

CREATING SPACE FOR SHAKESPEARE WITH MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES

by

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## Abstract

This thesis adopts an interdisciplinary approach to topics which have traditionally been studied individually, examining the communication opportunities Shakespeare's work can offer for marginalised people. It considers the way Shakespeare can be used by and with incarcerated people, people with mental health issues, people with learning disabilities and people who have experienced homelessness, all fields in which academic enquiry is usually isolated to one single type of marginalisation. The thesis is structured around a framework which draws on the work of spatial theorists, such as Lefebvre, Foucault, Soja and Bourdieu and builds on existing research in marginalised theatre as well as detailed ethnographic study and a significant core of research as practice. My central hypothesis is that Shakespeare can be used to affect the spatial constraints of people who feel imprisoned, whether literally or metaphorically, enabling them to speak and to be heard in ways which previously may have been elusive or unattainable.

The read-across for those who are marginalised is significant with many people experiencing multiple issues of marginalisation and it is therefore vital that research moves from the current siloed approach and embraces this intersectionality to enable it to represent the reality of life for those on the fringes of society. This thesis aims to begin this work with the hope the dialogue across these areas continues to expand as a result of the foundations this work provides and the legacy which has begun to be created through the establishment of permanent, collaborative in-prison theatre companies and the annual Applying Shakespeare Symposia which draw together practitioners and academics. The thesis is structured according to spatial activities; considering the creative, performative,

reflective and mediated spaces in which Shakespeare can both be used and also have the effect of manipulating and altering the space in which the activity takes place.

My research as practice embodies trauma-informed principles, examining the ways in which consistency, longevity, trust and collaboration enabled the development of personal resilience, positive autonomy and stronger communication skills. Through analysis of a wide-range of UK and international initiatives this thesis demonstrates the ways in which Shakespeare's work can be used to alter and remove communication constraints. Space can be created for people to find their own way of expressing themselves in a way which mainstream society can understand, whilst at the same time challenging society to 'see better' and to hear better. This is not a process of social homogenisation but about encouraging positive interactions and removing the stigma of marginalisation.



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## Abbreviations

ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
DPS	Dynamic Purchasing System
ECTR	End of Custody Temporary Release
ESC	Educational Shakespeare Company
GTC	Gartree Therapeutic Community
HHM	Hunter Heartbeat Method
HMPPS	Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service
IOMT	Intermediate Outcome Measurements Tool
IPPR	Institute for Public Policy Research
IYT	Intermission Youth Theatre
MARCH	Mental Assets for Resilient Community Health
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
NCJAA	National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance
OSU	Ohio State University
PEF	Prison Education Framework
PET	Prisoners' Education Trust
PIU	Protective Isolation Units
PLA	Prisoner Learning Alliance
PRT	Prison Reform Trust
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
RCU	Reverse Cohorting Units



SBB	Shakespeare Behind Bars
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENSE	Social Emotional Neuroscience Endocrinology
SU	Shielding Units
TIPP	Theatre for Prison and Probation

## Note on Thesis Conventions

The practice as research nature of this thesis raises a number of points which benefit from clarification.

The British Educational Research Association (BERA) Ethical Guidelines underpinned my approach to research with all groups of participants, informing the design of my processes for clarity of descriptions of the research, gathering consent, providing the right to withdraw and ensuring appropriate privacy and data storage.<sup>1</sup>

Ethics approval was granted from University of Birmingham for the research conducted and additional research approval was granted from Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Services (HMPPS) National Research Committee for the work conducted within prisons.<sup>2</sup>

All research participants were provided with a verbal explanation of the project and their potential involvement, a Participant Information Guide outlining the research and their rights to anonymity and to withdraw from the research up to three months from the end of their participation. They then signed a Research Consent Form to confirm their acceptance of this and elect for anonymity if they felt it preferable.

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<sup>1</sup> British Educational Research Association (BERA), *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research: Fourth Edition*, (London: BERA, 2018), <https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2018>

<sup>2</sup> University of Birmingham Humanities and Social Sciences Ethical Committee Review Approval granted 24 May 2016 (Application Reference ERN\_16-0355); HMPPS National Research Committee Approval granted 19 January 2018 (Application Reference 2017-363).

All participants under the age of 18 were anonymised and consent gained from their caregiver(s), pseudonyms were allocated to each young person, by which they are referred to throughout the thesis.

In recognition of the fact that many of the young people I worked with are not living with their own families and/or their theatrical experience was arranged and attended by some other person providing care (whether a teacher, teaching assistant or fosterer) I have used the term 'caregiver' throughout this thesis to remove the need for multiple alternatives of terminology to be provided in each reference to the adults accompanying the children and young people.

All of the participants within prisons were anonymised in line with HMPPS and Ministry of Justice (MoJ) requirements, for security purposes and in the interests of protecting victims and their families. Each participant within prison was allocated a pseudonym, thereby protecting their identity whilst retaining their humanity. Particularly within the criminal justice system, names are intrinsically linked to issues of power with some officers referring to people only by surname, or even by their prisoner number, so the pseudonyms allocated are first names to acknowledge that they are people not numbers.

Some staff within the prisons also elected to be anonymised for security reasons and this decision was respected and implemented, although their contributions were such that pseudonyms were not required and their feedback could be incorporated appropriately by denominating their role.

Labels can be problematic and at times damaging, reinforcing issues of marginalisation and stigmatisation.<sup>3</sup> Humans should be viewed as humans, not divided according to their educational needs or mental health but in the interests of clarity throughout this thesis it has been necessary to ensure the reader's understanding of the people being cited is not compromised. To this end I use people-centred phrases such as 'person with learning disabilities', 'person with mental health issues', 'person who has experienced homelessness' and 'person with autism', not because this is the defining factor about the person but it is important contextually within the thesis both to understand their situation and also the way in which they may experience judgement and prejudice.

