get a bee in their bonnet  
about calling them 'Mr'.  
I'm more interested in the person  
stood at the side of me

FOUND POEM ID02 – I JUST GET PROPER ANGRY

*(Although this participant preferred not to be interviewed using the LAAF method and the material is distilled from a semi-structured interview transcript, an image was still commissioned and accompanies the FP. This is so as to provide stylistic continuity with the ethnographic visio-textual method of representation used with other IPP participants.)*

was kinda mad in school  
like fighting  
Same thing  
at Juveniles  
Aged 17

13 I was in a kids home  
loads of gangs  
and shootings  
I wasn't involved  
just committing...crime

when I got this sentence  
I didn't know what it was  
8 years over tariff.  
I shouldn't even be  
on an IPP, for street robbery.

it's hurting my family.  
I'm not bothered about myself  
just gonna get  
knocked-back all the time  
just angers me

I am depressed  
I've got mates  
that suffer with depression  
a few of them  
have tried killing themselves

that kinda worried me  
I think I'm never getting out  
I don't really think  
about hurting myself,  
I just get proper angry



Figure 5 - Movie Poster ID02

FOUND POEM ID03 – WHEN DOES THIS EVER END?

come from a broken home,  
I think I was trouble  
at home at school,  
mom couldn't cope  
lived with nan and grandad  
for a long time

seen a lot of domestic violence  
at home, a lot of anger,  
a lot of fighting.  
So if a situation was to come  
that's how I was dealing with it  
through violence.

I've not took the opportunities  
given to me.  
why did I ever mess it up?  
age of 17 18-month tariff  
8½ years over  
4 Parole Board knock-backs

what I want and what is happening  
are two different things  
being an IPP prisoner.  
when does this ever end  
in the next year, after that?  
Why the hell did I mess up?



Figure 6 - Movie Poster ID03

FOUND POEM ID04 - PSYCHO MAD MAN

dad was a criminal  
we had trouble with...dad  
when we were younger  
pound me mom and...sister  
everyone was scared of him  
I got to a stage where I thought  
right you're fucking nothing to me.

mum's like law abiding  
me mum's side  
got their own businesses, houses.  
I've had a hatred  
my life has mostly been spent in jail.  
longest I've been out there  
is probably 18 months,

the worst thing  
to come to jail for is violence.  
You can't even remember  
what it was about,  
it's just stupidity.  
stabbed up a few people  
psycho mad man

hopefully in the future  
I'll be right  
just grew up just like I am.  
I feel this time it's different  
I try and put myself  
in other people's shoes now,  
Jehovah's helped me a lot,



Figure 7 - Movie Poster ID04

FOUND POEM ID05 – TOO OLD FOR PRISON

when I was young  
there was a war  
I saw the bombs  
coming over at night  
are you quite interested  
in the story so far?

My father  
was in the Army  
saw him with  
a gun and things  
close relationship  
with my dad,

my father died  
I was angry  
committed crimes  
with a gun.  
no bullets  
had it...for protection.

I'm too old  
for prison  
if I'm released  
like to do  
more art work.  
So I forget...the past

I'm looking forward  
I can get me  
house in the countryside  
by the tree  
some fishing  
be on me own.

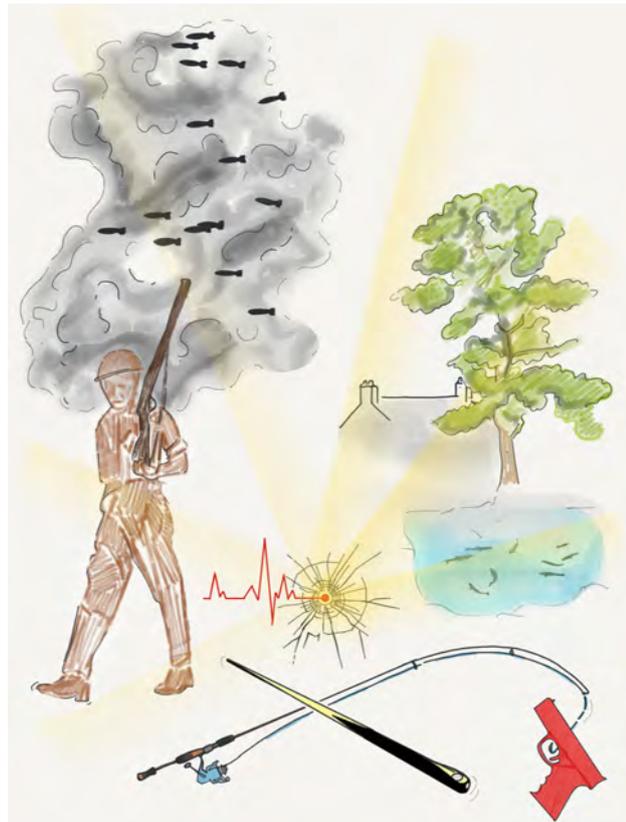


Figure 8 - Movie Poster ID05

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FOUND POEM ID10 - THAT KIND OF MENTALITY

I'm mixed race.  
been beat up a lot  
rushed by a gang  
jumped all over me,  
danced on me man.

Yeah ended up crawling  
after that day I was...like  
these...these people are merciless  
had this idea...every white person was racist  
I started...putting people in hospitals

if you hold onto...hope  
it will crush you  
it will probably break you  
just throw all hope  
out of the window

everything that has surrounded me  
has been...pretty messed up  
just associates with  
the criminal lifestyle  
a negative journey

The only thing that hasn't  
ever been related to crime  
was my mother.  
big brother's... a heroin addict  
other brother's...paranoid schizophrenic

Wasn't until I got a bit older  
kind of realised  
you can't go through life  
living with that kind of mentality  
I am not gonna let this place...define me



Figure 9 - Movie Poster ID10

FOUND POEM ID17 – THE ILLUSION OF TIME

to shoot somebody  
was a normal thing  
trapped in an environment  
like I come from

all negative around  
extreme violence  
being given towards [my] mum  
didn't have a father

caught up  
in the illusion of time  
just going and going and going  
everything is too fast

gun fire; me holding a gun  
judge hitting the hammer down  
horrible sentence  
I've felt suicidal

I started understanding  
why I'm here  
product of the environment  
how strange it was

got this overwhelming feeling  
I've never felt before  
an acknowledgement  
I'm loved outside



Figure 10 - Movie Poster ID17

FOUND POEM ID18 - AIN'T GOT A DATE

I know I'm innocent  
a common assault  
get arrested from hospital  
A miscarriage...of justice  
A corrupt police force,  
corrupt judge,

This is an evil sentence,  
when I came in I had 2 grandkids,  
I've got 11 out there now  
I don't want to involve any of them in this  
cause...this is a nightmare  
I don't want...a visit

I h-a-t-e it every single day  
and see the same faces  
it's just the same thing.  
get through it without any aggravation  
from the officers or...from the inmates  
it's dragged and dragged and dragged

when I'm on the wing  
I have to talk  
to some of them other guys  
to try and boost some of them up,  
some people give up,  
some people don't.

I think obviously  
there's...a good reason  
from the Creator.  
He wanted to save me  
got to be a good reason for it  
It's just w-he-n. (Laugh).  
ain't got a date



Figure 11 - Movie Poster ID18

FOUND POEM ID22 – GETTING A PROPER LIFE

my mum...and my dad  
couldn't really control me  
went to Children's Home  
I learnt how to steal cars  
ended up going to...boarding school  
for naughty kids

I learnt how to pick locks.  
I got kicked out for fighting  
went back to same estate  
Back into crime again.  
drinking, taking drugs, partying  
Robbery, with a shotgun.

I was in the Police Station  
getting questioned  
[my partner] was getting  
the 3 month scan for my son.  
that's not good  
"sentence 99 years".

a lot of false hope.  
a lot of guilt  
I'm stuck in here  
you are not living  
you're just...existing  
on the edge

when I'm released  
I will never...come back  
start me own life,  
getting a proper life  
family around me,  
relationship with my son.

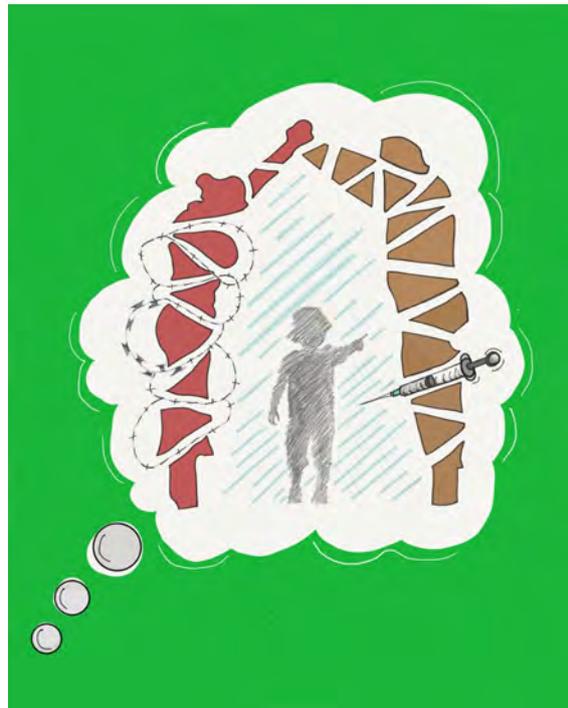


Figure 12 - Movie Poster ID22

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FOUND POEM IDS01 – THEY CAN JUST FLIP

*(26 year old female Prison Officer who, immediately before her AI interview was assaulted, disappointingly, by one of the IPP participants. Fifteen months in service.)*

they can just switch  
they just don't care  
'cause they don't ever know  
when they're getting out  
it doesn't matter...to them  
'cause they're just waiting  
for nothing...That's sad...

when they get to know somebody  
you can just speak to 'em  
and you...remember stuff  
that they've told you  
and you can just talk  
makes them feel  
a bit more normal

as a landing officer  
there's only 3 of you  
and...over 160 prisoners  
on a wing on one side  
so it's quite difficult  
to get round everyone  
and remember everything

Sounds horrible  
but you don't always  
even have 10 minutes  
for somebody  
there's jobs to do  
and as sad as it is  
it's just how it is.

how difficult our job  
complete chaos sometimes.  
from fighting with someone  
then sit down with them  
'cause they are crying  
their eyes out  
wanting to kill themselves

FOUND POEM ID27 – WE HAVE THE CURSE

I guess we have the curse  
a lot of other people  
have the curse and murder  
but like that's all one curse man.  
There's something in us  
like we want to...kill each other

to be in a gang  
bodies has to drop,  
it goes on...body count  
if police know you got a gun  
you're gonna get killed  
they don't stop and search

And it's just been  
tragedy after tragedy  
It's just been harsh  
like some bad things  
keep happening.  
really bad stuff

I was bad  
always wanted to change  
Jail... deteriorated my...behaviour  
I feel like a ghost...In the heart  
nearly died 3-4 times  
on this sentence.

what would it end like?  
I don't know.  
I guess it would have to end  
with me and my mom on holiday  
would have to reflect  
all that God's done for me



Figure 13 - Movie Poster ID27

FOUND POEM ID30 - JUST THE LITTLE THINGS

mum got really beat up  
me and my sister  
got abused by [her] fella,  
sexually abused

my sister wanted to talk  
I couldn't handle it  
she took a load of paracetamols  
they turned the life support machine off

tried telling my mum  
didn't have none of it  
I couldn't bath my little girl or...boy,  
memories [of] my childhood

got put in care  
started terrorising people  
causing mayhem  
foster brother...a father figure

he was a criminal  
deserved...what I got.  
IPP is fucked  
always add something  
on a sentence plan,

I'm not going home am I?  
it took...60 paracetamol  
to get people to start listening  
I was gutted when I woke up

at hospital it ...felt...different  
like a human being  
listened to my story  
just listening...the little things right?



Figure 14 - Movie Poster ID30

FOUND POEM ID31 – INDEFINITELY MAYBE

Groundhog Day.  
Just one day flows into the next  
canteen to canteen

I have an absolute hatred  
for the system  
I'm sick and tired of it.

If [IPP] no longer exists in law  
then why are we all still in here?  
it's affecting me mentally.

it's the not knowing  
when you'll be released  
is what causes your mind to break.

I've noticed  
people tend to give up on you  
Nothing ever comes of anything

I lost my partner  
when I was in [HMP] Bristol  
mum I lost...last year

like Johnny Cash said  
in that song 'Hurt'  
"everybody goes away in the end"

I've done about 6 prisons  
'same shit different toilet'  
over and over and over again

The ending's a non-ending  
when am I going home?  
'Indefinitely Maybe'



Figure 15 - Movie Poster ID31

FOUND POEM ID37 - THE HARDEST TIME

The hardest time in jail  
is the time away  
from your family.  
I phone every night and...day.

you know when...you're home-sick;  
you've got that feeling  
all the time  
in your stomach.

boxing would be definitely  
the biggest part of my life.  
and racing pigeons  
and tattooing

everything crashed down  
from fame to disaster  
I should have  
sought more help

The emotions I'm feeling  
about my crime  
are incredible.  
I have a lot of nightmares,

I have a tear quite often  
I've had to struggle on  
knowing I've got such  
a good support team

hopefully when I get  
to my first board  
they'll see that  
I'm not a dangerous person



Figure 16 - Movie Poster ID37

FOUND POEM ID38 – THE NORMALITY OF THINGS

Used to get bullied  
started fighting back  
after...many years of it.  
didn't really get on with people

mum's boyfriend used to get drunk  
and...he used to hit me  
fell out with my mum  
I had to do certain things to just get by

everyone who I was...around at the time  
was ...doing stuff illegal.  
it was just like the normality of things.  
I got suspended

that was the first time I got arrested  
I started getting arrested a lot more  
started smoking weed  
just basically going downhill

Just turned 19  
they said "3 year IPP"  
I didn't really know what it was  
it just pisses me off

I behave,  
I bottle up all my anger  
which led me to...self-harming  
I'd want it to finish

every time I come close  
to getting out  
she\* springs something else on me  
I don't really trust anyone

\* Probation Officer



Figure 17 - Movie Poster ID38

*Hope Deferred, Humanity Diminished?*

FOUND POEM ID40 - DRAW ME BACK

things are always  
circumstantial with me.  
Everything in my life  
has always been  
something happens

it's not just like in a small way  
it happens over the top  
Violence and having to get done  
what needed to get done  
was just, it was just normal.

started from a young age  
we fall into that way  
because there is no other way  
for us to be able to survive  
it seems normality

mum wasn't with  
my sister's dad for long,  
he was a junkie,  
there is a lot of the bad spirits  
from my father's side

On my mom's side of the family  
my nana is so honest  
from the righteous side  
I felt the need to support the family  
and be that male figure

when you get punished  
you've got time to reflect  
this is time for me now to go home  
draw me back  
over to the righteous side.



Figure 18 - Movie Poster ID40

FOUND POEM ID43 – FALLING THROUGH LIFE

He wasn't just me half brother  
was me best friend  
then D died  
never had a best friend since

dad was very violent  
the only...person I ever feared  
ended up going to jail  
me mam divorced him

I got put into care  
for me own protection  
remember me mam crying  
I think she was sort of at a loose end

She died of a brain haemorrhage  
I got brought to the headmaster's office  
my life with me mother was so short  
it was still a chunk, like 8 years.

early life was a drama  
and then it turned gritty  
I got done for drug dealing at school  
troubled childhood

I was in care  
for about 18 months  
taking us to child psychologists  
was weird the way I..just drop people

I can disassociate myself  
from...people  
I was in care, very turbulent  
just like falling through life

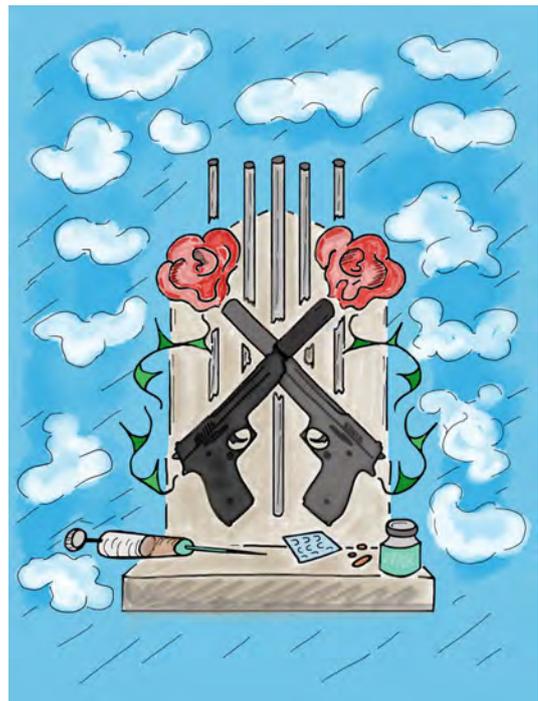


Figure 19 - Movie Poster ID43

*Hope Deferred, Humanity Diminished?*

FOUND POEM IDSO4 – SOME MORE TIME

*(25 year old female Prison Officer with 15 months in service.)*

as a prison officer  
you don't get much time  
to actually sit with the prisoners  
and speak to 'em properly  
about...their lives  
and what they want to change

it only takes someone  
to believe in you  
for you to change  
how you perceive yourself  
and how you think  
just having a bit of hope, innit?

if they feel like  
they've got somebody  
that actually cares  
a little bit about them,  
they've probably  
not had much of that  
in their life

some staff...come to work  
and they don't want  
to talk to any prisoners  
sometimes you just  
physically don't get time.  
[or] you...think  
"I just want to get through the day"

as humans everyone likes  
people to be interested  
in their life a little bit.  
we like to interact.  
makes you feel good  
I'd love it if we  
just had some more time.

## **5.5 Summary Conclusion**

This Interlude has sought to close the relational gap between the reader and the IPP participants. The texture of their lived experiences has been represented in their own words through FPs and film posters. Those lived experiences have been custodially contextualised through FPs distilled from the AI interview transcripts of three uniformed officers serving during one of the most challenging times for the Prison Service and speaking from two extremes of length of service and depth of experience. The juxtaposition of these two perspectives – from people in custody and their custodians – mirrors the tension intrinsic to the penal polarity I will explore as “custodial compassion” in Chapter Seven (see 7.5.2).

The humanising importance of relational presence emerged from analysis of IPP interview data and has already been highlighted (see 4.2.7). The pastoral implications of this will be developed further in Chapter Seven (7.3). Key to such relational presence is being present to oneself. As one pastor has observed: “the greatest asset which any of us offers to another in caring relationships is ourselves, or to be more precise, our reflexive selves – the self which we have reflected upon” (Kelly 2012, 5). The next chapter will be an exercise in such reflexivity, where I foreground my researcher ‘self’ so I am present to and in this ethnographic exploration of lived experience.

## **CHAPTER SIX – A REFLEXIVE REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS**

In all cases, the researcher's lived experiences, including her or his situated emotions and feelings, are the central methodological tools available to ethnographers (Ugelvik 2014, 479).

### **6.1 Introduction**

Reflective practice (RP) is a key aspect of the action-learning approach found in PT – known there as the pastoral cycle [PCy]). As discussed in Chapter Three, my adapted PCy's iterative approach follows these phases: *Define* the Issue; *Describe* the Context; *Reflect* on Practice; and *Act* Responsibly. RP does not belong solely to the third phase of this cycle. RP informs all the stages of the cycle. My reflections have helped me closely define the research question when initially overwhelmed by the scope of "humanising incarceration". It has allowed me to develop my descriptive skills as applied to the penal context. Critical conversation with the field of criminology and other disciplines has given me conceptual frames and a vocabulary to deepen my understanding of the research context alongside developing my ability to represent its contours (e.g. "epistemic injustice", "ethical loneliness" and "ACEs" – see previous chapters). RP has encouraged me to pause and cognitively wrestle with questions around my research, ministry and my 'self', as a means of developing my ministerial intentionality. RP has not made me a perfect pastoral practitioner but it has helped me to be clearer about what I intend to do, why I think a certain course of

action might be right and how to review the success, failure or indifference of the outcome.

I have written about the value of such practices for ministry (Beedon 2018a). In various contexts I have spoken about the importance of both reflective and reflexive practices for healthy ministry (Beedon 2018b, Beedon and Beedon 2018). Having to articulate what I mean about reflective and reflexive practice to readers and participants has given me greater clarity around two practices that are sometimes, mistakenly, assumed to be synonyms. The distinction I make is:

*Reflective Practice* – consists of the habits, actions and dispositions that help practitioners become more present to their life and work.

*Reflexive Practice* – consists of the habits, actions and dispositions that help practitioners become more present to their ‘selves’ *within* those reflections upon and around their life and work.

This chapter is an exercise in the latter. It is undertaken to deepen the authenticity of what I have presented in accompanying chapters by making my ‘self’ present. The disposition of humane attentiveness I introduced in the last chapter is here reflexively turned back upon myself as a data point and instrument for ‘reading’ the research context.

## **6.2 Authenticity**

Questions of “Narrative Truth” and the extent to which an ethnographic representation is ‘true’ were considered in Chapter Three. As argued there, “an ethnographic narrative...always remains a construction, a story about the author’s

experience of the group” (Moschella 2008, 29). Narrative modes of representation are more akin to an art form with an aesthetic than an artefact of a “positive commitment to value-free scientism” (Davies 2008, 216). Therefore they become an *evocation* of an experience rather than a ‘true’ *representation* (3.11).

Analogous to a piece of art that depicts the external world in an oblique way, ethnographic representation appeals to ‘authenticity’ in contrast to positivist ‘truth’. In a socially constructed world (Berger and Luckmann 1967), that which is ethnographically ‘true’ cannot be located in some Cartesian fashion “out there” but is located in the intersubjectivity of researcher-self, participant-Other and reader-audience. The rigorous *In Vivo* coding process employed in this project has honoured ‘participant voice’. I have sought to address the reader-audience facet of this intersubjectivity through the narration of the IPP sentence’s evolution alongside the capturing of the lived experiences of seventeen men held in custody under its terms. Throughout this thesis I have endeavoured not to leave my ‘self’ off of the page. In this chapter I deliberately reflexively foreground my lived experience during the two years of fieldwork. This is to acknowledge critically my own role in constructing the narrative presented here as well as describing the psycho-emotional *affect* I experienced through the ethnographic inhabiting of the lives of these participants (albeit tangentially). This is shared in the belief that writing “the self into the ethnography can be viewed as part of the quest toward greater authenticity...” (Coffey 1999, 118). It also honours the attentiveness to relationality which is at the heart of this research. An outworking of this research is the recognition of the pastoral significance of humane attentive *presence* (see 7.3). Why, therefore, would I seek to be textually absent from this descriptive process?

### **6.2.1 Autoethnography**

In the early days of this research project I had seriously considered it taking an autoethnographic form (Journal Entries 26.06.15, 17.07.15 and 11.03.17).

Autoethnography's appeal was it acknowledged the descriptive potential of a researcher's personal experience; valued their relationship with participants; employed deep and careful self-reflection; balanced intellectual and methodological rigour, emotion, and creativity; and was conducive to endeavours towards social justice (Adams, Jones, and Ellis 2015, 1-2). It also seemed more realistic in the rawness of its account as it showed "people in the process of figuring out what to do, how to live, and the meaning of their struggles" (Bochner and Ellis 2006, 111, see also Behar 1996). These aspects of autoethnography resonated with my contextual experience.

They also correlated with elements of approaches I had discovered and warmed to in PT: the problematisation of cultural beliefs, practices, and experiences (Swinton and Mowat 2006, 13-15, Miller-McLemore 2012a, 70-99); the valuing of relational and participative approaches founded on "a belief in the agency and creativity of participants" (Clare Louise Radford quoted in Bennett et al. 2018, p.153, on the value of participation see also Ward 2017, 160); an encouragement of reflective and reflexive practices in the conduct of research (Killen and De Beer 1994, Graham, Walton, and Ward 2005, Thompson, Pattison, and Thompson 2008, Nash and Nash 2012); an authenticity in eschewing sentimentality when reflexively wrestling with theodical issues posed by the struggles people face (Boisen 1960, Pattison 1989, Fulkerson 2007, Swinton 2007); the pursuit of academic rigour alongside creative

modes of theological engagement (Ballard and Couture 2001, Walton 2014); as well as a desire for human flourishing and the transformation of social structures that oppress (Pattison 1997, Cameron 2012).

Despite these strong resonances with my experience I noted the warning from autoethnographers of the concerns directed at the method by critics. These included the tendency toward self-indulgence, solipsism and narcissism (Etherington 2004, 141). I explore this further below.

### **6.2.2 Reflexivity**

Figure 20 is a self-portrait by Ernst Mach from his *The Analysis of Sensations*, originally published in 1886 (1914). It is an intriguing self-representation within which the artist's brow, nose and moustache feature. As a result, the viewer is invited to perceive the outer world that Mach beholds as if from his inner world.



**Figure 20 — From *The Analysis of Sensations* by Ernst Mach**

Mach is also being present to himself – including his inner world – in this process. This is a useful visual representation of the practice known as reflexivity. Reflexivity concerns engagement with...

...self-critical and self-conscious introspection and scrutiny. It is about deliberately asking yourself how *you*, as a human being, researcher and writer, might have shaped the very thing that you are studying” (Light 2010, 183 emphasis original).

## *Hope Deferred, Humanity Diminished?*

In ways I will describe in further detail later in this chapter, I became aware during the latter stages of fieldwork and subsequently that I had been psycho-emotionally affected by this research. This is unavoidable (Moschella 2008, 109). Research conducted with humane regard amongst a vulnerable group will always be affecting, but some of the impact upon me was detrimental, something I found hard to accept. I knew this was important research information that should be reflected in the outcomes of fieldwork, if only to help other researchers in similar fields be better informed of the dangers. It also needed to be critically acknowledged for its potential to have affected the outcomes of this research. This transparency is...

part of laying claim to the integrity and trustworthiness of qualitative research [...and] it is vital for researchers to find ways to analyse how subjective and intersubjective elements influence their research. Reflexivity offers one such tool (Finlay 2002, 531).

Reflective and reflexive practices, such as journaling in parallel with regular academic and pastoral supervision, assisted in my critical wrestling with my 'researcher-self' as I came to terms with my own humanity being tested and laid bare by the process. The words of Behar I had read years earlier came back to me:

I want to suggest that anthropologists, and other vulnerable observers, can and should write about loss. We must do so with a different awareness, and awareness about how excruciating are the paradoxes of attachment and displacement. Above all, I think we need to be absolutely pitiless with ourselves (Behar 1996, 81).

## *Hope Deferred, Humanity Diminished?*

One of my academic supervisors expressed his discomfort at the use of the word “pitiless” by Behar. I concede it should come with a caveat. I read it as denoting an unflinching willingness to be critically honest with one’s ‘self’, idealistic as that may sound. Yet, as I have become increasingly aware during my reflexive journey of self-exploration, greater pitilessness is potentially harmful and this critical impulse needs to be tempered with compassion for self, in the form of the deep humane regard this research argues for throughout. Compassionate reflexivity is motivated by a willingness to problematise one’s own role as a researcher in the field whilst acknowledging and caring for one’s own humanity in the process.

Given this strong reflexive impulse – as a form of pastoral care to myself – why did I choose not to follow an autoethnographic path as a means of bolstering the authenticity of this ethnographic endeavour? The answer is also reflexive. I was aware of my temperament which is introverted and favours introspection. Fatigue often locks me into hyper-rumination. I was concerned that a strongly reflexive approach to the construction of this thesis could lead to an infinite regression into my ‘self’. Not only would this be potentially unhealthy it most likely would prove self-indulgent. The only promise I had made to participants was that I would tell *their* story. It is their voice I want readers to hear. I feared an autoethnographic approach would compromise my commitment to the seventeen men who allowed me into their life-worlds. Nevertheless, this chapter is my concession to a growing realisation during fieldwork that I was present in and to this research, which brought a psycho-emotional cost.

### **6.3 Use of Self**

Over the last quarter of a century there has been a growing awareness amongst practitioners in various fields of the importance of reflexively paying attention to the use of one's 'self' in professional *praxis* (Curran, Seashore, and Welp 1995, Cunliffe 2004, Cunliffe and Jun 2005, Cunliffe 2009, Alvesson and Sköldbberg 2017, Cheung Judge 2018). What is meant by 'self' can be problematic both philosophically and practically as the "idea of 'one true self' is rather odd. In a complex, dynamic world, most people are not cut in stone. They have many affiliations and are expected to take on different roles" (Alvesson and Blom 2017, 42). In the sense I will operate with here 'self' denotes my subjective ability to differentiate myself from others, to know that I am not them (although I will most likely have been relationally and culturally shaped by them). This self-awareness provides the basis for critical reflexive engagement with questions concerning my own culturally, psychologically and ideologically formed dispositions and how these influence my interpretation of data.

The notion of 'Use of Self' (alternatively 'Self as Instrument'), as applied to qualitative methods of inquiry, recognises that "the researcher not only collects data but also serves as the 'instrument' through which data are collected" (Rew, Bechtel, and Sapp 1993, 300). Additionally, the "phrase researcher-as-instrument refers to the researcher as an active respondent in the research process" (Pezalla, Pettigrew, and Miller-Day 2012, 167). Although I have some discomfort about the metaphor – which has instrumentalist overtones – it is heuristic when understood to denote the ability of human beings, like scientific instruments, to register data. This is a positive exploitation of my subjectivity (Eisner 1998, 34). The following observations are

garnered from some of the additional data registered by my 'self' as interpreted within the holistic anthropological framework discussed in Chapter Two.

## **6.4 “...as yourself”**

An holistic view of human beings derived from Luke 10:27 has been discussed in 2.2.2. The Lucan passage is set in the context of teaching attributed to Jesus that discipleship involves practising a threefold love of God (with heart, mind, soul and strength), Neighbour and Self. The remainder of this chapter will be a reflexive application of this holistic framework – heart/mind/soul/strength – as I explore my 'researcher-self' in the context of fieldwork and data analysis. “Love”, as deep humane regard, is here reflexively turned to my 'self' before (in the next chapter) being redirected back to the human subjects of my research.

### **6.4.1 Heart (*Emotional/Relational*)**

Am I marketing something amongst a vulnerable group using my honed homiletical skills to persuade them to undertake work with an emotional and psychological cost which they would rather avoid? This scenario corrupts consent by means of emotionally coercive devices.

*(Passion, Persuasion and Consent, Journal Entry [JE] 01.03.17)*

An anxiety accompanied the consent-seeking phase of my fieldwork. Reflexivity “asks us to explicitly acknowledge our research in relation to power” (Adams, Jones, and Ellis 2015, 29). I was aware of the significant power imbalance between myself and those from whom I sought consent as participants. The research would delve into their troubled life-stories and a number of potential candidates declined outright

### *Hope Deferred, Humanity Diminished?*

because they did not want to re-visit traumatic or disappointing elements of their lives. I noted how “my delivery [was] becoming more polished in its...content” as I circled back to visit those initially hesitant about participating (JE 01.03.17). I am a trained preacher with over thirty years of experience in public speaking and the art of persuasion. At the time being discussed I was in the dual role of a religious leader in a penal community and also an employee of the PS who could draw keys that bolted doors and gates to prevent those I was wishing to interview from escaping. My anxiety was around informed consent amongst a vulnerable group in a clearly power-stratified context.

A relational and participative approach to research was something I was deeply committed to for reasons discussed in Chapter Three. An additional reason for this commitment was a concern that human agency featured in this research because it was an aspect of humanity that was often lacking in carceral space (see 7.4 for further discussion of ‘agency’). Pre-fieldwork I had observed “The regime controls the time of waking and eating, habits of personal hygiene and private finance, spans of relationships and the ability to practice religion” (JE 15.03.14).

I sought an inner assurance that I was not being overly coercive in my eagerness to persuade life-wounded men to participate in research I was passionately committed to undertaking. I cannot claim that the power imbalance inherent to the penal context and exacerbated by my insider status was neutralised. What I can record is that of the forty-three men serving IPP sentences at the research prison during this phase twelve immediately declined to participate. Eight more dropped out before focus groups were convened and interviews conducted. Other decliners remained friendly

and approachable in conversation even after opting out. This all suggested to me that I perhaps flattered myself as to my persuasive/coercive abilities. Nonetheless, I was careful in groups and LAAF interviews to stress what the Consent Form clearly stated, that participants could opt-out at any stage and have their data removed from the research record. This was to invest them with some power and agency in the research process.

#### **6.4.2 Mind (Intellectual/Psychological)**

And here is the realisation that poleaxed me into mute tears: That [inner] voice has served me well – very well – but does so no longer. It was the drive that allowed a fragile kid from a broken home on a large council estate to achieve things that would have been unimaginable to his tender youthful self. Unimaginable things of heart and head, of love and wisdom. But it now needs to give me some peace. (*Hello Old Friend*, JE 16.04.19)

I was conscious at the outset of this research that “if we undertake to study human lives, we have to be ready to face human feelings” (Ely et al. 1997, 49).

Concomitantly this often “comes at a personal cost to researchers” (Dickson-Swift et al. 2007, 336). I knew it was neither possible nor desirable to seek to be a Cartesian researcher-self as “feminist scholars have problematized the very possibility of a neutral, objective, dispassionate researcher, arguing instead that purported objectivity is socially constructed and contingent upon context and social identity” (Ballamingie and Johnson 2011, 712). The researcher response to the psycho-emotional distress of others is termed ‘emotional contagion’, ‘compathy’, ‘vicarious

traumatization', 'pain by proxy' or 'labour pains' because when "we see others experience pain or distress, we may ourselves have the 'compathetic response' that is, we may feel the pain or distress too" (Liamputtong 2007, 82).

The tragic death of the [REDACTED] troubled young man who inspired this research should have forewarned me of the potential psycho-emotional weight of this undertaking. Perhaps at a cognitive level it had but this preparedness fell short of the true impact of frequent ethnographic inhabiting of participants' lives that were littered with traumatic and distressing events. Even though I was initially reluctant to admit it and despite regular academic and pastoral supervision there was a personal cost. By the end of fieldwork I had become overly dependent on alcohol as a means of de-stressing at the end of days which regularly featured both the ever present challenges of pastoral care in a prison and the additional demands of ethnographic research amongst a vulnerable group.

Additional to the *affect* of my exposure to the levels of distress encountered in the participant group were personal psycho-emotional resonances I experienced with wider contextual elements within the prison. In my second year on the DPT programme I observed:

Researchers, especially when involved pastorally, have 'skin in the game'. I cannot pretend otherwise, especially when those for whom I have a duty of care grew up on the same council estates as myself and their stories have resonances with my own" (JE 07.03.15).

The mining town I grew up in was part of the 'catchment area' for the research prison within which I served. Reflecting on this personal resonance in the context of my own

troubled adolescence I was struck by a sense of “There but by the grace of God go I”.<sup>24</sup>

Work in institutions can be vocational (a response to an inner calling) but it can also be motivated by an unconscious desire for a personal healing that a practitioner finds within that context. For example...

...the mental health professional automatically selects the ideal clientele in which to study himself or herself vicariously and discover what the missing, denied aspects are, though the knowledge cannot benefit us personally – nor even our patients as much as it could do – until we acknowledge the fact that our work, however useful, has also been an evasion of the truth about ourselves” (Skynner 1984, 75-76).

As I have observed in my journal: “Maybe journeying with those who have taken that [self-destructive] turn, but are now seeking to find a path back to human flourishing, is therapeutic for a part of me as well. In their healing I find my own” (JE 24.05.14). Interpretative research can be “a source of personal growth for the researcher” (Mulholland 2007, 56).