For those within the prison system this labelling is even more problematic and there is a growing movement to define a new lexicon with which to discuss those in custody.<sup>4</sup> The terms 'prisoner', 'convict', 'offender', 'ex-offender' and 'inmate' all carry derogatory and stigmatising connotations so where possible I elect to refer to them as 'men', 'people' or 'actors'. Additionally, I refer to the male and female estate but within that estate there are transgender and gender-fluid people and The Gallowfield Players comprises 14 men and a pre-operative transgender woman so in plurality I sometimes use the term 'guys' as they felt this to be a gender-neutral address they were comfortable with. Some prisons, including HMP Stafford, have moved to a prison-wide policy of speaking of incarcerated people as 'residents' which is a more humanising term but one that some resent as they feel it suggests an element of free will which they do not have. Occasionally in order to make clear

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<sup>3</sup> Alexandra Cox, 'The language of incarceration', *Incarceration*, 1:1, 2020 <http://repository.essex.ac.uk/27518/>

<sup>4</sup> Nguyen Toan Tran, Stephanie Baggio, Angela Dawson et al, 'Words Matter: a call for humanizing and respectful language to describe people who experience incarceration', *BMC International Health and Human Rights*, 18, 41 (November 2018), <https://bmcinthealthhumrights.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12914-018-0180-4> [accessed 24 October 2020].

the distinction about whom I am writing it is necessary to differentiate staff or visitors from those incarcerated and at those times I use the term 'inmate' as this is the term agreed by the actors in both theatre companies as the one they personally find least offensive, although it is noted that in 2008 the Ministry of Justice wrote to HMP Wakefield requesting the use of the term 'prisoner' rather than 'inmate' as a way of promoting dignity and respect.<sup>5</sup>

Language is incredibly important and over time and in different geographies, against differing socio-political backdrops, different terminology is deemed appropriate or otherwise. I would hope that anyone reading this thesis understands that the language I have used is the language deemed most appropriate within the context I was working at the time of writing this and with the full agreement of the people about whom I write; any offense caused is deeply regretted on my part.

Given that practice as research is a central element of this thesis, many of the organisations and theatre companies continue to operate (albeit currently heavily impacted by COVID-19) which poses challenges in the articulation of the research. In trying to distinguish between work completed prior to writing and work which continues to develop there are times when it is necessary to shift tense within the chapters. I have attempted to minimise this where possible but where I continue to facilitate work within a theatre company it is appropriate to use the present tense, which whilst academically less cohesive is reflective of the substantive role the practical work has in this research project.

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<sup>5</sup> David Hanson (Prisons Minister) quoted by Tom Whitehead, 'Prisoners should not be called 'inmates', say MoJ', *The Telegraph*, 31 December 2008.

## Introduction

This thesis demonstrates the ways in which Shakespeare can be utilised as a communication method for those marginalised by society, such as people with learning disabilities, people with mental health issues, incarcerated people and people who have experienced homelessness. This interdisciplinary thesis combines academic research, ethnographic studies, applied theatre and trauma-informed approaches. It is responsive to national, institutional and government policies. It is based on my work as a practitioner with multiple existing theatre companies and through founding two permanent theatre companies within English prisons (The Gallowfield Players in HMP Gartree and Emergency Shakespeare in HMP Stafford). Research as practice has enabled me to validate my central hypothesis that Shakespeare can alter the spatial constraints for those who feel imprisoned, whether physically or metaphorically, enabling them to speak, and to be heard, in ways they may previously have struggled with. The intersectionality of this thesis brings to light new dimensions of the individual work which has preceded it. Through focusing holistically on practical programmes with marginalised people instead of within traditional silos of marginalisation the similarities in communication issues they experience can be highlighted and used to instigate policy change. I also encourage this dialogue to be broadened out further through interventions such as the annual Applying Shakespeare Symposia I organised as part of this research journey.

Building upon the work of French spatial theorists such as Henri Lefebvre, it evidences the ways in which social spaces are moulded and influenced by the interventions which take place within them and the extent to which these interventions then have a

lasting impact on future perception of these spaces.<sup>1</sup> My thesis demonstrates the additional significant impact of long-term programmes and the way in which these can help participants to develop transferable skills, confidence and self-worth. The combination of Shakespeare with the inherent 'cultural capital' his works convey, the physicality of theatre artistry and the deployment of trauma-informed methodologies enable those who have struggled to find their voice, or for their voice to be heard, to articulate themselves in new ways.<sup>2</sup> Many of those who are ostracised by society will have experienced significant trauma and 'among socially marginalised populations experiences of individual and systemic discrimination may elicit particularly marked adverse consequences'.<sup>3</sup> To evidence the ways in which this communication can encourage people to see things differently I borrow from Foucault's concept of 'heterotopia' (defined below).<sup>4</sup> This thesis considers a broad spectrum of those marginalised and the way in which both live performances and media depictions can alter public and personal perceptions about the limitations to which they may be subjected, either physically or through societal expectations.

### Combining practice with spatial theory

My thesis aims to contribute to the voids in the current research by taking a non-siloed approach to the field, considering projects across multiple groups rather than individualised

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<sup>1</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell 1991).

<sup>2</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, 'The Forms of Capital', trans. by Richard Nice, ed. by J Richardson, *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (Westport: Greenwood, 1986), pp. 241-58.

<sup>3</sup> Kimberly Matheson, Mindi D. Foster, Amy Bombay, Robyn J. McQuaid and Hymie Anisan, 'Traumatic Experiences, Perceived Discrimination and Psychological Distress Among Members of Various Socially Marginalised Groups' *Frontiers in Psychology* (February 2019), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00416>, [accessed 21 October 2020].