This is not to seek to collapse study/research/fieldwork into a therapeutic enterprise. But I am conscious that the *affect* of daily ministering in carceral space compounded by my endeavours to ‘compathetically’ be present to participants was personally costly. There were a number of elements of my own lived experience that were

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<sup>24</sup> A saying traditionally attributed to John Bradford (1510-55), allegedly said when witnessing people being taken for execution. Bradford himself was subsequently burned at the stake under Queen Mary Tudor.

psycho-emotionally triggered in the conduct of my work as both chaplain and insider-researcher. Following fieldwork I undertook a course of psychotherapy to help me process the aftershock of completing the research and resigning from the PS – the latter with a sense of having to get out before I was “broke beyond fixing” [JE 12.05.18]. The quotation from the head of this section is from a reflection I wrote after my first psychotherapy session.

#### **6.4.3 Soul (*Spiritual/Transcendent*)**

Journaling is a core activity in reflective and reflexive practice (Thompson, Pattison, and Thompson 2008, Nash and Nash 2012, Bolton and Delderfield 2018).

Throughout my ministry I had a temperamental aversion to recommendations to keep a journal. The requirement on the DPT programme to keep a reflective journal gave me no choice. To my surprise I instantly warmed to the practice and discovered it to be a “purposeful attempt to achieve deeper understanding and greater self-awareness” (Walton 2014, 45).

In the case of the more challenging topics, I discovered that I did not really know what I thought and felt until I had written about them. Initially I found this to be strange but the more I have shared this insight with groups and others when discussing reflective practice the number of nodding heads suggest this is not a rare phenomenon. I also wonder how much this reflexive writing (alongside other support) helped me avoid being “broke beyond fixing” as described in the previous section.

Not previously given to writing poetically, I frequently found myself resorting to poetic form when reflectively writing and discovered the truth that poems “make people feel and think differently” (Kara 2015, 131). Some of the more difficult topics I reflected

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upon required this creative approach that came at the experiences obliquely (telling the truth on “the slant” – Emily Dickinson – see 3.6.1). Not, as I originally thought, to make sense of them but to represent them reasonably, to evoke them. Reflective practice seemed to have ‘unlocked’ a part of my ‘self’ thereby opening up a mode of creative expression that improved my descriptive research capacity. Reviewing the 577 journal entries I have written since beginning my studies I discovered they cover a range of topics: personal and professional; academic and devotional; political and organisational. The majority of them are wrestling with contextual issues associated with my ministerial *praxis*.

Despite the contextual challenges present during fieldwork (see 4.2.1) one of my supervisors remarked on a possible irony that my musings were often a seeking after beauty amidst the starkness. Working in the prison system was never always all bad and there were, for a long time, enough glimpses of heroism, humanity and hope, despite the trials, to sustain me. But I became increasingly aware that I was beginning to lose the capacity to lift up my eyes and perceive the beauty, mystery and transcendence I once had in carceral space. My decision to resign brought a heavy heart, a sense of failure and many tears, as this section’s closing JE captures:

**Resignation**

The word sits on the page  
— forlornly  
it is alien to me  
and my spirit groans in sorrow  
as I recognise my hand in its form.  
How can this be me  
who runs without stopping  
until the task completes?

Its passivity seems supine  
— alarmingly  
suggesting defeat  
and surrender to foe or fate.  
Am I beaten  
or wise to self and service –  
knowing the bitterness that lies  
to ambush beyond compassion's bounds?

In this I seek God's will  
— faithfully  
I step out in trust  
lifting my weary feet and eyes.  
Journey's end unknown  
but trod in better light  
beyond the valley of the shadow  
where I have sojourned.

*(Resignation, JE 14.12.17)*

#### **6.4.4 Strength (Physical/Material)**

I had begun to notice...my wrist was beginning to ache at times and periodically I could feel a dry creaking in the wrist joint as if its natural lubricant was no longer present. I assume this is some sort of repetitive strain injury from using my right hand to painstakingly (literally!) highlight sections of interview text using a trackpad...It has occurred to me that the physicality of coding the lived experiences of my participants has engraved some of their pain onto my own body. The embodied tracing of my fingers, again and again and again, over the text(ure) of their lives has inscribed (written) some of their pain into my hands. (Field Note [FN] 2018\_08\_27 *I have engraved you on the palms of my hands*)

PT is an enterprise in “*phronesis*<sup>25</sup> – a wisdom that attends to lived experience...” (Walton 2014, 176). This practical wisdom at the heart of PT is both creative and discerning as well as concerned with ‘right action’ (Wall 2003). My reflective practice’s embracing of poetry and other creative forms assisted me in the task of discernment throughout the research process as well as informing its outcomes. Such discernment was embodied for “it is through my body that I understand other people” (Merleau-Ponty 1962, 186, cited in Etherington 2004, 212). This is a piece of wisdom that I have physically and painfully appropriated through fieldwork and data analysis, as revealed in the JE quotation at the head of this section.

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<sup>25</sup> “Practical reason”

My research has largely attended to the lived experiences of the seventeen participants held on an indeterminate sentence. In this chapter my focus has momentarily become more reflexive and, as an embodied 'self', an holistic representation requires some reference to the physicality of my research presence. Especially because the "body has increasingly become recognised as a source of wisdom and knowledge" (Etherington 2004, 212).

Pastoral supervision and psychotherapy have stressed to me the importance of the being attentive to physical sensations. Feminist PT has especially celebrated the embodied and affective aspects of lived experience as sources of knowledge (Walton 2014, 175). This non-Cartesian approach is one I have followed because the "exclusion of the human senses as a subject of being, knowing, and connecting is rooted in and furthers the mind/body dualism that rends spirit from flesh, human from nature, female from male, and sensuality from holiness" (Baldwin 2016, xii).

A lesson in somatic wisdom occurred for me around an incident that happened in the preparatory stage of my fieldwork. I was involved in the care of a close family member who was recovering from a cancer operation. I badly sprained my right ankle whilst misplacing my foot descending the stairs at night. It seemed symptomatic of my life at that stage – distracted and preoccupied I had failed to perform a simple task safely. Once I was able to bear weight on it again and began trying to walk, I noticed that biomechanically my ankle would not function properly. Proprioception is the ability of the human body to sense itself in physical space. A physiotherapist explained that the dysfunction of my ankle was because I had stretched the soft tissue out of shape and my body was having to recalibrate its proprioceptive sensing.

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Because of elongated ligaments in my ankle my brain could not correctly sense where my foot was falling. This injury taught me how intelligent human bodies are at sensing and I was curious as to how this might also be useful in qualitative research.

Some have argued that embodiment is central to qualitative research (Perry and Medina 2015). Whilst its absolute centrality, as opposed to a more anthropologically holistic position, could be contested, I began to pay more attention to my physical sensations during fieldwork and in the conduct of my chaplaincy duties.

I am finding it difficult to find the words to describe the sixty five or so minutes of the interview...[I'm sat on a train going to Supervision and my eyes are welling with tears.] There was a beauty to the encounter – at least from my side of the interaction. ID43's lived experience embodied brutalisation (his by his father), brutality (his towards others) and beauty (as he gently described the latter scenes of his film being devoid of the harm towards others that had been so present from childhood) (FN 2017\_05\_11 *IPP LAAF Interview 3*).

Noting in my writing “my eyes are welling with tears” was a deliberate means by which I acknowledged (rather than passing over) embodied responses to experiences in the field. After discovering the notion of proprioceptive wisdom I would note any ‘out of the ordinary’ bodily sensations and reactions in my journaling as a way of bringing them into a higher level of consciousness than I would do customarily.

As the months in the field went on and the wider situation across the penal system seemed unlikely to change for the better I noted increased physical deposits of stress

in my body – mild nocturnal panic attacks, tension in my neck and shoulders, issues with my vision and sometimes a sense of dread in the pit of my stomach as I entered the prison gates and drew my keys. Such somatic attentiveness did not prevent these physical manifestations of stress but it did provide an early-warning system that allowed me to exit the system before I was “broke beyond fixing”. I share these observations not out of self-pity but rather as a health warning to other researchers – especially internal ones – planning on undertaking a research project with similar psycho-emotional dynamics. My observations also have implications for staff seeking to offer the pastoral care I will explore in the next chapter.

At the end of my third year on the DPT programme I had to submit a written piece on reflective practice. As I approached the late draft stage my supervisor noted that the piece depicted a far tidier reflective journey than he had witnessed as my academic companion. I have a habit of wanting to tidy my world up. I suspect this may underlie my attraction to narrative forms of description that likewise have a tendency to neaten life. I am therefore conscious that the anthropological picture painted here is tidily compartmentalised: heart, mind, soul and strength. My excuse is that the linear flow of this textual presentation does not lend itself to a more nuanced depiction that better reflects the interplay of aspects. An holistic anthropology acknowledges that human *being* is a dynamic interplay of emotion, psyche, body and spirit. Emotions are felt in the body. Mental health issues impact physical health and *vice versa*. And for people of faith, loss of a sense of the transcendent affects all areas of life. Although here considered under separate headings this does not imply human beings are compartmentalised selves. Reflexive self-care involves constant attention to the parts and to the whole that is our “selves”.

## **6.5 Summary Conclusion**

At the end of Chapter Four (Findings) I discussed the important role that a pastoral disposition of attentiveness (as deep humane regard) could play in the care of those life-wounded souls living with an indeterminate sentence. In the next chapter, as I explore the pastoral implications of this research, I will highlight the need to foster attitudes and practices of ‘custodial compassion’ that manage the tension of humane regard within the (often brutal) reality of carceral space. This current chapter has been an exercise in reflexively turning that attentiveness and compassion back in on myself as a once internal researcher. I have explored the affective dimension of research amongst a vulnerable group using the “Use of Self” model as overlaid by an holistic theological anthropology.

I now turn my reflective attentiveness back outwards. Out to the lived experiences explored within the context of prison-based research. I do so with a future oriented intent as I formulate pastoral proposals that address the question this research has wrestled with: “How, pastorally, can those held under an IPP sentence be supported in a hope sustaining manner?”

## **CHAPTER SEVEN – A PASTORAL RESPONSE**

Recognising that suffering and the possibilities of human flourishing are not simply matters of individual concern, truly pastoral (i.e., caring) theology will necessarily include careful diagnosis of political powers and social structures that can both create and limit human potential (McClure 2010, 242).

### **7.1 Introduction**

The Gospel of John has Jesus saying to his audience: “I came that [you] may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10 NRSV). An outworking of this for theology in both its practical and political forms is a concern for human flourishing and a critique of the systems and structures that diminish people (Pattison 1997, Cameron 2012, Phillips 2012b, 127ff., De La Torre 2015, Bretherton 2019, 291ff.). Not all suffering is systemic and structural. Some is life cycle related. But every type of suffering “is the starting point for all pastoral and practical theology – in Moltmann’s words, ‘the open wound of life in this world’” (Cooper-White 2012, 23, Moltmann 1993, 49).

The concern of this research project has been the systemic open wound that is a form of incarceration established in Chapters One and Two as being corrosive of hope and humanity. It is not my contention that a form of custodial care can be imagined and practiced that will banish all despair. But it is my belief that a more attentive form of custodial care will lower risk and increase positive outcomes for IPP people in custody. An exploration of the Christian scriptural roots of pastoral care will help me articulate the type of response to human diminishment I envisage.

### **7.1.1 Towards a Definition of Pastoral Care**

Some IPP participants mentioned the support that their faith group provided via the Chaplaincy department (see 4.2.4). Chaplains play a key role in the provision of hope-maintaining PC in prison (Todd and Tipton 2011). Alongside faith provision, PC is central to Chaplaincy service delivery (National Offender Management Service 2016). However, in the secular carceral institutions served by multi-faith Chaplaincy departments, what is meant by 'pastoral care' can be contested. Therefore I will formulate an inclusive definition of PC whilst acknowledging this is shaped by my faith tradition.

Etymologically 'pastoral care' (PC) has its roots within the Judaeo-Christian religious traditions. In Jewish scripture the metaphor of 'shepherd' is frequently used to describe the nature of God's care for the Israelites (e.g. Psalms 23:1, 79:13, 95:7, 100:3; Jeremiah 50:7; Ezekiel 34:31). These texts were incorporated into Christian scripture and the metaphor was theologically extended to the Church as "the flock" (cf. Luke 12:32; 1 Peter 5:2-4) and Christ as the embodiment of God's shepherding care (Matthew 2:6 and John 10:11-18). In the early church the role of 'pastor' was identified as a 'shepherding' ministerial function (Ephesians 4:11). Derived from the Latin noun "pastor" (shepherd), the word is used in titular form for ministers in many Protestant traditions.

Through the centuries PC has evolved but the shepherding metaphor has remained central (Hiltner 1958, Dykstra 2005, 47-61, Litchfield 2006). It is established alongside other metaphors for ministry as "the grounding metaphor for the care-giving pastor" (Gerkin 1997, 28). As shall be discussed later in this chapter, whilst a

rich metaphor, the outworking of practices of PC construed this way have tended to become over-individualised and often clergy centred (Pattison 2000a, McClure 2010). The image of the faithful shepherd (pastor) personally tending his (as has usually been the case) flock in pastoral visitations around a parish is a stereotype conjured through long-established common pastoral practice. However, it has never done justice to the broader work of industrial missionaries, politicised priests, chaplains in various institutional contexts, faith-inspired lay social activists and everyday faithful disciples practising neighbour-regarding love (Smith 1996, Pattison 2000a, 11, Mescher 2013). The shepherd metaphor is inadequate as a single model for PC but, despite its shortcomings, there are useful resonances in it with the model proposed in this chapter. This makes it worthy of more consideration, as does the metaphor's resonances with my research's highlighting of the importance of pastoral presence for hope-maintenance (7.3). One participant's recollection during interview of the key role a chaplain played after a failed suicide attempt poignantly highlighted the importance of humane attentiveness in hope-restoration (ID03 LAAF 42:09ff.).

### ***7.1.2 Redeeming the Good Shepherd***

I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep (John 10:14-15 NRSV).

John the Evangelist's representation of Jesus as the Good Shepherd conveys two elements of care that are relevant to the penal context: knowledge and commitment. The mutual knowledge envisaged in this passage suggests relationality and a depth of understanding that is the fruit of relational intentionality between the actors within

this association. Going back to the underlying pastoral metaphor, the shepherd who was good at their job was one who knew their flock and its members' foibles. This relational knowledge is found in all long-established quality human relationships as implied when a person claims "I have known him/her for a long time", suggesting a depth of personal understanding.

Challenges to the practicing of this depth of relationality in the penal context are not insignificant. There can be a suspicion that such softening of custodial boundaries undermines safety and security. Staff workload in an age of austerity means contact time between them and people in custody is increasingly shorter. Unlike parish populations, prisons are constantly in flux and apart from a relatively few long-term people those in custody will serve less than a year and not all the time at the same establishment (Cabinet Office 2018). Unfortunately all these factors combined can foster at best a superficial regard for those in the State's care and custody and at worst actual disregard of their humanity (see Chapter One). What I propose here is challenging in this context but not impossible. It is the acquiring of a disposition of humane attentiveness at the heart of which is a knowing of another person that goes beyond their crime or offending behaviour. Through a Christian theological lens this seeks to emulate the "prodigality of compassion" at the heart of God's loving intent towards humanity (2.2.4).

A 'good' shepherd also has deep commitment to their caring task and those encountered within it. In the Johannine passage the talk of laying down of life is, in theological terms, deliberately evocative of Jesus' personal sacrifice (death on a cross) that was a direct consequence of his mission. I am hesitant to write of 'self-

sacrifice' as I strongly argue in this chapter for 'self-care' as an exercise in responsible PC. The phrase in modern parlance describing "having skin in the game" best captures for me what John's representation of the Good Shepherd evokes. The form of PC I argue for in this chapter does require commitment in the form of a personal investment of oneself – to give our own humanity to this venture for the sake of the other. It is deeply vocational and dispositional.

So this is a call to seek relational knowledge and make a personal humane investment. But who is it a call to in the context of a prison, in the light of the participants' experiences?

### ***7.1.3 The Realm of Pastoral Care***

PC is primarily associated in many institutions with chaplaincy departments. In prisons these offer a valuable service in providing an environment less hostile and more humane than usually encountered in carceral space (Clear et al. 2000, Todd and Tipton 2011). Uniformed officers and other staff frequently direct people in custody to the services of chaplains, especially in times of crisis.

Compared to neglect, this is a preferable attitude. However, it can foster a belief that PC, however defined, is the sole remit of chaplaincy departments as, analogously, medical care is that of the Healthcare Department. What I argue for in this chapter is that PC be construed and practiced as an institutionally embedded humane

disposition.<sup>26</sup> In effect this is little more than meeting the PS's own aspiration towards people in custody, as stated in its Statement of Purpose: "Our duty is to look after them with *humanity* and help them lead law-abiding and useful lives in custody and after release" (Coyle 2003, 10). "Our" implies a collective duty.

#### **7.1.4 Finally, a definition**

Highlighting the collective duty expressed by the PS's Statement of Purpose is not intended to imply that chaplains do not have specialist faith-informed pastoral skills to offer in the humanising of incarceration. However, it has been noted that the "pastoral imperative" at the heart of much chaplaincy work is of a generic form (i.e. non-faith based). Whilst care might be inspired by a chaplain's personal faith or belief, its provision and nature is regardless of a person's own faith position (Phillips 2013, 192ff.). This is in stark contrast to a classic definition of PC:

The ministry of the cure of souls, or pastoral care, consists of helping acts, done by representative Christian persons, directed toward the healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling of troubled persons whose troubles arise in the context of ultimate meanings and concerns (Clebsch and Jaekle 1975, 4).

This model is impossible to reconcile with that required of multi-faith prison chaplaincy departments and a PS that accommodates "non-religious" PC from

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<sup>26</sup> How such a disposition is fostered institutionally is beyond the scope of this research as it involves principles of organisational change that could positively affect systems, structures and institutional culture. Some pastoral principles and practices are enumerated below (6.5) but more systemic change would need to underpin and support these measures if an humane disposition is to be institutionally embedded.

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Humanist practitioners (Humanists UK 2017). The journey from the Judaeo-Christian metaphor of shepherding for PC has been a long one. Nowadays the phrase “pastoral care” is used in many non-ecclesial contexts (e.g. education) where it is “concerned with...personal, social and emotional development” (note the avoiding of the ‘spiritual’ dimension of humanity) (National Association of Pastoral Care in Education 2019). Is there any common thread running through the various understandings of PC as have evolved down the centuries that might help articulate a definition that is able to speak into the cultural plurals of penal practice? One that especially addresses the despair and life-woundedness encountered amongst the research group?

Conscious of the Christian theological lens I am looking through, my retrieval of the image of the Good Shepherd offers a possible connecting thread. As described, the role of shepherd construed in the terms of John 10 (7.1.2) calls upon relational knowledge and deep humane commitment. But the role also implies attentiveness. The Parable of the Lost Sheep (Luke 15:3-7) is an illustrative story attributed to Jesus that is set within a chapter of stories about lostness (including that of a coin and a son). The parabolic nature of these stories is to convey the nature of God’s love that is tireless in seeking and searching out the lost, as a good shepherd would be around a sheep straying into danger. This was my own experience and understanding of PC behind bars: searching out and seeking the humanity that is easily lost to everyday sight when beholding those who are deeply life-wounded. The PC metaphor of shepherd calls out this humane attentiveness that I will expand upon throughout this chapter. This is the definition of PC I have formulated and will be working with when considering its institutionalised expression in prison work:

Pastoral care is the disposition and associated practices of deep humane regard founded on an attentiveness to an 'other' which seeks and works for the other's flourishing as well as challenging those systems and structures that diminish them (or threaten to do so).

The call I make is methodologically rooted in PT's interdisciplinary engagement with lived human experience and the "need for theoretical and practical transformation" of situations where human flourishing is hindered (Pattison and Lynch 2005, 410). It is rooted in my research data findings which called forth a pastoral disposition premised upon a relationality that practices attentiveness to the life-wounded people in custody. This is a humane disposition that sees deeper than a person's crimes as it is fostered by a profound desire for their well-being.

The ties between pastoral and practical forms of theology will now be explored as a means by which to further explicate the epistemological underpinning of this chapter's description of the pastoral outcomes from my research.

## **7.2 Practical Theology and Pastoral Care**

The relationship between PC and PT is long-standing and complex (Pattison and Lynch 2005). Some of the earliest and most influential writers in PT wrote from ministry-based pastoral concerns. These issues were addressed through an interdisciplinary conversation between theology and the human sciences, particularly psychology and its psycho-therapeutic practice in counselling (Boisen 1960, Hiltner 1958, Gerkin 1984, 1997, Pattison 2000a, 19ff.). Throughout the twentieth century theology saw "an increasing interest in the theoretical and empirical study of

everyday, lived experience” and undertook a “turn to the human” (Pattison and Lynch 2005, 408).

### **7.2.1 The Living Human Document**

The human subject of study in this paradigm shift was not a theologically deduced anthropological construct, but an inductively explored and experientially encountered realm of *being* human. In some cases the subject was autobiographical (Boisen 1960, Pattison 2000b), in others ecclesiological (Hopewell 1987, Fulkerson 2007) and in yet others, transformation of the world and its systems (Pattison 1997, Forrester 1997, Veling 2005). At the inter- and intra-personal levels ‘the human’ was analogously approached as a ‘document’ to be read for epistemological insight (Gerkin 1984). This metaphor was later contemporised as the “living human web” (Miller-McLemore 1993, 2018). The metaphor of ‘web’ anthropologically recognises that the human subject is not some atomised individual but a person located within communities and social-structures that shape and direct their life toward flourishing or diminishment. The findings of this research have shown that the participants are not individuals whose criminal acts arose solely from personal wilfulness but human beings whose development, behaviour and thinking were significantly (but not exclusively) determined by the interplay of relational and social factors present pre-custody. A PC sensitive to these insights must be aware of the contextual factors that surround and pre-exist the individual. Sadly, this has not always been the way PC has been construed due to the anthropological understanding known as individualism.

### **7.2.2 Individualism**

The anthropological model that construes human beings as atomistic individuals with relatively unfettered agency is known as “individualism” and is the prominent philosophy of human nature in the West (Lukes 2006). It has liberated ordinary citizens from the will of fickle monarchs, the superstitious practices and oppressive control of the medieval Church and provided a basis for the formulation of human rights. But western individualism has also fostered an atomistic view of people that has been corrosive of a more social and relational understanding of what it means to be human. John Donne (1572-1631) poetically evoked this anthropological vision of a shared humanity:

No man (*sic*) is an island entire of itself; every man  
is a piece of the continent, a part of the main;...  
...any man's death diminishes me,  
because I am involved in mankind (*sic*)... (Donne 1624)

Martin Buber's *I and Thou* formulated a philosophical social anthropology that highlighted the dangers of thoroughgoing individualism which fostered an I-It (non-social) relationship with others (Buber 1937, Kramer and Gawlick 2003). Liberation theologians have especially criticised western individualism as the anthropological ideology supporting the exploitation of others through its failure to recognise the common humanity we share (Gutiérrez 1973, Comblin 1990). Other theologians, often drawing upon social models of the Trinity, have stressed the importance of community and the relational for human flourishing (McFadyen 1990, Gunton 1991, Fiddes 2000, Zizioulas 2004, Jenson 2006).

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Sociologists have critiqued the consumerist economic embodiment of individualism for its dehumanising tendencies (Bauman 2001, Sennett 2012). Neoliberalism is the ideological outworking of individualism and promotes free-market capitalism. The 'punitive turn' in penology has been attributed to this neoliberalist ideology and seeks social control of those disenfranchised from the market (Garland 2001, Wacquant 2009). This explains the significant increase in prison population size in the last three decades. Compared to previous social understandings of crime, the new penal orthodoxy...

...took grip in the 1980s, characterised by a more individualistic and consumerist outlook...In this environment prisoners were no longer seen as the victims of circumstances. Instead, crime was increasingly seen as an act of personal choice and the responsibility of the individual offender (Bennett 2012, 6-7).

Stripping an individual of their social context is dehumanising. This was evidenced by the interview data. Participant ID30 attributed the allaying of his serious suicidal intent to uniformed staff who were prepared to listen to his story and have some sense of his pre-custodial lived experience. To be human is to be a social creature functioning within a living human web of relationships, systems and structures. A person in custody's humanity, which theologically and anthropologically they share with all staff, is often lost in places of mass incarceration where an humane form of attentiveness struggles to gain credence. That is why it is still newsworthy when a prison governor bans the use of the words "offender" and "inmate" whilst favouring use of first names in the prison they oversee (O'Neill 2019).

### **7.2.3 The Individualisation of Pastoral Care**

PT's early engagement with psychological and psycho-therapeutic interpretations of human well-being contributed to the individualistic focus of the 'treatment model' in PC (Pattison 2000a, 82ff.). It fostered a tendency amongst some Christians to privilege "service over justice" (Stoddart 2014, 123). Caring for an individual is less challenging than acknowledging and addressing the wider socio-historical context within which that person is located. This can lead to the domestication of PC into "a pastoral 'niceness' [that] is a deep affront to the radical challenge of the gospel of Jesus Christ that requires justice and mercy, truthfulness as well as kindness" (Whipp 2013, 118). The promotion of human flourishing inevitably raises political and systemic questions (McClure 2010, 242). As a chaplain, being a paid employee of a host organisation, especially in the public sector, can temper the ability to "speak truth to power" even though the "perception of [chaplains] as independent, counter-cultural agents [remains part of] institutional mythology" in many cases (Todd and Tipton 2011, 33).

From the beginning I was acutely conscious of the role conflict inherent in this research: prison chaplain (religious leader / pastoral carer / government employee) and researcher (with a latitude to discover and expose uncomfortable truths). In reality I found the PS, especially the research prison, to be very accommodating. I was aware that, due to the pastoral experience of the death of the young man that motivated this research and my pre-reading around the genealogy of the IPP sentence (especially Annison 2015a), I felt that many held under its terms were suffering a significant injustice. Therefore, throughout the project I endeavoured to

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keep my passion for justice at a level that maintained motivation but not such that research became a crusade. I was greatly helped in this by regular academic supervision. Nevertheless, I continued to wrestle with the summons of PT to challenge the systems and structures that diminish human beings. I sought to identify ways that could do so around the IPP issue that avoided either a futile and impractical meta-level critique at one extreme or the formulating of some pastoral pharmacology to anaesthetise despairing IPP people in custody so they accepted their plight better. Story-telling was the key.

Attentiveness to the individual stories shared in interviews provided a narrative texture that brought any abstract notions such as 'injustice' or 'deprivation' to life – it became a matter of 'flesh and blood' to me. In my personal ministry amongst the participants, knowing their story (in part at least) called forth from me a deeper pastoral attentiveness. There is an irony in this given my critique of the individualisation of PC. Whilst I argue against *individualism* as an anthropological model I contend that greater attentiveness to individuals as contextualised human beings shaped by the content of their stories is pastorally transformative, as I encountered during the interviewing *praxis* of this research. Knowing something of what has shaped and sometimes diminished a person allows those offering PC the opportunity to pause, reflect and avoid any simple or quick consolation that is blind to the often significant social factors impacting upon a person in custody.

If PT is to be true to its declared intent to foster human flourishing (see 7.1) it must continue to develop its attentiveness to the storied lives of those it seeks to serve.

But narrative is not just a resource to inform PC. Story-telling can also be a political act.

#### ***7.2.4 Story-Telling as Pastoral and Political Action***

The narrative basis of the interview method I employed (LAAF) exposed me to the power of story as a human artefact. Being aware of the many disappointments they had suffered, the only promise I made to participants was to tell their story. I intentionally made this promise as both a pastoral and a political act. To have their story told is a pastoral act as it demonstrates the embodied attentiveness at the heart of my definition of PC (7.1.4). To tell a person's story one has to pay attention.

It also addresses their experience of 'ethical loneliness' (see 1.5). The sense of social abandonment was tangible throughout participant interviews and expressed in their collective "hatred for the system" (ID31 09:20). In formal and casual conversations with diverse groups and individuals about my research I have been struck as to how frequently people confess to total ignorance concerning the IPP sentence. Participants felt that the general public either did not know or care about their plight. In post data analysis member-checking feedback ID39 wrote: "Thank you for taking the time to listen to all 17 of us who may have found this helpful, to others as well as ourselves..." (See Appendix 9).

Story-telling is also a political act. The form of narration envisaged here as a political act is premised on Arendtian political philosophy which asserts that in social transformation "story-telling can be considered as a peculiar design tool that has a history in contributing to generate a more democratic, inclusive and active idea of politics" (Tassinari, Piredda, and Bertolotti 2017, S3492). At its most powerful it has

the ability to redeem “the memory of the dead, the defeated and the vanquished by making present to us once more their failed hopes, their untrodden paths, and unfulfilled dreams” (Benhabib 1990, 196). The life-worlds of the participants in this research are usually inaccessible to those outside of the penal context. This research has provided an ethnographic representation of the temporality and *affect* of the IPP sentence that determines the texture of their custodial lives alongside the despondency that accompanies their sense of abandonment. Story-telling provides “the ability to recreate the world as it appear[s] through the eyes of others” (Benhabib 1990, 183).

The narrative evocation that this empathic shift embodies is both a pastoral and political act. IPP story-telling is not like a fairy tale with an inevitable happy ending. As an action research project employing an ethnographic methodology this research has sought to enter the lived experience of IPP participants and tell their story such that readers/listeners can know something of participants’ life-worlds. So as to “serve their political task, [Participative Action Research] stories should ‘stir people to think about what they are doing’ by inviting readers to try to figure out how the world would look if approached from perspectives different from their own” (Santos 2012, 116).

As a researcher I have felt driven by the “uncontrollable narrative impulse of memory” (Cavarero 2000, 35). As a pastoral practitioner in carceral space I often felt I was ‘tilting at windmills’. The perennial challenges to rehabilitative endeavours in systems of mass incarceration were compounded during my time as a chaplain by the issues outlined previously (see 4.2.1). Days before I left the PS I wrote a reflexive poem in

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my journal, accompanied by an image from *Don Quixote* (Cervantes Saavedra 1993): **Apophatic Hope** – *Writing to Forestall Despair*

I write because I cannot,  
not because I can  
but because to not  
would be  
to betray.

I write to not betray,  
not because to write  
makes right  
but because...  
what?

I write to not despair,  
to succumb  
would make hope  
an orphan  
left.

I write to surrender not,  
for tilting not  
at windmills,  
us all  
diminishes.

(JE 21/05/2019)

## *Hope Deferred, Humanity Diminished?*

The poem was inspired by a BBC Radio 4 interview that day in the programme *Front Row* (Abell 2018). It was with the poet, writer and dancer Tishani Doshi. She spoke of writing as an act of hope, albeit her latest collection of poetry was partly inspired by the murder of a close friend and other accounts of violence against women. Although rooted in these bleak experiences, Doshi regarded her work as a form of defiant optimism, a notion that spoke into my context beautifully. Even though it felt quixotic I re-committed myself to a vicarious hope practiced through my story-telling of the IPP experience from the inside out. It was a substitutionary hope practiced for those living with hope deferred or in despair. This is my political act of defiant optimism and is embodied in my writing of articles on incarceration in the *Church Times* (Beedon 2016a, b, 2018c, 2019a), engagement with the Prison Reform Trust, presentations at conferences and informing public opinion about the IPP issue through one personal conversation at a time.<sup>27</sup> I have noted above (4.2.4) that I was pleasantly surprised that despite all the negative narrative elements expressed in the LAAF interviews there were also glimpses of hope (see LAAFs IDs 10; 17; 18; 22; 37; 39; 40; 43). How could I despair at participants' plight when many were desperately trying to maintain some life-sustaining hope?

Planning beyond the demands of thesis writing, I have approached the artist I commissioned to produce the LAAF movie posters for each participant. We are exploring a collaboration that publicly exhibits the images juxtaposed with the FPs that are so evocative of the lived experiences of the IPP participants. Additionally, as this research was authorised by NOMS, I am required to write a report for them in

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<sup>27</sup> This conversational approach included an 'audience' with my Diocesan bishop to share my research insights.

which the recommendations contained in this chapter will also appear. As yet the degree to which these recommendations might filter through to inform policy is uncertain but that is no reason to try not – defiant optimism.

### **7.3 Pastorally Attentive Penal Communities**

In order to achieve our objective for hope there needs to be a reciprocal agreement between staff and residents, for hope to be nurtured, maintained and deepened (Lewis and Robertson 2019, 244).

In Chapter Four I suggested that “Humane regard requires attentiveness to the lived experience of ‘another’ and this is the well-spring for quality PC” (4.3). Since their inception, warehouses of humanity that are the places of modern mass incarceration have had a culture of hyper-surveillance (Foucault 1977). Penal systems provide the ability to monitor almost every move of a resident and track their whereabouts day and night. Ironically, alongside this panoptical ability can reside an institutional inattentiveness to the person that is behind the prison number or the cell location. Or even to perceive people in custody in a “maloptical” manner:

In the Malopticon, penal subjects suffer not hyper- or super-visibility; rather, they suffer the pain of not being seen; at least not as they would recognize themselves...not only is the subject of the Malopticon seen badly; he/she is seen as bad (McNeill 2019, 225 emphasis original).

This observation might seem harsh to some who work in the penal system that believe they relate personally to those in their care and custody. But if the

transformational level of penal relationality was widespread institutionalised good practice, why has there been the need to keep launching programmes to address the personal and relational aspect of carceral space (e.g. *Every Contact Matters* and *Five Minute Interventions*) (Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service 2017, 13, Kenny and Webster 2015)? One commentator is more strident:

In the extreme scenario, relationships have been completely removed from institutions (such as super-max prisons), leading to what I would argue to be a toxic environment, which creates anger rather than growth (Lewis 2016, 164).

The IPP interviews I conducted revealed that staff whom participants identified as embodying hope-generating practices were the ones that 'knew' them at a level beyond the superficial. Staff had achieved this through being 'present' to them as human beings rather than simply as functionaries in a penal system. As one chaplain has noted, people in custody have been found to "value this support, highlighting the importance of giving time and respect in a non-judgemental manner" (Brandner 2014). This is a 'ministry of presence'.

### **7.3.1 A Ministry of Presence**

Speak little; listen much; think more of understanding hearts and of adapting yourself to their needs than saying clever things to them. Show them that you have an open mind, let everyone see by experience that there is safety and consolation in opening his (*sic*) mind to you (François Fénelon cited in Benner 1998, 144).

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As argued in the introduction to this chapter, PC as construed here is not a form of humane regard I consider to be the responsibility of chaplaincy departments alone. It is an institutional disposition to be fostered and developed across establishments. However, I will draw upon chaplaincy studies to describe the nature of the attentiveness I am proposing.

Some authors in pastoral theology describe “a ministry of presence” (Hall 2004, 172ff.). The centrality of this approach to care is made clear by one writer: “Pastoral care can...be defined as a form of practical theology specified as an intentional *enacting* and *embodying* of a theology of presence...” (McClure 2012, 270 emphasis original). In its uncritical form, a ministry of presence can be a secondary rationalisation of purposeless ministerial loitering, lacking precision and theological intent. At best it is an existential response to be fully present to the other person who is in distress or need of care. It means “vulnerability to and participation in the life-world of those served” (Fackre 1990). Although the provenance of this caring approach is uncertain some have claimed its roots lie in the Christian humanistic tradition of François Fénelon (1651-1715) and Charles de Foucauld (1858-1916) (Sullivan 2014, 173-192). In the context of end of life care, research into the quality of ‘pastoral presence’ in the midst of personal despair has highlighted its ability to foster hope (Nolan 2012).

To be pastorally attentive in a hope-fostering way is to be more than just physically present. The quote attributed to Fénelon at the head of this section describes pastoral attentiveness: speak sparingly; listen much; do both, not to explain or rectify but primarily to understand the other person; have an open mind; be present to

another in a way that fosters a sense of safety and consolation. Some might find this form of pastoral presence is more easily imaginable in a parish rather than a penal context. But why might that be? I suspect this is, in large part, because of the scapegoating social dynamic discussed in section 1.4.