<sup>4</sup> Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias' trans. by Jay Miskowiec, *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuite* (October 1984), <https://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/foucault1.pdf> [accessed 6 September 2020].

case studies, as is the focus in much of the existing literature.<sup>5</sup> My research is instead structured around a theoretical framework influenced by spatial theorists including Lefebvre, Michel Foucault, Gaston Bachelard and Edward Soja as well as Pierre Bourdieu's work on 'cultural capital' and 'habitus'.<sup>6</sup> There has been a rise in interest in spatiality as a social product over the last half-century and this has extended into work on the representations of early modern London on stage. Sarah Dustagheer catalogues this scholarly exploration in relation to Shakespeare in her 2013 article, noting the contributions of Steven Mullaney, Janette Dillon and Jean Howard to this field of critical enquiry.<sup>7</sup> However, this sub-discipline is centred on the portrayal of space on the early modern stage while my research will build on this concept that 'plays helped to transform specific places into

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<sup>5</sup> Murray Cox (ed.), *Shakespeare comes to Broadmoor: The actors are come hither* (London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1992); Sue Jennings, *Dramatherapy: Theory and Practice Volumes 1, 2 & 3* (London and New York: Routledge, 1987, 1992, 1997); Sue Jennings, *Dramatherapy and Social Theatre: Necessary Dialogues* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007); Jon Palmer and Richard Hayhow, *Learning Disability and Contemporary Theatre* (Huddersfield: Full Body and the Voice, 2008); Matt Hargrave, *Theatres of Learning Disability: Good, Bad or Plain Ugly?* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Kelly Hunter, *Shakespeare's Heartbeat: Drama games for children with autism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015); James Thompson (ed.), *Prison Theatre: Perspectives and Practices* (London and New York: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1998); Michael Balfour (ed.), *Theatre in Prison: Theory and Practice* (Bristol and Portland: Intellect, 2004); Jean Troustine, *Shakespeare Behind Bars: One teacher's story of the power of drama in a women's prison* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2004); Amy Scott-Douglass, *Shakespeare Inside: The Bard Behind Bars* (London and New York: Continuum, 2007); Jonathan Shailor (ed.), *Performing New Lives: Prison theatre* (London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2011); Laura Bates, *Shakespeare Saved My Life: Ten years in solitary with the Bard* (Naperville, Illinois: Sourcebooks, 2013); Niels Herold, *Prison Shakespeare and the Purpose of Performance: Repentance Rituals and the Early Modern* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Rob Pensalfini, *Prison Shakespeare: For these Deep Shames and Great Indignities* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Nadine Holdsworth, 'Citizenship: The Ethics of Inclusion' in *Performance Studies: Key Words, Concepts and Theories* ed. by Brian Reynolds (London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 133-41; Manuel Muñoz-Bellerin and Nuria Cordero-Ramos, 'The Role of Applied Theatre in Social Work: Creative Interventions with Homeless Individuals', *British Journal of Social Work*, 50 (May 2020), pp. 1611-29.

<sup>6</sup> Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*; Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life: The One-Volume Edition*, trans. by John Moore (Volumes 1 and 2) and Gregory Elliott (Volume 3) (London and Brooklyn: Verso, 2014); Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias'; Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1977); Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. by Maria Jolas (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1964); Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London and New York: Verso, 1989); Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and other real-and-imagined places* (Malden, Oxford and Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 1996); Pierre Bourdieu, 'The Forms of Capital'.

<sup>7</sup> Sarah Dustagheer, 'Shakespeare and the Spatial Turn', *Literary Compass*, 10:17 (2013), 570-81.



significant social spaces, that is, into environments marked by the actions, movements and daily practices of inhabitants', but within the sphere of contemporary marginalised communities.<sup>8</sup> This intersectionality of spatial theory and applied Shakespeare allows me to analyse a range of interventions across a broad spectrum without attempting classification based on the predominant source of marginalisation (i.e. learning disabilities, incarceration or homelessness). Moving away from this binary segregation is important in a people-centred approach and allows cross-fertilisation of artistic practices between organisations for the benefit of participants. I consider the way in which interventions interact with Lefebvre's spatial triad and the symbiosis of influence between the space and the activity within it, or by the programmes' Foucauldian heterotopic potential.<sup>9</sup>

Lefebvre developed the concept of a spatial triad which consisted of *spatial practice* (perceived space formed by everyday routines), *representations of space* (lived space influenced by the inhabitants) and *representational space* (conceived space which is 'directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols').<sup>10</sup> As I argued in my article 'Action is Eloquence', the addition of Shakespeare has a tangible effect on the latter of these three spaces. It impacts on how the daily routine and usual habitation of a space coalesce and imbues the lived space with alternative tonality.<sup>11</sup> Lefebvre states that

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<sup>8</sup> Jean Howard, *Theater of a City: The Places of London Comedy, 1598-1642* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 38-39; Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias'.

<sup>10</sup> Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 38-39.

<sup>11</sup> Rowan Mackenzie, 'Action is Eloquence: Creating Space for Shakespeare in HMP Gartree', *Drama Research*, 11:1 (April 2020), <https://www.nationaldrama.org.uk/journal/>, [accessed 6 September 2020].

representational space is alive: it speaks...It embraces the loci of passion, of action and of lived situations, and this immediately implies time....it is essentially qualitative, fluid and dynamic.<sup>12</sup>

This fluidity of conceived or social space to the events which take place within it is explored more fully within the creative environments of workshops and rehearsals (Chapter 1) although Lefebvre's conceit that "'users" passively experience whatever [is] imposed upon them' is one I would challenge with the marginalised communities I engaged.<sup>13</sup> Instead the users were the instruments of change in the vein of Boal's forum theatre principles in which 'the participant has to intervene decisively in the dramatic action and change it'; their developing vocalisation through the medium of Shakespeare was the catalyst which altered the dynamic of the space in which the creative process took place.<sup>14</sup> Lefebvre's 'Theory of Moments' is also relevant to this thesis as it combines the 'higher form of repetition, renewal and reappearance' which forms moments of an individual's life-experience with the concept of these being specifically timebound.<sup>15</sup> He acknowledges that it is impossible to provide a comprehensive list of these moments as 'there is nothing to prevent the invention of new moments' and as this thesis will demonstrate these moments can be found in the heterotopic potential of performing Shakespeare with marginalised groups.

Foucault's concept of heterotopia as real places which act as counter-sites, 'outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location within reality', is

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<sup>12</sup> Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 42.