Because of their deviance, once banished from civil society, people in the wilderness of custody are to be forgotten, at least until their release looms and the collective amnesia lifts as public risk becomes an issue. Public discourse as purveyed in some media means “you become a ‘prisoner’, an ‘offender’, a ‘convict’ – no longer a member of society, as if by going to prison, you have given up your membership of the club of society” (Warr 2012, 143). The bounds of compassion easily encompass the fragile parishioner in need of the pastor’s time but I suspect they are less elastic when it comes to the sometimes dangerous and dysfunctional people whom are considered more in need of punishment and correction than pastoral care (Dingwall and Hillier 2015).

Yet carceral space is not devoid of such attentive encounters as research listening to ‘prisoner voice’ has highlighted:

...caring officers were present with prisoners in both the physical and affective sense of the term. They sat down with people, which is highly significant on wings where officers were busy and responsible for observing large groups. Caring officers were experienced as always ‘there for you’ as well as fully ‘there’ during a particular interaction (Tait 2012, 21).

The humane regard that this quote describes and my research findings point towards is an antidote to the relational ruptures that many of my participants disclosed in interview (see 4.2.7). The pastoral texture of the attentiveness I am arguing for can be best described through the consideration of two dispositions towards human beings culturally encountered in southern Africa: *Sawubona* and *Ubuntu*.

### **7.3.2 Deep Humane Regard – ‘Sawubona’ and ‘Ubuntu’**

“Sawubona!” is a common greeting amongst the peoples of southern Africa. Literally it translates as “I/We see you”. The customary response is “Sikhona” meaning “I am here”. The ‘seeing’ implied goes beyond the visual apprehension of another and denotes a relational presence of one with another and *vice versa*. As a pastoral presence, *sawubona* “is a mutual invitation to be in one another’s presence, in spite of, or even because of, the other person’s needs. It means to be fully in the presence of the other...” (Taylor 2018, Chapter 4). It offers an “invitation to a deep witnessing and presence. This greeting forms an agreement to affirm and investigate the mutual potential and obligation that is present in a given moment” (Bishop 2019).

Such a presence of affirmation and investigation was something I sought to model in the LAAF interview process. I found the level of disclosure to be surprising.

Participants shared with me elements of their lives that, whilst discomfoting to hear, were indicative of a level of trust I had not anticipated. It affirmed my pastoral hunch that relational attentiveness provides a way into the heart of others where, potentially, healing can take place.

The greeting and the relational attentiveness *sawubona* intends is premised upon an associated anthropological idea from southern Africa: *ubuntu*. Although difficult to

translate into English it is often rendered as: “I am because we are, and because we are, I am” (Ngunjiri 2016, 224). It has been described as a philosophy, a world view, an ethic, a spirituality or a humanism (Hailey 2008, 4, Ngunjiri 2016, 230-32, Dreyer et al. 2017, 1-2). It captures well the humane attentiveness being argued for here as a pastoral response to the often dehumanising effects of mass incarceration. It is based upon a belief in a shared humanity across all cultural and systemic divides. It affirms that human “beings only become truly human through relationships with others” (Dreyer et al. 2017). Therefore the addressing of relational ruptures is fundamental to human flourishing. That is why Archbishop Desmond Tutu formulated a theology based upon the principles of *ubuntu* as the foundation for reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa (Battle 2009).

Empathic presence is at the heart of *ubuntu*:

It is the capacity in African culture to express compassion, reciprocity, dignity, harmony, and humanity in the interests of building and maintaining community. (Nussbaum 2003, 21)

Both *sawubona* and *ubuntu* are notions that can be romanticised, commodified and commercialised. It has been recognised that the communitarian impulse can stifle personal development and creative non-conformity (Tucker and Masango 2017, 151-152). When misappropriated into some Western ‘self-help’ thinking the individual becomes the centre of attention and the *sawubona* greeting begins not with “I/We see you” but the more Cartesian “I am here to be seen!” (Holden 2011). In one example of misappropriation, values of *sawubona* and *ubuntu* have been assimilated into a relational business leadership model that instrumentally harnesses them for

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the purposes of corporate success (Caldwell and Atwijuka 2018). The employment of these terms in service of ‘the bottom line’ seems philosophically and morally remote from their original intent, insofar as such intent can be identified for these conceptually evolving clusters of ideas. But if communitarian values are at the heart of these anthropological dispositions there is an obvious tension between these values and corporate ones. Liberation theologians have adequately exposed the corrosive effects of capitalism on indigenous communities (Comblin 1990). Also, as a final critical point regarding *sawubona* and *ubuntu*, there are always dangers in idealising the concept of “community” and shared identity (Volf 1996). *Ubuntu* has sometimes been referred to as a form of “benevolent coercion”, particularly as experienced by women (Chifungo 2014, Nell 2017, 143).

Critical awareness of the shortcomings of *sawubona* and *ubuntu* does not require the abandonment of the attentive humane dispositional values that they express. These can provide useful models as I heuristically explore the nature of pastoral care that can be rehabilitatively employed in the penal context. I therefore posit that transformative relationality calls upon an attentiveness embodied in the *sawubona* and *ubuntu* form of “presence”. It requires empathically ‘being there’ for another, as discussed by some IPP participants in the context of the *Kainos* community: listening, normalising, trusting and believing in a person’s capacity to change (4.2.7). Whilst the broader and deeper institutionalisation of this humane attentiveness would be therapeutic and rehabilitative amongst the general prison population, its application amongst those existing within the lived experience of IPP is vital. My contention is not that humane attentiveness is totally lacking from prisons but that it is patchy in its

reach and too easily dependent upon which members of staff are ‘on the wing’ or the disposition of the governor or other senior managers.

Before I draw this chapter to a close in sketching out the shape of penal attentiveness, I need to briefly consider three related notions that bear on this matter but have not yet been foregrounded: sin, agency and self-belief.

## **7.4 Sin, Agency and Self-Belief**

Although placing the emphasis in different places, most desistance scholars now agree that explanations of desistance require an understanding of the interplay between social and subjective factors... (Burke, Collett, and McNeill 2019, 67).

Desistance is the dispositional shift away from offending behaviour. The above quote hints at the complex factors that are involved in the lives of people in custody who make the transition away from criminality. There are internal (attitudinal, psychological and affective) factors at play with external (cultural, relational and social) elements, all clustered around the individual seeking to change their life. This language around the struggle involved in the personal journey from sometimes prolific wrong-doing to desistance reminds me of (Christian) faith-based discourse around sin and agency.

### **7.4.1 Sin and the Incarcerated Soul**

The New Testament word for sin is *hamartia* (ἁμαρτία) whose etymological root refers to “missing the mark” (Strong 1980c entry 266). The old English word “sin” similarly is derived from an archery term for missing the target (Hill 1984, 56). The

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practice in the United States of calling some penal institutions “penitentiaries” (places of penance) reminds us of the practice in early versions of modern mass incarceration to conflate sin and criminality. A similar conflation is suggested by the importing of the term “cell” (a place to ponder one’s relationship with God) from monastic life (Beedon 2019b, 6).

In Christian theological discourse sin originates “in the human being’s inclination to ignore, disobey, or replace God...” (Foley 1990, 1173). It manifests itself in “living foolishly in distorted faith” and doing so “against God” (Kelsey 2009, 408,409). Even today, in terms of theological anthropology, a human being’s true identity is defined by their “related-to-by-God-ness” (Kelsey 2009, 590). Little surprise then that early penal institutions, conceived as places of penance, were socially and physically constructed to correct such “distorted faith” and turn the contrite soul back to God.

A deep flaw in this approach was the individualised understanding of sin. This was challenged by my encounter with the lived experience of IPP participants in their interviews. Whilst I would never excuse or condone their criminal actions, their way of being in the world was deeply influenced by factors that went beyond personal wilfulness. There were (wrong) personal choices made, but responsibility was deeply attenuated by social factors. This resonates with McFadyen’s view that, in “one sense, all understandings of sin are relational...” (2000, 202 n.1). The tri-fold love of God, neighbour and self that is described in Luke 10:27 (see 2.2.2) suggests that sin could be construed as a relational rupture of that love, which is riven not only God-wards but also personally and socially. Such love is...

...a form of relationship founded on the particularity and the integrity of partners and at the same time on the indissolubility of their commitment and orientation one to another, which seeks the well-being and perfection of the other (McFadyen 2000, 207).

Sin can thus be construed as a distorted love of either God, neighbour or self (or some combination thereof). Such a rupture could never be repaired by an obsession over an individual's wrong-doing.

In a multi-faith and significantly secular society it is right that the hegemony of the Christian faith's metaphysical claims no longer determine the public narrative concerning those convicted of crimes. Today people in custody are not perceived as "sinners" but "offenders" (literally those who have "struck against" the bonds of society). If the correction of "sin" (as a disposition towards wrong-doing in the eyes of God) is no longer the aim of incarceration what has replaced it?

Rehabilitation<sup>28</sup> in the form of behaviour modification has replaced 'sin' as the positive aim of modern incarceration.<sup>29</sup> Offending behaviour (OB) programmes play an important role in addressing the behavioural factors that shape a person's propensity to commit criminal acts (Hollin and Palmer 2006). But they do raise questions concerning human agency. Personal 'agency' is something most people in custody feel the lack of, but the indeterminacy of the IPP sentence diminishes it even further. Numerous parole 'knock backs' deepen the impression that matters are

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<sup>28</sup> I find 'rehabilitation' etymologically problematic. It means to restore to a former state. Attention to many of the participants' life narratives suggests this might be the last thing we should intend. But it is the word in common usage in carceral space.

<sup>29</sup> In distinction to the negative aims of punishment and deterrence.

totally outside an individual's control. This may actually not be the case but interview data about 'the System' (4.2.3) revealed how strong the perception was that they were 'being done to' rather than 'worked with'.

#### **7.4.2 Agency and Coercive Control**

I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate...For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. (Romans 7:15,19 NRSV).

It is one of the truisms about our life that there are things that we do and other things that happen to us (Mayr 2011, 1).

The narrative of a number of the IPP participants I interviewed reminded me of the words from Paul of Tarsus in his *Epistle to the Romans* (above). This was especially true of data contributing to the 'Stupid Self' theme within the 'Thinking' meta-theme (see 4.2.5). There was little to suggest that participants intended to render their actions inconsequential by referring to them as "stupid". The sense I got was that they did not understand why they sometimes did what they did and frequently so.

If, for the pastoral purposes of secular penal discourse, agency is not to be interpreted in terms of "sin", how might it be understood? Within prisons both sides of the Atlantic psychotherapeutic correctional interventions and programmes have anthropologically located the person in custody as a subject to be "fixed". On this understanding, there is a broken or deviant agentic or moral centre to the person in custody that needs rectifying. Pervasive and often unchallenged anthropological notions underpin this approach that is premised upon "individualistic theories of moral

action [which] typically assume an internalisation of behavioural standards that, in turn, create a permanent control mechanism within the person that governs future behaviour” (Haney 2005, 74). Accessing and modifying this behavioural control mechanism located within the individual is the goal of OB programmes.

Most of the IPP participants in this study were highly sceptical of the value of such programmes. One described his participation on OB courses as merely “playing the system on itself” (ID43 43:55). This is unsurprising given participants’ general distrust of ‘authority figures’ as disclosed in interview (ID40 22:30). However, this negative appraisal of programmes is not one shared with all IPP people and another study found “comments were generally positive toward treatment programs, with the consensus view being that participating in programs has been helpful in terms of assisting behavioural change” (Stephenson, Woodhams, and Harkins 2017, 288). Where both this study and my research findings concur is in showing the negative *affect* of systemic coercion to participate alongside a perception that involvement in programmes was a ‘tick box’ exercise to avoid the prospect of, in effect, serving a life sentence (Stephenson, Woodhams, and Harkins 2017, 277). One participant observed:

...the programmes they try and make you do, ...I personally think that they are very condescending and...they are formed by people I don’t know what world they live in but I don’t think they live in the real world (ID30 LAAF 27:50).

The effectiveness of OB courses is mixed (Carlen 2005, 436). This is not the same as saying they are ineffective but of those adults released from custody between

April and June 2017 nearly half (48%) were reconvicted of another offence within one year of release (Prison Reform Trust 2019, 3). Critics have also attributed the programmes approach to an...

...authoritarian model of rehabilitation [that] is really only a subtler version of the old repressive model, seeking compliance by means of intimidation and coercion...to mould the offender and ensure conformity to a predesigned pattern of thought and behaviour... (Rotman 1994, 292).

Ironically, rather than fostering personal agency such subtle coercion frequently evokes sublimated frustration externalised as supine compliance. The approach becomes “infantilising” of the person in custody and their response therefore often predictably childish (Burke, Collett, and McNeill 2019, 11). This imposed passivity has been theologically identified as an area of anthropological concern suggesting people in custody “are treated as objects rather than as subjects” (Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales 2006, 63).

### **7.4.3 Self-Belief**

A quote frequently attributed to the first inspector of prisons, Alexander Paterson (1884-1947), whose source is unknown, states: “The secret of discipline is motivation. When a man (*sic*) is sufficiently motivated, discipline will take care of itself.” Amongst the IPP participant group many were deeply demotivated and expressed the view that there was no longer any point participating in OB courses (see 4.2.6). Research amongst people released from prison who did not re-offend highlighted the importance of “some outside force, someone who ‘believed in’ the ex-

offender” (Maruna 2001, 71). Such an humane presence could engender a self-belief in a “redemption script”, allowing the formulation of a personal narrative of ‘bad’ made ‘good’ to then generatively ‘do good’ (Maruna 2001, 85-130).

Incarcerated human beings are surrounded by systems of surveillance and personnel trained to report any ‘falling short’ that might suggest an on-going risk of re-offending. Loci of positive regard in carceral space are few. The more stigmatised a resident – think ‘IPP’ and ‘prolific offender’ – the tighter the scrutiny and regular the encounter with negativity. The one research participant (ID37) most obviously on track to complete his sentence at minimum tariff spoke of how his Offender Manager (OM) was encouraging and challenging. The OM spoke in ways that clearly regarded him positively and with a little professional pride at his progress. But amongst the group generally there was a shared perception that those they believed should be encouraging them often were negative and discouraging (see 4.2.4).

The pastoral disposition of deep humane regard I am arguing for is not naïve about a human being’s capacity for self-delusion nor their frequent tendency to deny or mitigate responsibility for wrong-doing. Anna Freud has argued that these human responses to negative experiences are part of the ego’s psychological defence mechanism (Freud 1968). In the case of life sentenced people in custody: “Denial of the offence was a defence mechanism that seemed to hold at bay the painful realities entailed by a conviction for murder” (Wright, Crewe, and Hulley 2017, 238). Pastoral attentiveness will not magically turn the other person into a saint. But the humane attentiveness and relational presence described here can provide the psycho-emotional container which provides, as one of my DPT colleagues describes, “a safe

space for slow questions” (Stobert 2018). It is under such conditions, rather than that of the malopticon, where the most profound transformation from personal diminishment to enrichment can take place.

I conclude this chapter and the last substantive element of this current work with an exercise in imagination. Whilst I might, again, be ‘tilting at windmills’ I want to critically re-imagine carceral space in accordance with the principles and practices I have been describing thus far, shaped by the needs named in the data. All transformation begins in the imagination, as evidenced in the ‘fantasy’ sub-theme that emerged from the interview data (4.2.5). Within the prophetic and apocalyptic books of the Bible, it is a vision of a transformed reality that stirs to action (Brueggemann 1978). Without a mental picture or notion of the future there is nothing to draw a person from the present forwards (the “goal” element of the psychology of hope, see 2.3.4). That is why the role of the imagination in pastoral care is recognised and well established (Wenderoth 1990).

My imaginative enterprise will be the painting of a picture of institutionalised pastoral attentiveness, explicating its guiding principles and suggesting practices that embody the values that have been shaped by the themes that the LAAF interview data has elicited.

## **7.5 Developing, Maintaining and Institutionalising Pastoral**

### **Attentiveness**

Respectful, sociable relationships based on the recognition of shared humanity and a prisoner's individuality were experienced as caring in themselves and alleviated...the threats to personhood which inhered in the prison as a punishing institution (Tait 2012, 20).

The humanising of incarceration requires the tempering of climates of control and correction with compassion – a deep humane regard shaped by the principles and embodied in the practices that follow. Whilst this research has focussed predominantly on the plight of those serving an IPP sentence, my journey has now brought me to the realisation that these principles and practices, whilst not wholly absent from prisons, would be profoundly transformative if embedded deeper and wider across the whole penal estate.

Regarding IPP people in custody, I believe these principles and practices would be better served in specialist units either separate from the main wings, integrated but demarcated within a wing, or created by specialist IPP group work, one-to-one support and activities within the prison regime. The most feasible option will be determined by context and resources. Whichever is chosen, specialist staff and/or volunteers should be introduced to the practices enumerated below and trained in the practices that outflow from them so as to be equipped to mentor IPP people in custody. The role of mentor would include working collaboratively with the IPP person in the following elements:

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- fostering a supportive person-centred relational presence with their mentoree (pastoral attentiveness),
- when appropriate, discussing with and helping them identify any ‘quick fixes’ or longer term personal ambitions (goals),
- establishing and maintaining the mentoree’s focus and self-belief (agency),
- planning and monitoring progress against personally determined (with coaching) paths to success (roadmap).

At the heart of this role is the *sawubona* approach of a pastoral attentiveness that strives to truly see the humanity of the person in custody. This is to apprehend the human being beyond their criminal or dysfunctional behaviour (but not be ignorant of it). Crucial to this is awareness of the life narrative of the person that embodies their lived experience, especially those experiences that have deeply wounded their humanity, such as ACEs.

### **7.5.1 Affect Regulation and Other ACEs Factors**

It is easier to treat someone with humanity when you can understand the person behind the behaviour. An understanding of the impact of early life trauma...can help staff respond differently to challenging behaviours including aggression, substance misuse and self-harm (Mann 2019, 4).