<sup>13</sup> Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 43.

<sup>14</sup> Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, trans. by Charles A and Maria-Odilia Leal McBride and Emily Fryer (London: Pluto Press, 2008), p. 117.

<sup>15</sup> Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life Volume III*, p. 638.

readily applicable to theatrical interventions, the example which he chooses to embody his description of the third principle.<sup>16</sup> He describes this third principle as:

The heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several places, several sites that are in themselves incompatible. Thus it is that the theatre brings onto the rectangle of the stage, one after the other, a whole series of places that are foreign to one another.<sup>17</sup>

Foucault's description of the theatre as bringing together a series of incompatible places through the changing of scenic locations is developed by academic Joanne Tompkins in her monograph, *Theatre's Heterotopias*.<sup>18</sup> Tompkins summarises Kevin Hetherington's description of heterotopias having the 'effect of making things appear out of place' along with Marin's contribution to this critical thinking.<sup>19</sup> She then outlines the three elements she defines when isolating the heterotopia (reminiscent of Henri Lefebvre's spatial triad): constructed space, abstracted space and, between these, the heterotopia.<sup>20</sup> Tompkins defines constructed space as that in which the production is set whilst abstracted space is a 'contrasting spatial environment that may be located in a geographically determined place'.<sup>21</sup> She then describes how heterotopia can be created from the way in which the constructed space and the abstracted space are juxtaposed. She challenges Foucault's

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<sup>16</sup> Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', p. 6.

<sup>18</sup> Joanne Tompkins, *Theatre's Heterotopias: Performance and the Cultural Politics of Space* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

<sup>19</sup> Kevin Hetherington, *The Badlands of Modernity: Heterotopia and Social Ordering* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 49; Louis Marin, *Utopics: The Semiological Play of Textual Spaces*, trans. by R. A. Vollrath (New York: Humanity Books, 1984).

<sup>20</sup> Tompkins, p. 50.

<sup>21</sup> Tompkins, p. 32.

assertion that all theatre is inherently heterotopic but instead refines this idea to a concept that theatre can enable the performance of 'other possibilities for socio-political alternatives to the existing order'.<sup>22</sup> In my opinion, theatre has inherent heterotopic potential but that it is only when it juxtaposes seemingly contrasting realities that it becomes heterotopic; it is these contrasts which bring about the challenging of perceptions. Across the projects surveyed as part of this thesis, examples of these contrasting instances included Shylock's 'if you prick us, do we not bleed' speech poignantly performed by a man serving a life sentence and a literal enactment of Titania's request to 'tie up my love's tongue' to highlight issues of physical restraint for people with mental health issues.<sup>23</sup>

Tompkins foregrounds the priority of spatiality within theatre, citing Lefebvre's insistence that spaces are already in existence prior to the entry of actors and David Wiles' logic that 'theatre is pre-eminently a spatial medium for it can dispense with language on occasion but never with space'.<sup>24</sup> Tompkins' definition of heterotopia as 'a space generated by performance that enables us to better understand the theatrical experience' is mapped out robustly.<sup>25</sup> However, there are some benefits from considering Foucault's other principles, not just the third one, which she considers and effectively dismisses in favour of her more nuanced perspective of how the term applies in a theatrical context.<sup>26</sup> The first principle, that heterotopias of crisis are being replaced by those of deviation, 'those in which individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are

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<sup>22</sup> Tompkins, p. 6.

<sup>23</sup> William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, ed. by John Russell Brown (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1955), 3.1.58; William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ed. by Harold F. Brooks (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1979), 3.1.194

<sup>24</sup> Tompkins, p. 7, citing David Wiles, *Tragedy in Athens: Performance Space and Theatrical Meaning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> Tompkins, p. 32.

<sup>26</sup> Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', p. 5-6.

placed', can be built upon powerfully in the context of marginalized groups. It is they who are seen as deviating from the norm of society yet Shakespeare enables them to create a heterotopia and to expose an alternative perspective. The second and fourth principles relate to time and the way in which heterotopias exist contextually against a backdrop of the moment, 'slices in time', which resonates with my development in Chapter 4 of this idea of *presenting* as making something visible but also as being of the *present*. My interpretation of heterotopias centres around the way in which they can be used to destabilise the expected view of the world and present alternative perspectives. On this basis, the combination of juxtaposing contradictory combinations, giving voice to those who deviate from societal norms and being immediate and relevant embody the concept within my own research.

Bachelard's concept that 'the image has touched the depths before it stirs the surface' was developed as a central tenet to Cox and Thielgaard's Aeolian Mode which harnesses the power of narration as a way of freeing patients from their past.<sup>27</sup> His idea of 'felicitous space', a place in which 'we take root, day after day, in a "corner of the world"' and the way this offers comfort through the memories contained within it, is a powerful one.<sup>28</sup> This, combined with Marvin Carlson's concept of theatrical ghosting, was evidenced in the way that spaces came to be seen as benevolent as a result of creative activities undertaken within them, repurposing them from their original function into a space of positivity where the marginalized group felt a sense of ownership of the space.<sup>29</sup> Soja's

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<sup>27</sup> Bachelard, p. xx; Murray Cox and Alice Thielgaard, *Mutative Metaphors in Psychotherapy: The Aeolian Mode* (London and Bristol, Pennsylvania: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1997).

<sup>28</sup> Bachelard, p. 27.

<sup>29</sup> Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2001).

assessment that 'space is a product of social translation, transformation and experience' draws heavily on Lefebvre but develops this further by attempting to negotiate a socio-spatial dialectic which forces a consideration of social spatiality within Marxism.<sup>30</sup> He highlights the way in which space 'arises from purposeful social practice' and this is definitely borne out in the phenomenological research I have undertaken where spaces can be altered from their previous nature of confinement and limitation to places of possibilities and hope through the activities undertaken within them.

Pierre Bourdieu developed the theory of 'cultural capital' to explain the disparity of scholastic achievement of children from differing social classes, considering the inherent cultural capital of the elite as adding additional resources for those children comparative to the less wealthy. Bourdieu argues that

the inheritance of cultural wealth which has been accumulated  
and bequeathed by previous generations only really belongs  
(although it is *theoretically* offered to everyone) to those endowed  
with the means of appropriating it for themselves.<sup>31</sup>

His division of the concept into three elements: embodied (language and mannerisms), objectified (works of arts and physical items) and institutionalised (educational credentials and background) is helpful and it is a combination of the three which we see used to

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<sup>30</sup> Soja, *Postmodern Geographies*, p. 80.

<sup>31</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, 'Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction', in *Knowledge, Education and Cultural Change: Papers in the Sociology of Education*, ed. by Richard Brown (Tavistock: Routledge, 1973), pp. 487-511 (p. 488).

heterotopic effect when marginalised groups of society engage with Shakespeare.<sup>32</sup> The ingrained practices of his works, the outward symbols, such as the emblematic crown of Macbeth or Prospero's cloak and staff, and the institutional homage to Shakespeare are combined to demonstrate something which mainstream society would often not expect to see from those who are not from the more elite echelons of society.

More recent academic studies of cultural capital have developed these notions to include technical, emotional, national and subcultural strands to the definition, including these to encompass a widened set of measures which calibrate the inherited privileges offered by the wealthy in comparison to the economically deprived.<sup>33</sup> In 2019 OfSTED formalised a requirement for educational institutions to 'equip pupils with the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life'.<sup>34</sup> This is a double-edged sword which attempts to enable all children more equally yet in fact entrenches the very division by its existence and the marginalised groups with which this thesis is concerned are those who often lack this due to circumstances, prejudice and deprivation in many forms. Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus' is also relevant here – a sense of belonging which is engendered through cultural capital and life experiences.<sup>35</sup> Bourdieu has recently begun to influence the field of criminology with *Criminology and Criminal Justice* dedicating a special issue to exploration of the topic and Jake Philips arguing that 'the potential for Bourdieu's work to contribute to

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<sup>32</sup> Bourdieu, 1986), p. 243-47.

<sup>33</sup> Tony Bennett, Mike Savage et al, *Culture, Class, Distinction* (London: Routledge, 2009); John Holden, *Culture and Class* (Counterpoint, British Council Thinktank, 2010), <http://www.bluedrum.ie/documents/CultureAndClassStandard.pdf> [accessed 29 February 2020].

<sup>34</sup> OfSTED School Inspection Handbook (November 2019), p. 43 [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/843108/School\\_inspection\\_handbook\\_-\\_section\\_5.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/843108/School_inspection_handbook_-_section_5.pdf), [accessed 29 February 2020].

<sup>35</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. by Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

our understanding of criminal justice institutions is clear'.<sup>36</sup> Matthew Reason applies Bourdieu to Shakespeare in his research with adolescent theatregoers, describing habitus as 'an embodied phenomenon with our dispositions written into and enacted through the body'.<sup>37</sup> He concludes that 'those young people with less cultural capital were less able to invest themselves into the experience [theatre-going] and consequently less likely to identify with the experience'.<sup>38</sup>

In the context of marginalised people this effect may well be magnified under normal circumstances, but as my research demonstrates inversion of this situation is eminently possible, enabling them to invest themselves into Shakespeare and to shape it in a way which speaks to and for them. It is a combination of the constructed stage-play world, cultural capital of Shakespeare and the embodiment of the marginalised participants through their ownership of the text which creates a heterotopia. This heterotopia encourages society to question its own embodied cultural capital; those attitudes and practices which lead them to believe that people who differ from them would not be able to make Shakespeare their own authentic mouthpiece for communicating with the world. Although grounded in the concepts developed by spatial theorists such as Lefebvre and Foucault, my work is also influenced by the work of spatial theatre scholars such as Anne

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<sup>36</sup> Jake Phillips, 'Myopia and misrecognition: The impact of managerialism on the management of compliance', *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 16:1 (2016), <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1748895815594664> [accessed 10 October 2020].

<sup>37</sup> Matthew Reason, 'What Makes a Theatregoer? Habitus, Identity and Interest Development in Adolescent Audiences to Shakespeare', in *Shakespeare: Actors and Audiences* ed. by Fiona Banks (London and New York: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2019), pp. 97-118, (p. 98).

<sup>38</sup> Reason, 'What Makes a Theatregoer?', p. 112.



Ubersfeld, Gay McAuley and Joanne Tompkins who applied these theoretical concepts to the theatrical space.<sup>39</sup>

This thesis is structured according to the usage of space, loosely grouping these into four primary activities: creativity, performance, reflection and media, whilst acknowledging that as with any system of labelling this is imperfect and brings its own challenges. There is naturally some cross-over between these spaces; those engaged in the creative practices of rehearsal may well reflect during quieter moments of the session, those presenting a narrative to the media are undoubtedly performing, albeit under a different set of requirements than a straightforward theatre performance may require. However, this alignment, although loosely applied, into these four spaces allows me to map them against the relevant theoretical framework which applies and therefore to interrogate the hypotheses I have about the way in which Shakespeare can be utilised as a powerful communication tool for those marginalised and the way it can alter previously restrictive spaces into something permeable by those previously excluded from mainstream society. Drawing on the wealth of material in existence, including the ever-developing field of audience reception theories in the context of both live and mediated performances, I attempt to navigate the complexities of how actors from marginalised sectors of society can utilise the power of theatre to challenge preconceptions related to the supposed limitations connected to their marginalization, yet also the need for their art to be critiqued objectively. Claire Bishop summarises this in her assertion that:

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<sup>39</sup> Anne Ubersfeld, *Reading Theatre*, trans. by Frank Collins (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); Gay McAuley, *Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theatre* (Michigan: Michigan University of Press, 1999); Tompkins, 2014.