Research has shown a link between affect (emotion) regulation and ACEs. These adverse early years’ experiences often impair a person’s ability in adulthood to regulate emotions appropriately (see 4.3). There is also a strong correlation between such experiences and adult violent behaviour (Ford et al. 2019). Some US based research has gloomily employed the phrase “the childhood to prison pipeline” to

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describe the trajectory from ACEs to custody (Stensrud, Gilbride, and Bruinekool 2019). This American study argues for preventative and early intervention but seems fatalistic about those already trapped in carceral space.

Other research is less deterministic and reports improved outcomes for adults with poor affect regulation. Approaches have used drama (Koch et al. 2015); meditation/mindfulness practices (Gillespie 2015, Deuchar 2018); cognitive behavioural therapy (Brazão et al. 2018); as well as 'trauma informed' life skills training led by lay (non-psychological) staff working with juvenile people in custody (Ford and Hawke 2012). The latter study stressed the importance of separating the model from "behaviour management" approaches, as the emphasis is on support for the individual not the requirement they meet the criteria of a programme to achieve a stage of sentence progression.

As stated in my discussion around 'agency' (7.4.2), OB programmes have their place within a correctional penal model. But in a wider humanitarian purview provision would also be made for interventions where people in custody are related to not primarily as deviant subjects to be 'fixed' but as human beings in all their complexity, mystery and ambiguity. The following *Principles* and *Practices* will sketch out this humanitarian penal purview. They are illustrative (not exhaustive) of the humane texture of the penal pastoral disposition I propose.

### **7.5.2 Principles**

1. Persons in custody should be understood by all staff primarily to be human beings who are little different to themselves save in the life chances they have had and poor decisions they may have made. Whilst such regard is often espoused in institutional purpose and mission statements this should not be taken as proof that transformative levels of humane attentiveness are operative.
2. The humane regard observed in some African cultures and expressed in the notions of *ubuntu* and *sawubona* provides anthropological underpinning to the approach being formulated here and informs the following principles. “I am because we are” is the principle that acknowledges a shared humanity whereby one person’s diminishment belittles all. “I see you / I am here” denotes a personal and institutional disposition that strives to be fully present to another. This is undertaken in the hope that there will be a relational reciprocity extended from the other thereby establishing the basis for transformational relationality.
3. People in custody should be related to not primarily in terms of their offence(s) but their humanity as socially constructed. The individualisation of crime that fails fully to appreciate and address the social factors that lead to criminality will continue to set up many people in custody to fail repeatedly. Contextual custodial factors also continue to contribute to the on-going criminal *habitus* existing pre-custody for many people in custody and adds additional rehabilitative drag to those serving an indeterminate sentence. Continued

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- thought needs to be given as to how IPP people in custody can receive person-centred support that addresses the peculiarities of their lived-experience and the personal perils associated with indeterminate custody.
4. The fostering of deeper humane regard for people in custody should not be to the detriment of staff well-being. One ultimately cannot be achieved without the other. In interviews staff spoke of the psycho-emotional challenges of custodial care. On occasions violent methods of control and restraint may need to be deployed against a refractory person, then followed shortly after by comforting them as the consequences of their non-compliance for their sentence progression sinks in (an example of poor affect regulation).
  5. Community engagement has rehabilitative potential in two ways. The introduction of appropriately recruited and trained volunteers into the working life of a prison exposes members of the 'outside world' to carceral space and the actual lived experience of people in custody. Their personal conversations can then feed into wider public discourse in an informative way. Secondly, they introduce a "normality" to the realm of discourse that is often lacking behind bars. As a path towards desistance "[d]oing 'normal things' builds confidence and allows the residents to feel and be responsible" (Lewis and Robertson 2019, 18).
  6. There are polarities of expectations to be managed in the prison environment. Harsh custodial factors of safety and security frequently vie with more humanising aspects. Both realities need to be respected. 'Custodial Compassion' is a principle formulated during my chaplaincy work and prison

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research (Beedon 2016a). It expresses an approach that embraces both the importance of custodial practices (keys, gates, bars, security threats, etc.) tempered with compassion construed as deep attentiveness to the humanity of those in a prison's care and custody.

7. The operationalising of the principles and practices envisaged here is not presented as the panacea for all the current failings of mass incarceration. I acknowledge that a 'mixed economy' of rehabilitative approaches are required. The principle here is that specialist trained staff/volunteers working with IPP people in custody operate in co-ordination with and support of OB programmes and more intense forensic psychological interventions by offering regular on-going relational support for people who are increasingly existentially "stuck".

At the heart of all these principles is a desire to foster the hope that is basic to human flourishing. Acknowledgement of a shared humanity coupled with an empathic attentiveness that looks beyond but does not disregard criminal behaviour is hope-generating. Such regard applies to staff also and helps in the maintenance of hopefulness amidst the daily challenges of penal practice. The involvement of community volunteers widens this regard and embodies the hope that those behind bars are not forgotten. Hope requires a level of relational trust but this has to be of an intelligent kind (O'Neill 2017). Managing the polarity that is 'custodial compassion' is challenging but crucial if prisons are to become more hope-full. It entails not working against the grain of institutional life but in partnership with and support of all rehabilitative endeavours.

### **7.5.3 Practices**

1. Careful attention needs to be paid to the language frequently used by officers and other staff in penal discourse concerning people in custody (e.g. referring to them as “cons” and people convicted of sex offences as “nonces”).  
Language both expresses and shapes perceptions of other human beings. It can engender a self-fulfilling prophecy “as labelling theory suggests, discourses that reflect and predict failure may well provoke it” (Burke, Collett, and McNeill 2019, 70). These dehumanising identity differentiations made by some staff (as well as between some residents) are verbal expressions of psychological splitting whereby relief from role anxiety or identity insecurity “can be gained by establishing difference or similarity” (Jones 2006, 38). This tendency to differentiate coldly, comforting as it may seem, is contrary to the principle of *sawubona*, called for in the data of people’s real experiences. Therefore it should be challenged and more humane alternative ways of perceiving people in custody fostered.
2. All staff – especially those working specifically with IPP sentence servers – should be trauma and ACEs informed concerning the experiences many people in custody have encountered in early years. The implications of this concerning affect regulation should be common knowledge. Alongside this, trauma-informed methods to de-escalate situations should be established as good practice (Jervis 2019, 23).
3. Whilst maintaining appropriate boundaries, efforts should be made to move away from “Them/Us” binary thinking around staff and residents towards more

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“therapeutic correctional relationships” (Lewis 2017). Senior managers can consider the most contextually sensitive means to achieve this end but the fostering of a sense of community, shared group activities and the facilitation of honest conversations are priorities.

4. Volunteer community mentors can provide a normalising relational presence with a person-centred focus to work with people in custody to co-create a forward and outward-looking life perspective. Under the right conditions they might also provide a “through the gate” bridge to support services in the community, similar to or in conjunction with Community Chaplaincy projects or non-faith based alternatives (Wells 2019).
5. Outcomes from *Measurement of the Quality of Prisoner Life and Staff Quality of Life* surveys should be closely monitored as well as other means of assessing the institutional climate for its capacity to treat staff and residents humanely (Liebling 2012).
6. My experience of pastoral supervision (as a research requirement) has alerted me to the importance of self-care when ministering and conducting fieldwork in the psycho-emotionally demanding prison environment. The ‘emotional labour’ of humanely engaging with often disturbed, dysfunctional and sometimes dangerous people should not be underestimated. Good pastoral and professional support needs to be in place to aid staff if they are to avoid either burn-out or bitterness as they practice deep humane regard.

7. Related to (6), specialist volunteers/staff should be provided with and trained in reflective and reflexive practices that enable them to be healthily self-aware as they operate in the highly challenging relational space envisaged here.

I am aware that this enumeration of principles and practices runs the danger of providing yet another ‘tick box’ exercise in a context already unhealthily replete with them. But as an exercise in *practical* theology I think it important that when arguing pastorally for deep humane regard I answer the questions: “Where to start?” and “What does this look like?” Some penal practitioners will prefer principles as a starting point and others the everyday practices to be followed. I hope I have provided enough here to satisfy both temperaments.

Before I conclude this chapter I need to sketch out some of the limitations to my research that I have been able to identify in the post-fieldwork stage. This will also acknowledge some of the important work already taking place that embodies the principles and practices envisaged here.

## **7.6 Research Limitations**

Having departed from the PS shortly after completing fieldwork interviews I no longer have an insider perspective or direct access to developments in penal practice. In the process of writing up my findings I became conscious that my research interest (support of “stuck” IPP people in custody) was a concern shared more widely in HMPPS. Initiatives were being undertaken that aimed to address the issue. This is heartening but it is still too early to tell how effective these measures will be. In an attempt to glean more information I have engaged with the Prison Reform Trust and

spoken to one of their researchers<sup>30</sup> who is involved in an IPP focussed project. I have maintained a Twitter presence and follow many criminologists, prison governors and penal reformers so as to try and stay abreast of developments in my field of interest. I have also conversed with HMPPS' [REDACTED] Clinical Lead for Counselling Psychology Services<sup>31</sup> about compassion-centred and trauma-informed work she oversees in the region where I am currently residing.<sup>32</sup> I have spent a day at HMP Guys Marsh in its person-centred Growth Project shadowing its founder<sup>33</sup> to get a feel for penal units structured around humane regard.

But there are limitations to my knowledge that I wish time, resources and access permissions allowed me to follow up. Areas I would wish to explore further:

- How far has the relational attentiveness espoused by the Five Minute Interventions and Every Contact Matters initiatives and other elements of the 'rehabilitative culture' approach actually deepened institutional humane regard for people in custody (Kenny and Webster 2015)?
- The role of Key Worker was introduced just as I left HMPPS so I am curious as to the degree to which staff undertaking this work have acquired a pastoral disposition and if the approach's transformational potential has been realised (Ministry of Justice 2019b).

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<sup>30</sup> Dr Mia Harris

<sup>31</sup> Ms Deborah Franks

<sup>32</sup> As of December 2019 I am an Anglican chaplain again (albeit sessional) at a nearby prison which has a significant number of IPP men in custody.

<sup>33</sup> Dr Sarah Lewis

## *Hope Deferred, Humanity Diminished?*

- HMPs Warren Hill, Humber, Buckley Hall and Erlestoke are experimenting with 'progressive regimes' to provide environments especially conducive to people in custody who have failed to progress on their sentence plan or have been recalled (Ministry of Justice 2019c). Therapeutic Communities, Psychologically Informed Planned Environments and Enabling Environments have been set up in various locations to provide specialist penal contexts for different client groups but all with a shared person-centred approach (Turley, Payne, and Webster 2013, Bennett and Shuker 2017, Cook and Williams 2019). To what degree do these approaches embody the penal pastoral attentiveness I am arguing for in this work?

I am not seeking to re-invent the pastoral wheel nor am I blind to the important and promising work already being undertaken in my field of interest. But I know that the best of pastoral intentions can end up getting lost in the constantly changing institutional world of the PS as it operates amidst shifting penal policy and ever present financial constraints. That is why, despite the acknowledgement of the limitations of my current knowledge, I still wish to issue a clarion call to deeper and more widely embodied pastoral attentiveness within the PS.

## **7.7 Summary Conclusion**

Staff were fully present and engaged without displaying unnecessary power...Authority was deployed through high-quality relationships founded on mutual respect and a sense among prisoners that the establishment was fully invested in their growth (Liebling et al. 2019, 3, from Mann 2019, 10).

“It is not a pipe dream” is a self-confidence bolstering mantra running through my head at this point. The quote (above), from a research report on the progressive regime at HMP Warren Hill, strengthens my belief that I am not just quixotically ‘tilting at windmills’ as I critically re-imagine a form of incarceration that institutionally embodies practices of pastoral attentiveness. There are already significant pockets of good practice in existence around the prison estate. But if this IPP research contributes to steadying the nerve of policy-makers and practitioners when challenges to attempts to humanise incarceration come (as they surely will) then it will have achieved something worthwhile.

This chapter began with an exploration of the bucolic imagery of ancient shepherds and their pastoral knowledge, commitment and attentiveness to the needs of their flock. As shaped by Judaeo-Christian tradition, this has abided as a metaphor for PC (not exclusively so) down the centuries. A drawback of this image is its tendency to individualise care whereas more recent understandings of PC have acknowledged the socio-contextual aspects of human diminishment.

I have shown how a faith-based practice of care rooted in the Judaeo-Christian tradition has evolved in the penal context into a more generic form. This has reflected

changes in wider society, acknowledged the increasing numbers of people in custody who self-declare as “no religion” and HMPPS’s accommodation of the offering of PC by Humanist practitioners who are overtly non-religious. Therefore I have offered a definition of PC (7.1.4) that aims to honour what might be an humanitarian aspiration that is shared more widely than would be one couched in more overtly Christian terms.

A non-faith based anthropological approach has been formulated by critically appropriating the ideas of *sawubona* and *ubuntu* (present in some southern African cultures and of particular relevance in contexts of reconciliation). The former denotes a deep humane attentiveness that recognises the importance of relational presence to one another if human beings are to flourish. The latter concerns the acknowledgement of a shared humanity that counteracts a psychological tendency to differentiate from ‘other’ individuals or groups when personal identity is insecure or anxiety high.

A dominant anthropological model in carceral space is that people in custody are deviant human beings that need ‘fixing’. This narrative is written into the inception of places of modern mass incarceration as *correctional* facilities or penitentiaries. As originally conceived, the deviancy or defect to be corrected was ‘sin’ and its antidote a penitential faith-informed turning around of the miscreant’s life. This understanding has been replaced with a more psychotherapeutic model which still raises questions concerning coercive control and human agency. Recent theories on desistance have highlighted the importance of self-belief coupled with ‘significant others’ who have belief in a person’s ability to change. Positive Relational Figures (2.3.4) outside of the

## *Hope Deferred, Humanity Diminished?*

malopticon but present to people in custody within it, who have deep humane regard and skills in pastoral attentiveness, can be transformative in fostering hope that generates self-belief.

None of this will be easy. Prisons are places where some of the most life-wounded dwell. ACEs and other socio-experiential factors lead to behavioural and sometimes personality disorders amongst many people in custody. Affect regulation can be poor leading to the possibility of violent outbursts at any point. Sentimentality is dangerous. The principles and practices I have sketched in this chapter describe a way of being for staff supporting these life-wounded souls. Ways that are not ignorant of people in custody's propensity to be dysfunctional or dangerous but neither are they blind to the humanity that lies beyond a person's actions. These principles and practices are offered to foster habits of the heart that mean, come what may, "I/We See You".

## **FOUND POEM ID35 - BETTER MUST COME**

I'm not wicked  
We become  
who we become,  
we are shaped  
by our environment,

I've gone bad.  
my uncle killed my aunty  
cousin got murdered in prison  
[Another] got shot in his balls  
he robbed a drug dealer

I fell under this IPP  
in and out of prison  
every time I get a down-fall  
I lose more  
than the price of my crime

mum...said...to me  
"you got bad spirits"  
praying...every night  
got a disabled brother  
that's how bad it is.

felt like my life  
got stolen away  
I think about my mum,  
say my prayers  
and it's like, better must come



Figure 21 - Movie Poster ID35

## **FINAL REFLECTIONS**

“I love you man”. These are the last words one of IPP participants said to me spontaneously when I visited him today to make sure he was aware I was leaving (my last day today) (JE 2018\_05\_28 *I Love You Man*).

At the opening of this thesis I offered an invitation: “Come with me”. An aim central to this work has been to take the reader with me on a journey exploring what may be an unfamiliar place – carceral space. The loss of liberty alongside the general privations and dangers of mass incarceration are known to have a detrimental psycho-emotional effect on people in custody. In addition to this contextual *affect* the group amongst whom this research was conducted have the added strain on their humanity that indeterminacy brings. If the reader comes to the end of this work with a deeper appreciation of what it might be like to live indeterminately in carceral space one of my aims has been fulfilled.

Another goal, and the only promise I made to the participants, was to tell their story. The narrative approach of life history interviewing I employed elicited qualitative data so rich that it almost told its own story (notwithstanding the many hours I spent in analysing it). The ‘Found Poems’ seemed to emerge out of data like Michelangelo claimed his sculptural forms emerged from the cold stone he was working with. Much of the credit for the evocative nature of the material must go to the participants. Their willingness to entrust their story to me – including some of the darkest and most regrettable moments of their lives – was humbling. It was a privilege to sit with them in interview and be present to them and their story. If I have done any justice to what

they have entrusted to me in the telling of their story this will be my greatest achievement.

Beyond the vicarious inhabiting of their world and the articulating of their story/stories is the transforming of *praxis* that PT seeks. A practical outcome from this research will be an official report on my findings that I have to submit to NOMS. What the effect of this will be on penal practice is obviously unknown at this stage. This hope-fostering enterprise is still a “work in progress”. The principles and practices I have enumerated in the last chapter will be the core of my recommendations to NOMS.

In the writing of this final section I have become emotionally overwhelmed and tearful. This is something that has taken me by surprise. I have sensed a “Farewell” and a letting go. My pastoral supervisor would often ask at moments like these, “What has that stirred in you?” In this instance I am aware that part of what is going on for me psycho-emotionally is that this thesis is the product of an almost seven year journey on the DPT programme at the University of Birmingham which is now ending. This brings its own sadness because of the fellowship of the learning community I have enjoyed.

I am also aware that, temperamentally, I am not one for sentimentality when moving on so my transition out of the DPT programme cannot be the sum total of what I am viscerally experiencing. To a degree this whole enterprise has been the chasing down of a pastoral hunch borne out of three decades of ministry and brought into sharp focus by the death in a cell of a [REDACTED] young man serving an indeterminate sentence. The hunch was that the relational quality of human interaction can be transformative, even amongst some of the most life-wounded

## *Hope Deferred, Humanity Diminished?*

souls. Whether my work has been transformative in the lives of the seventeen participants is for them and others to judge. But the journal entry excerpt at the head of this final reflection heartens and moves me.