Value judgements are necessary, not as a means to reinforce elite culture and police the boundaries of art and non-art, but as a way to understand and clarify our shared values at a given historical moment.<sup>40</sup>

Navigating these at times contradictory cultural and sociological values is challenging and I continue to refine my ability to do so even as this thesis is submitted, acknowledging Criminologist Kieran McCartan's construct that research is a journey which requires adaptability.<sup>41</sup>

## Methodology

My research blends the work of international academics and practitioners across a multitude of different types of applied Shakespeare projects with extended ethnographic studies of projects I have been involved with (primarily in UK and Europe due to my own location). Ethnographic data has been collected from three learning disabled theatre companies, my own two in-prison theatre companies and one mental health service user theatre company. This was supplemented with facilitation and observation of dozens of workshops and individual sessions and interviews with practitioners nationally and internationally. I combine predominantly qualitative data sources gathered from long-term studies of groups using Shakespeare with quantitative analysis where appropriate and supported by the rich base of research in related fields which has preceded my own work.

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<sup>40</sup> Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London and New York: Verso, 2012), p. 8.

<sup>41</sup> Kieran McCartan, *HMPPS Insights Seminar: The Importance of Research in Practice: From Reading to Doing and Back again* (delivered via Zoom, 14 September 2020).

Feedback has been gathered from participants, audience members, staff and other sources, anecdotal feedback collated from rehearsals and group discussions and semi-structured interviews conducted where appropriate. All participants within my ethnographic research were offered the opportunity to be anonymised and anonymisation was a requirement of working with those incarcerated, as outlined in the Note on Conventions. Self-analysis has featured with those in prison as they assessed their own confidence and ability levels at the outset and conclusion of interventions (Appendix 1), attributing numerical scores to each, an approach endorsed by the research which developed the Immediate Outcomes Measurement Tool, discussed in further detail later.<sup>42</sup> There are limitations to the data which can be gathered from those who have severe communication issues, such as profound learning disabilities, and for all marginalised groups it is imperative to remain cognisant that many participants will articulate what they believe the researcher wants to hear. This potential issue was mitigated, to some extent, through longitudinal ethnographic study, development of trust with participants and cross-referencing responses against contextual sources to validate authenticity of response.

This thesis is not simply a theoretical contemplation of the power of Shakespeare to support trauma-informed facilitation with those marginalised; it combines this with the actuality of ongoing, living projects with these very people. This requires continual adjustment of methods, a centralisation of the practice during sessions with adequate time and mental space for reflection and research outside of these times. McCartan influences

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<sup>42</sup> Mike Maguire, Emma Disley, Mark Liddle, Rosie Meek and Nina Burrowes, *Developing a toolkit to measure intermediate outcomes to reduce reoffending from arts and mentoring interventions* (Ministry of Justice Analytical Series, 2019), <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/developing-a-toolkit-to-measure-intermediate-outcomes-to-reduce-reoffending-from-arts-and-mentoring-interventions> [accessed 2 September 2020].

my working practice with his assertion that ‘research is a journey, it’s an ongoing conversation, not a product’ which requires continual re-evaluation and re-calibration.<sup>43</sup> As evidenced in Chapter 1, the longevity of involvement with a community is fundamental to the effectiveness of interventions as it allows the trauma-informed tenets of collaboration, peer support, trust and empowerment to fully develop, in ways that are simply not possible with short-term projects.<sup>44</sup> The spatial development as a result of Shakespeare interventions is central but it is vital to be cognisant of the perceived restrictions enforced by spaces at the outset of such projects. My work adopts an approach which Gayle Letherby describes as being where ‘*knowing* and *doing* are intimately related and it is impossible to write about one without consideration of the other’.<sup>45</sup> Letherby’s preference for auto/biographical research is not appropriate, in my opinion, when working with those marginalised as their voices should be the ones given space to be heard. However, her conclusion that we ‘need to be ambivalent about presenting and publicising our work, we must continue to do it while highlighting the limitations of what we are able to do’ resonates with me as much of this thesis works towards unpacking the subtleties of being a practitioner helping people to find their voice while being mindful that those voices do not have to sound like culturally expected renditions of Shakespeare.<sup>46</sup>

There is a temptation for those engaging in work with marginalised individuals and communities, who are not themselves marginalised, to assume a mantle of superiority, to

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<sup>43</sup> McCartan, (14 September 2020).

<sup>44</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S., *SAMHSA’s Concept of Trauma and Guidance for A Trauma-Informed Approach* (Rockville: MD, 2014), [https://www.cdc.gov/cpr/infographics/6\\_principles\\_trauma\\_info.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/cpr/infographics/6_principles_trauma_info.htm) [accessed 8 August 2020].

<sup>45</sup> Gayle Letherby, *Feminist Research In Theory and Practice*, (Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2003), p. 3.

<sup>46</sup> Letherby, p. 158.

patronise (albeit unintentionally) those with whom they are creating theatre through the assumption that they are giving the gift of cultural achievement through this artistry. Jenny Hughes writes of the historical prevalence of these 'sanctioned cultural activities [which] can be understood as disciplinary impositions of middle-class respectability on the poor'.<sup>47</sup> The media contribution to this colonisation of marginalised people is explored in significant detail in Chapter 4 but the undertones of this attitude resonate more widely across pedagogical and facilitatory approaches to applied theatre. My own research is responsive to the accusation that some applied theatre assumes a form of colonised superiority in which those facilitating the work seek to deliver charitable aims to those marginalised as they assert a value judgement of self-improvement.<sup>48</sup> The duality of role as practitioner and researcher is complex and whilst 'congruent with a much valued (and vaunted) rights-based social and political agenda' the nuances of balancing the competing priorities pose challenges.<sup>49</sup> Jo Aldridge's book on participatory research explores these difficulties and offers valuable insights into how to conduct this dual role with integrity, authenticity and ethical consideration as researchers endeavour to move participants from the tokenistic involvement of passivity to the emancipatory role they perform in social transformation.<sup>50</sup> This basis for research has underpinned my own doctoral research and led me to encourage activism as the antithesis to passive appropriation of marginalised people working with applied theatre.