It has been one of my contentions in this work that the believing of others in a person and their future is hope-fostering. In the conduct of this research I endeavoured to embody the humane regard that is at the heart of this research. This was its *praxis*. A consequence of this is that I became invested in the participants and their future, including feeling disappointment when there were setbacks in their sentence progression. I am now cut off from knowing where the seventeen human beings are geographically and in terms of their release. Though this may be the well-spring of my current sadness, my hope for them holds out, wherever they may be.

## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1 : Participant Contact Letter (Invitation)**

#### **An Invitation to Participate in Research**

##### **Hope Deferred, Humanity Diminished?**

*An enquiry into caring for those serving a Sentence of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP)*

**Can you help me?** Along with many other staff, I have become concerned about the level of self-harm and suicide amongst residents at HMP XXX, not just as a chaplain but as a fellow human being. Following a death in custody in the [REDACTED] of 2015 I have become especially keen to figure out how we might improve the care we offer to those serving an IPP sentence. Would you be willing to help me with a project that might make a positive difference? I can't make any promises, other than I will work with you to do the best that we can to figure out 'what better looks like' when it comes to caring for you and other IPP prisoners.

This work will be part of some studies I am undertaking with the University of Birmingham to help me develop as a Prison Chaplain. It is being supervised by Professor Stephen Pattison who can be contacted at:

**The Department of Theology and Religion  
ERI Building, University of Birmingham  
Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT  
0121 4143406**

**What will it involve?** I hope as many IPP prisoners as possible will participate in a couple of Focus Groups I will be running during my research. This will be an opportunity for you to guide my research.

## *Hope Deferred, Humanity Diminished?*

From chatting to some of you already I know you have interesting stories to tell that would help me and others better understand how you have ended up here and how we might better support you. Sadly, because I am studying part-time, I will not have time to interview everyone individually. However, I would like to interview a few and if you would be interested in participating in the interviews let me know when I next get in touch. I am especially interested in stories that are important to you and would help me to understand your life and future hopes a little better. I will explain in more detail in how this will be achieved at the Focus Groups. (Those who are not interviewed are invited to submit something to me in writing about what we will discuss at the Focus Groups.)

So, can you help me to understand a little more about you and what it is like to be serving an IPP sentence?

I imagine the individual interviews will take 1 – 1 ½ hours. Anything you say will be treated in the strictest confidence (so long as it does not have security or safety implications which I am required to disclose) and your name will be changed in any material made public so you cannot be identified. **This is purely voluntary and if you choose not to be involved this will not reflect detrimentally upon you at all.**

**What will you get out of it?** Your participation in this project will not affect your sentence plan or parole chances in any way, positive or negative. What your involvement might do is make a difference to the support IPP prisoners receive so their sentence is less likely to raise distress to unbearable levels and more likely to lead to release, as well as reunion with their families sooner rather than later. Your successful participation will be noted as positive behaviour in your case notes on CNomis.

**What if you change your mind?** If you show an interest in contributing to this

work, you are completely free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time up to nine months after the Focus Groups or interview, without affecting your relationship with myself or anyone within the National Offender Management Service. The project is supported by the Safer Custody Department and has been approved by the Governing Governor and the University of Birmingham's Ethics Committee.

**What do you do now?** I will be in touch with you shortly to see if you are interested

in being a part of this work. I look forward to speaking with you. I am planning to begin the research sometime in March 2017.

**The Reverend David Kirk Beedon** (Anglican Chaplain, HM Prison XXX)

NOTE: *Participants should be aware of and observe the following.*

**CONFIDENTIALITY** – To enable open conversation, participants in Focus Groups should not divulge what is discussed within the meeting nor identify those present to anyone outside of the group.

**WITHDRAWAL** – It is your right to withdraw at any point in the research process and any information you have shared would be excluded from the research and related

## **An Invitation to Participate in Research**

### **Hope Deferred, Humanity Diminished?**

*An enquiry into caring for those serving a Sentence of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP)*

**Can you help me?** Along with many other staff, I have become concerned about the level of self-harm and suicide amongst residents at HMP XXX, not just as a chaplain but as a fellow human being. Following a death in custody in the [REDACTED] of 2015 I have become especially keen to figure out how we might improve the care we offer to those serving an IPP sentence. Would you be willing to help me with a project that might make a positive difference? As someone who has a key role in the care and custody of IPP prisoners I would love to draw on your insights and experience.

This work will be part of some studies I am undertaking with the University of Birmingham to help me develop as a Prison Chaplain. It is being supervised by Professor Stephen Pattison who can be contacted at:

**The Department of Theology and Religion, ERI Building  
University of Birmingham, Edgbaston  
Birmingham B15 2TT  
0121 4143406**

The project is supported by our Safer Custody Department and has been approved by our Governing Governor, NOMS National Research Committee and the University of Birmingham's Ethics Committee.

**What will it involve?** Participation would involve me interviewing you about your experience in the prison system working with IPP prisoner. In addition there will be one or two Focus Groups to pool information. Anything you share will be treated in the strictest

## *Hope Deferred, Humanity Diminished?*

confidence and your name will be changed in any material made public so you cannot be identified.

**What will you get out of it?** Sorry, but your participation in this project, or your refusal to be involved, will not offer any reward or penalty. What your involvement might do is make a difference to the support IPP prisoners receive so their sentence is less likely to raise distress to unbearable levels and more likely to lead to release and reunion with their families sooner rather than later.

**What if you change your mind?** If you show an interest in contributing to this work, you are completely free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time up to nine months after the Focus Groups or interviews, without detriment in any way to yourself.

**What do you do now?** I will be in touch with you shortly to see if you are interested in being a part of this work. I look forward to speaking and, hopefully, working with. The research will start in March 2017 with interviews possibly in the summer.

**The Reverend David Kirk Beedon** (Anglican Chaplain, HM Prison XXX)

NOTE: *Participants should be aware of and observe the following.*

**CONFIDENTIALITY** – To enable open conversation, participants in Focus Groups should not divulge what is discussed within the meeting nor identify those present to anyone outside of the group.

**WITHDRAWAL** – It is your right to withdraw at any point in the research process and any information you have shared would be excluded from the research and related records destroyed. However, it may not be possible to identify the information shared by you during your participation in any Focus Group as it may not be attributable.

## Appendix 2 : Research Information and Consent Forms

### Hope Deferred, Humanity Diminished?

*An enquiry into caring for those serving a Sentence of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP)*

#### Research Information Sheet (Person in Custody)

Dear

I am grateful for your interest in participating in some research I am undertaking. This sheet provides further information so you have a better idea of what you will be involved in. My religious duties aside, I see my work as a Prison Chaplain as a humanistic one: *to lessen human distress and increase well-being*. Alongside the work many others do at HMP XXX, I want to contribute to the transforming of lives but know sometimes we fail in that endeavour. As part of my professional development I look forward to working with you in figuring out how we might become better at lessening distress, increasing well-being and transforming the lives of IPP prisoners.

The two parts of my research where I would most value your contribution are:

#### 1. Telling your story

Using a life-history interviewing technique called *Life As A Film* I hope some IPP prisoners will help me to understand, as best I can, what it is to live in the world of an IPP prisoner. I know prisoners often feel they are not listened to, well this would be your chance to tell me some of your story. I am interested in exploring your life story by asking you the following:

I know prisoners often feel they are not listened to, well this would be your chance to tell me some of your story.

like

- a. If your life story was made into a film, what sort of film would it be? (e.g. Thriller, Comedy, Tragedy, etc.)
- b. Tell me more about the story / plot of the film.
- c. Who would the main characters be?
- d. How would the film end?
- e. If you made a short trailer advertising the film of your life story, what would the main scene(s) be?

The interview would last for approximately one hour. Whatever you share will be anonymous and will help paint a truer picture of what it is really like to serve an IPP sentence than if I read files and reports. I will share with you the picture I describe,

for your comment, through a Focus Group. (Other non-interviewed participants will be invited to submit short written responses to the questions above.)

## **2. Helping me figure out how we might better care for IPP prisoners**

...we have a good chance of figuring out some new way that will better support you and others on an IPP stretch.

There are probably lots of people that have all sorts of theories about what will best support IPP prisoners through their sentence. None of them are serving an IPP sentence. You know what it is like and, I believe, therefore know things no one else does about being an IPP prisoner. This is valuable stuff and means, together, we have a good chance of figuring out some new way that will better support you and others on an IPP stretch. This may sound daunting, but there are tried and tested ways of going about this

that I trust will work for us. You'll be surprised at what we can achieve together, if we are courageous.

I will be running a parallel process with staff who play a key role amongst IPP prisoners. Part 2 of my research will be to work with you and these members of staff as we design a better way of caring for and supporting IPP prisoners.

I appreciate that telling your story might be difficult or troubling to you and I will ensure there is appropriate support available should you be affected by this exercise. If you have any concerns about the project at any time, you may contact (or get wing staff to do so by producing this information sheet) the Safer Custody Team at HMP XXX.

Apart from the satisfaction of telling your story and having a go at making the world of an IPP prisoner a little better I cannot offer any incentives or privileges nor affect your sentence plan. But I will put a 'positive behaviour' note on your CNomis file for your willingness to participate and on successful completion of the project.

Your participation in this project requires formal consent so if you are willing to take part please complete the enclosed form and return it to me. Many thanks.

**The Reverend David Kirk Beedon** (Anglican Chaplain, HM Prison XXX)

NOTE: *Participants should be aware of and observe the following.*

**CONFIDENTIALITY** – To enable open conversation, participants in Focus Groups should not divulge what is discussed within the meeting nor identify those present to anyone outside of the group.

**WITHDRAWAL** – It is your right to withdraw at any point in the research process and any information you have shared would be excluded from the research and related records destroyed. However, it may not be possible to identify the information shared by you during your participation in any Focus Group as it may not be attributable.

This research will be conducted in adherence to *Government Social Research* criteria for qualitative research (2003), the University of Birmingham's *Code of Practice for Research* (2015) and the best practice guidance of the *British Sociological Association* (2002) and the *British Society of Criminology* (2015).

## **Hope Deferred, Humanity Diminished?**

***An enquiry into caring for those serving a Sentence of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP)***

### ***Research Information Sheet (Staff)***

Her Majesty's Prison Service serves the public by keeping in custody those committed by the courts. Our duty is to **look after them with humanity** and help them lead law-abiding and useful lives in custody and after release.

HM Prison Service *Statement of Purpose*

Dear

I am grateful for your interest in participating in some research I am undertaking. This sheet provides further information so you have a better idea of what you will be involved in. My religious duties aside, I see my work as a Prison Chaplain as a humanistic one – *to lessen human distress and increase well-being* – as we aspire to as part of HMPS' *Statement of Purpose* (above).

Alongside the work you and many others do at HMP XXX, I want to contribute to the transforming of lives but know sometimes we fail in that endeavour. As part of my professional development I look forward to working with you in figuring out how we might become better at lessening distress, increasing well-being and transforming the lives of IPP prisoners.

The two parts of my research where I would most value your contribution are:

#### ***1. Discovering the best of what we do***

I initially approached you because I know you play a key role in work with IPP prisoners at HMP XXX. Therefore you have a wealth of experience and knowledge I would love to access for my research.

In particular I am keen to find out what, in your experience, best practice is when it comes to supporting and caring for IPP prisoners. I will be using a semi-structured interview to start this process. I envisage this interview would take no more than one hour.

Whatever you share will be anonymous and will be analysed along with other staff interviews to identify common themes. Once all the interviews are completed I will share with you the key themes, for your comment, through a Focus Group.

## **2. Helping me figure out how we might better care for IPP prisoners**

Serving an indeterminate sentence is known to be a significant factor that can lead to self-harm and/or suicide. Between 2007-2013, of the 321 deaths in custody, 18% of the prisoners were serving an IPP sentence (currently they constitute only 5.23% of the prison population). The reasons underlying this issue are complex and we will never be able to design a perfect system within which such tragedies never take place. But I think we can make it better and that you have something valuable to offer in helping us to bring about this transformation. It may sound daunting, but there are tried and tested ways of going about this that I trust will work for us. You'll be surprised at what we can achieve together, if we are courageous.

I will be running a parallel process with IPP prisoners and hope at a later stage in my research fieldwork to bring key staff and them together to consider the outcomes of my enquiry.

If you have any concerns about the project at any time, you may contact the Safer Custody Team at HMP XXX.

**Your participation in this project requires formal consent so if you are willing to take part please complete the enclosed form and return it to me. Many thanks.**

**The Reverend David Kirk Beedon** (Anglican Chaplain, HM Prison XXX)

NOTE: *Participants should be aware of and observe the following.*

**CONFIDENTIALITY** – To enable open conversation, participants in Focus Groups should not divulge what is discussed within the meeting nor identify those present to anyone outside of the group.

**WITHDRAWAL** – It is your right to withdraw at any point in the research process and any information you have shared would be excluded from the research and related records destroyed. However, it may not be possible to identify the information shared by you during your participation in any Focus

This research will be conducted in adherence to *Government Social Research* criteria for qualitative research (2003), the University of Birmingham's *Code of Practice for Research* (2015) and the best practice guidance of the *British Sociological Association* (2002) and the *British Society of Criminology* (2015).

**Hope Deferred, Humanity Diminished?**

*An enquiry into caring for those serving a Sentence of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP)*

**Participant Consent Form**

**Researcher: David Kirk Beedon**

**Name of Organisation: HM Prison XXX**

**Name of University: University of Birmingham**

**Please read the enclosed information sheet carefully then tick as appropriate:**

	Yes	No
I have read and understand the information provided about the research.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to being interviewed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am interested in being part of a Focus Group to look at the initial findings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that I can withdraw from the project at any time without explanation, up to nine months after the Focus Groups / Interviews.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that my identity will be protected and a pseudonym used in the writing up of the research and any subsequent publications.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to take part in the research outlined in the information sheet.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that the data will be kept securely for ten years, in accordance with University of Birmingham requirements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree not to divulge information shared nor identify other participants in the Focus Groups.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Name of Participant:**

**Signed:**

**Date:**

**Name of Researcher:**

**Signed:**

**Date:**

**David Kirk Beedon**

If you would like any further information about any aspect of this project, please do not hesitate to contact me:

**Reverend David Kirk Beedon, Chaplaincy Department, HMP XXX**

**Extension: NNNN**

One copy for participant and one for the research file.

**Appendix3 : *Life as a Film* Questions**

**IPP *Life As A Film* Interviews (Canter & Youngs)**

IPP ID	Date	Venue

a. If your life story was made into a film, what sort of film would it be?

**Comedy      Romance      Crime      Action      Tragedy      Thriller**

b. Tell me more about the story / plot of the film.

c. Who would the main characters be?

d. How would the film end?

e. If you made a short trailer advertising the film of your life story, what would the main scene(s) be? (up to five scenes)

## **Appendix 4 : Staff Interview (AI) Protocol**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Staff Participant IDS \_\_\_\_\_

“Her Majesty’s Prison Service serves the public by keeping in custody those committed by the courts. Our duty is to look after them with humanity and help them lead law-abiding and useful lives in custody and after release.”

[Note: Consent Form]

### General Tips

- Encourage people to tell stories rather than answer questions
- Encourage and draw them out with positive energy
- Pick up on positive words and build on them – mirror back using their frame (visual, auditory or kinaesthetic)
- Avoid putting things into your words – use something they said and ask “can you say some more?” or “what do you mean when you say”
- Stay out of your head and fully in ally mode – join them and give them the benefit of the doubt
- Offer appreciation and contribute positively

### Background

As we have already discussed, I am carrying out research amongst IPP prisoners into how we can best support them when the indeterminate nature of their sentence increases risk factors of self-harm or suicide. You are one of a number of staff who have been named by an IPP participant as being supportive in your role as a prison officer. My goal is to locate, understand and illuminate the best of what officers are doing with difficult IPP prisoners to support them in retaining their humanity and treating them with humanity. I have been listening to the IPP prisoners lived experience and now I am really keen to hear your lived experience and in particular what you think is happening when you are at your best. I will be listening as an ally because I am really keen to learn from you.

Whilst my focus is on IPP prisoners I’d like to start by thinking more generally.

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1) (Vocational)

a) What is it that inspired you to become a prison officer / chaplain / volunteer?

Prompts to draw out more if it is slow in coming

- What really appealed to you
- What did you imagine it would be like at its best
- What were you hoping to offer
- What were your initial excitements and impressions

b) I am sure that this job has many ups and downs, peaks and troughs – I'd like you to reflect for a moment on a high point - Can you describe for me, in as much detail as you like, the day you remember as the best day of your life as a prison officer?

- When you felt most alive and engaged
- When you really felt you were making a difference
- Describe for me that day and how you felt as it happened – what were you doing, what were other people doing

2) Having been identified as playing a key supportive role in the life of an IPP prisoner

a) Can you recall and describe the incident that was referred to during his interview?

- Leave space for them to think – prompt with a meditative presence to get them back to what it looked, sounded and felt like
- Ask concrete questions about where, how long for, encourage a sensing description not abstractions

b) What do you think you did that made a difference to the guy?

- What is it about you that enables you to do things like that
- What prompted you to do that on that day
- What do you think helped you on that day to do what you did

c) Why do you think what you did made such a difference in the story the guy tells?

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- Did you see how it impacted him at the time
- Why do you think he remembered you and mentioned you

3) The Prison Service's Mission Statement places a duty on us "to look after [prisoners] with humanity". If I were a documentary film-maker doing a feature on treating prisoners humanely tell me about a specific real life scene that you've witnessed that you would be proud to be included (in the film).

a) What did you see going on?

- Describe the setting where is it
- Who are the people involved
- How did the scene unfold
- How might a narrator describe what is happening

b) What were you doing?

- Thinking, feeling, saying
- What was your intention – how might that be portrayed

c) How were other staff / prisoners involved?

4) (Training / Role Models)

a) If you were in charge of training prison staff, what principles would you teach about how they should relate to inmates? Can you give me up to 3 – 4 principles (practices/simple rules/points)?