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<sup>47</sup> Jenny Hughes, 'A pre-history of applied theatre: work, house, perform' in *Critical Perspectives on Applied Theatre* ed. by Jenny Hughes and Helen Nicholson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 40-60 (p. 44).

<sup>48</sup> Sonya Freeman Loftis, 'Autistic Culture, Shakespeare Therapy and the Hunter Heartbeat Method', *Shakespeare Survey* 72 (2019), 256-67 (p. 266) DOI: [10.1080/23297018.2016.1207202](https://doi.org/10.1080/23297018.2016.1207202) [accessed 1 September 2020].

<sup>49</sup> Jo Aldridge, *Participatory Research: Working with vulnerable groups in research and practice* (Bristol and Chicago: Policy Press, 2016), p. 29.

<sup>50</sup> Aldridge, p. 156.

## Marginalised groups

Whilst there is extensive academic research on applied theatre the majority of it exists in siloed consideration of specific groups, with little intersectionality across differing circles.<sup>51</sup>

This thesis aims to influence the academic discourse away from consideration of marginalised groups in relative isolation as the read-across between those with mental health issues, learning disabilities, those who have experienced imprisonment and experienced homelessness is vast. Through encouraging a critical discourse which encompasses a broader consideration of these sectors of society my aspiration is that there will be positive implications for policy decisions now and in the future. To support this my research draws on a combination of academic analysis, research as practice and Government policy documents as this tripartite approach allows the development of new connections across the field. Statistics suggest that 25-40% of people with learning disabilities also experience mental health issues, with many of them not receiving support for these issues due to 'lack of communication between mainstream psychiatry services and intellectual disability psychiatry services'.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, trans. by Charles A and Maria-Odilia Leal McBride and Emily Fryer (London: Pluto Press, 2008); Sue Jennings (ed.), *Dramatherapy and Social Theatre: Necessary Dialogues* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009); Murray Cox (ed.) *Shakespeare Comes to Broadmoor: 'the actors are come hither'* (London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1992); Jon Palmer and Richard Hayhow, *Learning Disability and Contemporary Theatre* (Huddersfield: Full Body and the Voice, 2008); Matt Hargrave, *Theatres of Learning Disability: Good, Bad or Plain Ugly?* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Kelly Hunter, *Shakespeare's Heartbeat: Drama games for children with autism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015); James Thompson (ed.), *Prison Theatre: Perspectives and Practices* (London and New York: Jessica Kingsley Publishing, 1998); Michael Balfour (ed.) *Theatre in Prison: Theory and Practice* (Bristol and Portland: Intellect, 2004); Jonathan Shailor, *Performing New Lives: Prison Theatre* (London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishing, 2011).

<sup>52</sup> Foundation for people with learning disabilities website, 'Learning disability statistics: Mental health problems', <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/learning-disabilities/help-information/learning-disability-statistics-/187699> [accessed 3 September 2020]; Intellectual Disability and Health website, 'Research evidence

Mental health issues amongst those incarcerated is disproportionately higher than the general population of the UK:

The most comprehensive study of prison mental health in England and Wales found that approximately 90% of prisoners experienced one of the five categories of psychiatric disorder studied – four times the corresponding rate in the wider community. Some 70% of prisoners had two or more of these problems.<sup>53</sup>

The psychiatric disorders included in that study were psychosis, neurotic disorders, personality disorders, hazardous drinking and drug dependency and it is estimated that reception screening upon imprisonment identifies less than a third of those with mental health needs.<sup>54</sup> Self-harm and suicide within the criminal justice system are significant with the latest *Prisons Annual Report* documenting a 15% increase in self-inflicted deaths in custody in the male estate and 25% increase in self-harm from the previous year, with over 45,000 instances logged in 2018.<sup>55</sup>

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on the health of people with intellectual disabilities', <http://www.intellectualdisability.info/historic-articles/articles/research-evidence-on-the-health-of-people-with-intellectual-disabilities> [accessed 3 September 2020].

<sup>53</sup> Alice Mills and Kathleen Kendall, 'Mental health in prisons', in *Handbook on Prisons: Second Edition*, ed. by Yvonne Jewkes, Jamie Bennett and Ben Crewe (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 187-204, (p. 188), citing N. Singleton, H. Meltzer and R. Gatward, *Psychiatric Morbidity Among Prisoners* (Office of National Statistics, 1998).

<sup>54</sup> C. Brooker, J. Repper, C. Beverley, M. Ferriter and N. Brewer, *Mental Health Services and Prisons* (Sheffield, University of Sheffield School of Health and Related Research, 2002), <http://www.ohrn.nhs.uk/resource/Research/MHSysRevIntro.pdf> [accessed 20 August 2020].

<sup>55</sup> Peter Clarke, *HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales, Annual Report 2018-19* (Crown Copyright, July 2019), p. 25 [https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisoners/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2019/07/6.5563\\_HMI-Prisons-AR\\_2018-19\\_WEB\\_FINAL\\_040719.pdf](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisoners/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2019/07/6.5563_HMI-Prisons-AR_2018-19_WEB_FINAL_040719.pdf) [accessed 19 July 2020].

Finding statistical evidence of the prevalence of learning disabilities within the criminal justice system is problematic due to differing assessment tools and a lack of comprehensive screening, but the Prison Reform Trust estimates approximately 32% are borderline or have learning disabilities whilst 30% have dyslexia and close to 60% have 'severe deficits in literacy and numeracy'.<sup>56</sup> Whilst there is no evidence that people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) are more likely to commit offences, 4-5% of sentenced prisoners have ASD comparative to 1-2% of the general population, highlighting a significant issue which is not yet adequately understood.<sup>57</sup> So widespread are mental health and learning disability issues with those convicted of criminal offences that new sentencing guidelines were introduced from 1 October 2020 to 'provide clarity and transparency around the sentencing process for this group of offenders'.<sup>58</sup> The 2016 report on the joint inspection of prisons and probation found that 'over two-thirds of [short-term] prisoners need help with accommodation' on release and lack of suitable accommodation is frequently cited as a barrier to successful desistance.<sup>59</sup> The, admittedly limited, 'evidence base suggests that cognitive impairment amongst homeless people is common', according to one of the few studies conducted into this field.<sup>60</sup> Given the intrinsic links between these

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<sup>56</sup> Nancy Loucks, *No one Knows: Offenders with learning difficulties and learning disabilities* (Prison Reform Trust, 2008), <http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/uploads/documents/noknl.pdf> [accessed 3 September 2020].