Play them back as you get them to show they have been heard and count them off, capture key words and probe for additional explanations of the principle/practice

- What things should we aim for more often

b) I'm not asking you to name names necessarily but what is it about the best officer you know that makes them a role model of good practice? What do they embody?

- Is there a story or example that stand out for you
- What are you seeing as things that should be preserved or strengthened

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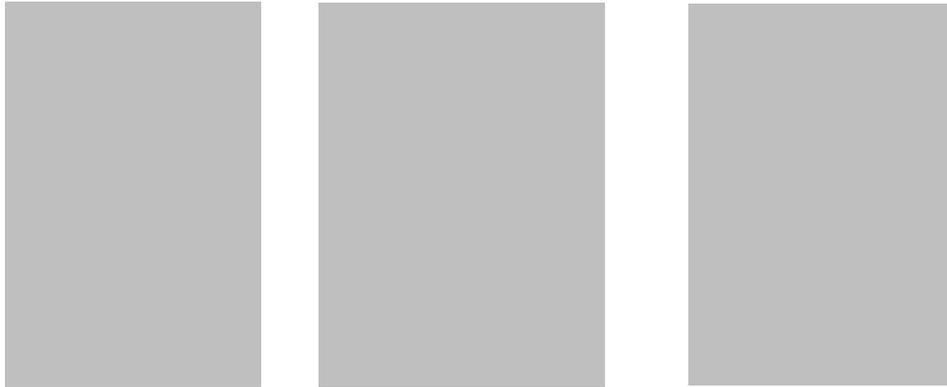
5) If you had at least one wish for staff-inmate relationships here, what would it be?

- What would you really love to see happening
- What would you like to hear people saying
- How would you like people to be feeling

## Appendix 5 : LAAF Genre Illustrations (Examples)

### Life As A Film Genres (Canter & Youngs)

#### Comedy

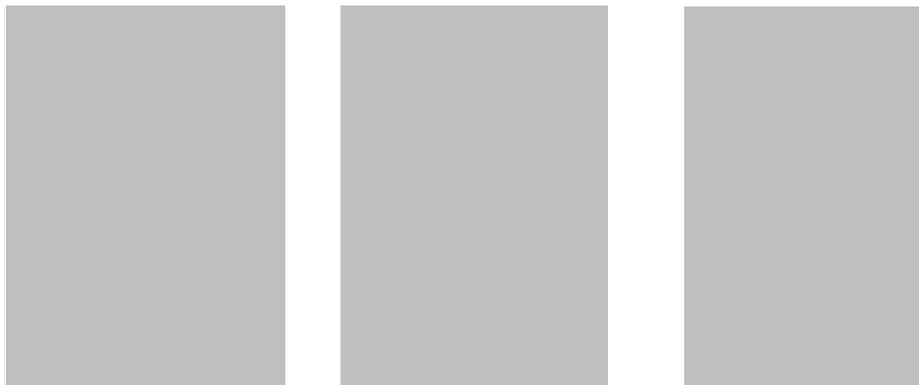


#### Hope Deferred, Humanity Diminished?

*An enquiry into caring for those serving a Sentence of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP)*

### Life As A Film Genres (Canter & Youngs)

#### Tragedy



#### Hope Deferred, Humanity Diminished?

*An enquiry into caring for those serving a Sentence of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP)*



## **Appendix 7 : Member Checking Survey**

### **PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL**

Return Address PO Box

February 2019

Dear

Greetings! I hope you have received the New Year card I sent out a few weeks ago. Best wishes to you in 2019.

I am pleased to announce I have started writing up the research you helped me with. At the heart of this remains my desire to fulfil the promise I made you: **To tell your story**. Thank you for helping me do this. I would very much welcome some feedback from you. Some of you will be aware I left the Prison Service in May 2018. Partly this was so I could focus more on these studies as your stories are precious to me.

Enclosed is a survey (to be found in stamped and addressed envelope). It is a way for me to check with you some themes I have identified from across the 17 interviews. Do they ring true to your experience? Of course this is a composite picture made up of elements from 17 separate lives. But I am trying to give readers an overall sense of what it has been and is like being a person serving an IPP sentence.

I have used actual phrases from your interview to create a “found poem”. This is another – more creative – way of telling your story. I have enclosed your personal one. I have shared some of these (anonymously) and readers are always moved by your experiences. They are your words that have touched them.

I have also enclosed a copy of the movie style poster that was produced for your interview. It’s a visual representation of a handful of elements from your story. Most of you should have already have received your personal (and professionally printed) full size version.

**Can you be one final help to me in this research and complete the enclosed survey? Also, look at your poem and poster and write down any responses you have to them. Express how much you feel they do or don’t represent elements of your story. Please return as soon as possible.**

With my eternal gratitude and heartfelt best wishes for the future chapters of your life...

## SEVEN THEMES IDENTIFIED FROM YOUR LIVED EXPERIENCES

[ID: \_\_\_\_\_]

Please bear in mind: This is a composite picture made up from 17 different life stories. There is a variety of backgrounds and experiences in them.

Not all elements will be true to your particular life. But I welcome some sort of indication as to the degree to which these themes have been present in your lived experience. Thank you.

The Reverend David Kirk Beedon

PO Box XX

### THEME 1 OF 7: The *affect* of IPP

Interview 15: IPP “just angers me”.

Interview 07: We’re “being tortured”.

All of you mentioned how the IPP sentence has affected you emotionally and mentally. Some of you shared your deep anger and sense of injustice. Mention was also made of periods of depression, despair and hopelessness. There was also the recurring disappointments of knock-backs, false hope and not knowing if or when you might be released. Some confessed that they “couldn’t be bothered anymore” [ID30] to ‘jump through hoops’. Many of you expressed deep distrust or even “hatred for the system” [ID31] and authority figures. Some felt they had been lied to or let down too many times.

Please tick **one** box to indicate this theme’s presence in your life

**Definitely**  
true to my life

**Largely true**  
in my life

**Only partly**  
true in my life

**Not True** to  
my life at all

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## THEME 2 OF 7: Behaviour

Interview 09: “It was just the normality of things...”.

Interview 04: [I was] “a product of the environment”.

A number (not all) of you mentioned you grew up in areas where criminal behaviour seemed to be ‘normal’. As a result some of you got into scrapes with “The Law” early in life. A number had served other juvenile / prison sentences before getting the IPP. Where this was true you demonstrated a familiarity with ‘prison culture’ (how things work behind bars) and how to ‘play the system’.

Please tick **one** box to indicate this theme’s presence in your life

**Definitely  
true to my  
life**

**Largely true  
in my life**

**Only partly  
true in my  
life**

**Not True to  
my life at all**

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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## THEME 3 OF 7: Development

Interview 02: I had a “troubled childhood”.

Interview 11: “Got kicked out” from the children’s home.

Some of you (not all of you) shared that your childhood and/or adolescence was troubled. One described their life from early on as “tragedy after tragedy” (Interview 12). A number mentioned spells in the care of social services. One participant stated that there was a time that he felt he “hated the world” because of what he suffered in childhood (Interview 05). A number of you described violence (*to or from you*) in your earlier turbulent life. In this case there was inner anger due to mistreatment.

Please tick **one** box to indicate this theme’s presence in your life

**Definitely  
true to my life**

**Largely true  
in my life**

**Only partly  
true in my life**

**Not True to  
my life at all**

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*Hope Deferred, Humanity Diminished?*

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**THEME 4 of 7: Hope**

Interview 10: ...“better must come” from this experience (of IPP).

Interview 04: This sentence has happened “for a reason”.

You described many personal challenges. So it was heartening to discover elements of hope in some of your stories. There was a belief that there might be a “greater purpose” (Interview 01) beyond the things you have suffered. Some of you shared how your faith has helped you to be hopeful. A few spoke of a “happy ending” to come (Interview 14).

Please tick **one** box to indicate this theme’s presence in your life

**Definitely true** to my life

**Largely true** in my life

**Only partly true** in my life

**Not True** to my life at all

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**THEME 5 of 7: Thinking**

Interview 16: I frequently “mess up”.

Interviews 12 & 10: I get into “stupid little trouble” and do “stupid things”.

A number of you mentioned regret about the past and receiving an IPP sentence (Interview 11: “the regrets”). Others spoke of seeing themselves as having a “negative” (Inter 16) or “bad” (Interview 10) side. This was alongside a more positive “side of things” (Inter 01 – which included having a “heart of gold” on occasions). A few contrasted their way of thinking (“it’s only me”) with the “law abiding people” of their family (Inter 03). One spoke of a Jekyll and Hyde type of inner struggle. Not wanting to give in to his rage at IPP and to “manifest the bad” (Inter 10). “Alpha Male” ways of thinking were also mentioned as coming from male role models in the past. This was a respect-seeking way of thinking (Inters 01, 03, 16). Some acknowledged the stupidity of their actions (Inter 10: “got nothing now”).

*Hope Deferred, Humanity Diminished?*

Please tick **one** box to indicate this theme's presence in your life

**Definitely true** to my life

**Largely true** in my life

**Only partly true** in my life

**Not True** to my life at all

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**THEME 6 of 7: Time**

Interview 04: This sentence creates "the illusion of time"

Interview 16: "...when does this ever end?"

Lots spoke of how different time feels to you on IPP. "Every single day" (Inter 06) feels the same, like in the film "Groundhog Day" (Inters 07 & 14). The dragging of time is made worse, you suggested, by the frequent delays of paperwork, courses and parole boards. Some confessed to giving up ("just switch off" (Inter 14); "did me own thing" (Inter 11); "don't really care" (Inter 15)) and an avoidance of getting your hopes up (Inters 06 & 11). Others described how, "from a young age" (Inter 01) they seemed to be on a "negative journey" (Inter 06). They just fell "into that way" (Inter 01; also "falling through" life in Inter 02). A number shared their sadness at the death of close family members or friends (Inters 02, 05, 13, 16, 17). This made them very aware of their own mortality. Older participants shared their fear that they would die in custody.

Please tick **one** box to indicate this theme's presence in your life

**Definitely true** to my life

**Largely true** in my life

**Only partly true** in my life

**Not True** to my life at all

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**THEME 7 of 7: Relationships**

Interview 05: [My 'In-Laws'] "still loved me"

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Interview 02: [*Kainos* volunteers were] “just giving us an ear”

Your families featured in most interviews, as did the desire to heal some relationships that had been damaged or lost. Some of you mentioned regret at the effect your IPP sentence had on your loved ones and a few of you disclosed you preferred keeping your families at a distance so they were not further distressed. People were mentioned who had related to some of you in ways that had transformed your lives or helped you get through the more difficult parts of your sentence. *Kainos* volunteers were mentioned as well as a handful of other staff who helped you by being prepared to listen to your story, believe in you and be encouraging (Interview 05 “[these officers] actually cared”); Interview 06 [my probation officer] “believes in me”.

Please tick **one** box to indicate this theme’s presence in your life

**Definitely  
true to my  
life**

**Largely true  
in my life**

**Only partly  
true in my life**

**Not True to  
my life at all**

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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### Your ‘Found Poem’

*(See enclosed)*

This is made up from your own words and is my attempt to capture something of the essence of your lived experience from what you said during your interview.

As a ‘word picture’, do you recognise yourself in this poem?

Was there a part of the poem you especially liked? If so, why was that?

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Was there a part of the poem you are curious about or troubled by?

Would you want to change any of it to make it a better 'word picture'?

**Your 'Movie Poster'**

*(See enclosed)*

These posters were created by a professional artist who works artistically with men in other prisons. Based on the *Life As A Film* interview method most of you participated in they attempt to represent in a graphical way something of your lived experience. The artist was provided with an anonymous outline of some of the key points you shared in interview and this is his visual representation of what he understood.

As a graphical representation, do you recognise your lived experience in this picture?

Are there elements of the picture you especially liked? If so, why was that?

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Are there elements in the poster you are curious about or troubled by?

Would you want to change any of it to make it a better 'word picture'?

Any other comments?

I would be most grateful if you would complete this survey and return to me in the enclosed stamped and addressed envelope. **The PO Box address closes at the end of April** so please do not delay. Again, thank you for your valuable contribution to this research.

The best of wishes for your future.

The Reverend David Kirk Beedon

**Appendix 8 : Coding Memos (Sample from 213 Fine II Codes)**

<b>META</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Memo</b>	<b>ID</b>	<b>Abbrev.</b>
AFFECT OF IPP (excerpt)	A Horrible Sentence AHS (ID17)	A horrible nightmarish experience for ID17. A sense not that he didn't deserve jail but the length and indeterminacy made	ID17	AHS

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		him feel suicidal and was unfair.		
	a release date ARD (ID38)	In addition to the IPP general temporal texture this refers ID38's frustration with the sentence and probation's handling of his sentence plan. Hoping for release he was still anxious about the imagined issues from being in a hostel and sharing a room.	ID38	ARD
	baby momma BM (ID27)	Regret of impact of his sentence upon his family (mom, his child's mother and his child in particular).	ID27	BM
	being tortured BT1 (ID31)	He had a strongly held theory that IPP was a deliberate act to break people's wills and their minds (quoting the Nazis as the inventors of the sentence)	ID31	BT1
	Couldn't be bothered CBB (ID30)	A by-product of the IPP sentence this attitude led to a serious attempt to take his own life. Interestingly chose same method (paracetamol) as his sister who killed herself whilst he was in custody and had suffered the same sexual abuse as a child.	ID30	CBB

## Appendix 9 : Member Checking Responses

THEME 1 OF 7: The *affect* of IPP

Interview 15: IPP “just angers me”.

Interview 07: We’re “being tortured”.

<b>Definitely true</b> to my life	<b>Largely</b> true in my life	<b>Only partly</b> true in my life	<b>Not True</b> to my life at all
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ID03, ID27, ID35, ID39,			
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THEME 2 OF 7: Behaviour

Interview 09: “It was just the normality of things...”.

Interview 04: [I was] “a product of the environment”.

<b>Definitely true</b> to my life	<b>Largely</b> true in my life	<b>Only partly</b> true in my life	<b>Not True</b> to my life at all
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ID03, ID35, ID39		ID27	
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THEME 3 OF 7: Development

Interview 02: I had a “troubled childhood”.

Interview 11: “Got kicked out” from the children’s home.

<b>Definitely true</b> to my life	<b>Largely</b> true in my life	<b>Only partly</b> true in my life	<b>Not True</b> to my life at all
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ID03, ID39	ID27		ID35
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THEME 4 of 7: Hope

Interview 10: ...“better must come” from this experience (of IPP).

Interview 04: This sentence has happened “for a reason”.

*Hope Deferred, Humanity Diminished?*

**Definitely true** to my life      **Largely true** in my life      **Only partly true** in my life      **Not True** to my life at all

ID03, ID27, ID39	ID35		
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THEME 5 of 7: Thinking

Interview 16: I frequently “mess up”.

Interviews 12 & 10: I get into “stupid little trouble” and do “stupid things”.

**Definitely true** to my life      **Largely true** in my life      **Only partly true** in my life      **Not True** to my life at all

ID03, ID39	ID35	ID27	
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THEME 6 of 7: Time

Interview 04: This sentence creates “the illusion of time”

Interview 16: “...when does this ever end?”

**Definitely true** to my life      **Largely true** in my life      **Only partly true** in my life      **Not True** to my life at all

ID03, ID39	ID27, ID35		
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THEME 7 of 7: Relationships

Interview 05: [My ‘In-Laws’] “still loved me”

Interview 02: [*Kainos* volunteers were] “just giving us an ear”

**Definitely true** to my life      **Largely true** in my life      **Only partly true** in my life      **Not True** to my life at all

ID03, ID39	ID27	ID35	
------------	------	------	--

Your ‘Found Poem’

***As a 'word picture', do you recognise yourself in this poem?***

ID03 - Yes

ID27 - Yes

ID35 - Yes

ID39 - Yes

***Was there a part of the poem you especially liked? If so, why was that?***

ID03 - All of it. Because it was my life, my story.

ID27 - I like paragraph 8 because it describes how I'm feeling at the moment.

[I feel like a ghost...sometimes.

In the heart

Cause I missed out

my babe mother,

my kids, that's the hardest part sometimes...I feel dead.

I've nearly died 3 / 4 times

on this sentence. Yeah.]

ID35 - First verse.

[I'm not wicked

I got a soul,

I got a soul

We become

who we become,

we are shaped

by our environment,

because of that

I've gone bad.]

ID39 - All of the poem.

***Was there a part of the poem you are curious about or troubled by?***

- ID03 - All of it to be honest.  
ID27 - No, just that it might be shocking to readers.  
ID35 - [No response]  
ID39 - No.

***Would you want to change any of it to make it a better 'word picture'?***

- ID03 - No. I would like to change my life but that's my life, so I can't change the past.  
ID27 - No, I really like it.  
ID35 - Only a little, give it flow.  
ID39 - No.

***As a graphical representation, do you recognise your lived experience in this picture?***

- ID03 - Yes.  
ID27 - Yes I do.  
ID35 - Yes.  
ID39 - Yes.

***Are there elements of the picture you especially liked? If so, why was that?***

- ID03 - The artistic imagination.  
ID27 - I like that it looks like a globe and the two different worlds meet as one.  
ID35 - The scales, phone call (but doesn't define why). A call can change everything.  
ID39 - All of it.

***Are there elements in the poster you are curious about or troubled by?***

- ID03 - No.  
ID27 - No.  
ID35 - After being released and then recalled... Maybe I'm waiting for that call... Because I feel robbed.

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ID39 - No.

***Would you want to change any of it to make it a better 'word picture'?***

ID03 - No.

ID27 - Yeah, if I could see some streets reflected in the water or some of my experience in the water like a marriage.

ID35 - Maybe in the scales and my burden is weighed by my past and future.

ID39 - No.

**Any Other Comments**

ID35: Thank you David, at least you reached out and made a difference. Holding onto dark thoughts only makes them a reality as there is no light to find one's way home. Best wishes...

ID39: Thank you for taking the time to listen to all 17 of us who may have found this helpful, to others as well as ourselves. I wish you all the best for your future...

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