<sup>57</sup> Alexandria Lewis, 'Autism, Suicide and Self-Harm', *What Good Looks Like Conference: A national partnership approach to supporting those in prison at risk of self-harm and suicide* (online conference, 2 October 2020).

<sup>58</sup> Sentencing Council, *Sentencing offenders with mental disorders, developmental disorders, or neurological impairments* (1 October 2020), <https://www.sentencingcouncil.org.uk/overarching-guides/magistrates-court/item/sentencing-offenders-with-mental-disorders-developmental-disorders-or-neurological-impairments/> [accessed 5 November 2020].

<sup>59</sup> Glenys Stacey and Peter Clarke, *An Inspection of Through the Gate Resettlement Services for Short-Term Prisoners: A joint inspection by HM Inspectorate of Probation and HM Inspectorate of Prisons* (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation, October 2016), p. 21, <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/cji/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2016/09/Through-the-Gate.pdf> [accessed 3 September 2020].

<sup>60</sup> Peter M. Oakes and Ros C. Davis, 'Intellectual disability in homeless adults: A prevalence study', *Journal of Intellectual Disabilities*, 12:4 (Los Angeles, London, New Delhi and Singapore: Sage Publications, 2008), 325-34 (pp. 326).



forms of marginalisation the development of positive communication methodologies needs consideration across the spectrum rather than focusing on one isolated reason for an individual being marginalised, ignoring the other contributory factors.

A survey of the existing academic research reveals the richness of existing work with various marginalised communities but also a number of significant areas in which the dialogue could be further enriched. Applied theatre and applied Shakespeare is a field which has gained significant interest in recent years and which continues to develop, with more academics and practitioners exploring the possibilities it offers. However, many of the projects and interventions take place disparately and much of the work is relatively ephemeral with practitioners often moving onto the next project without materials being archived in a way which would make them accessible for others. My own research aims to address this through consideration of a spectrum of marginalised individuals and communities, blending significant practice-based research with theoretical arguments to enhance the existing literature and open up new avenues of potential inquiry.

Applied theatre defies simple definition; it is an umbrella term which covers a multitude of 'theatrical practices and creative processes... that is responsive to ordinary people and their stories'.<sup>61</sup> Tracing the historical origins of such a non-homogenous discipline is complex but, as Prentki and Preston document, the practices recognisable as applied theatre have 'progressively gained currency throughout the second half of the twentieth century'.<sup>62</sup> Boal's seminal text, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, significantly influenced

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<sup>61</sup> Tim Prentki and Sheila Preston, 'Applied Theatre: An Introduction', in *The Applied Theatre Reader*, ed. by Tim Prentki and Sheila Preston (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 9-15 (p. 9).

<sup>62</sup> Prentki and Preston, p. 11.

the development of this field of work, encouraging theatre in which monologue is transformed into dialogue and 'theatre is action!'<sup>63</sup> His description of theatre as discourse drew on George Ikashawa for the concept that 'the bourgeoisie presents the spectacle' whilst the oppressed are not yet sure of how their world looks and so they present unpolished rehearsal as they use theatre to explore their relationships to the world.<sup>64</sup> Boal's concepts of image theatre (using non-verbal sculpting of the actors' bodies to create statue-like tableaux representing moments of oppression) and forum theatre (in which the audience are invited to 'intervene decisively in the dramatic action and change it') have become ingrained in theatrical practice.<sup>65</sup> They are an intrinsic part of applied theatre organisations such as Cardboard Citizens who pride themselves on making 'theatre which activates change' as they offer a methodology of empowerment in which alternative narratives can be explored.<sup>66</sup>

The widespread nature of applied theatre includes (but is not limited to) theatre in education, community projects, work with those with learning disabilities, mental health issues, conflict resolution drama, work with those incarcerated, theatre with those who have experienced homelessness, dramatherapy, theatre in war zones and the aftermath of natural disasters, and work which has a social diaspora focus such as tackling racism or other inequalities. Academics such as Helen Nicholson have been instrumental in developing the genre of applied theatre which she describes as 'the gift of theatre',

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<sup>63</sup> Boal, p. 135.

<sup>64</sup> Boal, p. 120.

<sup>65</sup> Boal, p.112-17.

<sup>66</sup> Cardboard Citizens, Adrian Jackson (Artistic Director) cites his personal and professional admiration of Augusto Boal with whom he worked closely throughout his life, as an intrinsic part of Cardboard Citizen's theatrical methodology, <https://cardboardcitizens.org.uk/who-we-are/theatre-of-the-oppressed/> [accessed 31 August 2020].

contributing a number of monographs and edited collections which are consumed by university students across the world as this field expands in popularity at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.<sup>67</sup> Nicholson and Hughes acknowledge an 'ecology of practices' which are 'continually shifting and developing', and this thesis aims to contribute to the development of this rich and nuanced field which encompasses significant diversity.<sup>68</sup> Reviewing the literature across this entire spectrum would exceed the scope of this thesis so I will restrict this to the four main groups of people with whom my research is concerned, listed above. At times I will also touch more broadly on some of the research developments in trauma-informed pedagogy such as the principles underpinning these approaches as defined by SAMHSA.<sup>69</sup> As Felitti et al discovered in their seminal *Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Study*, those who experience four or more categories of childhood traumas, such as abuse, neglect and severe poverty, are 4-12 times more likely to have addiction issues, self-harming and suicidal tendencies along with increased risk of poor health and obesity.<sup>70</sup> This study has been instrumental in developing focus on the necessity to acknowledge trauma and to develop strategies which are able to alleviate some of the issues and avoid causing further distress. Trauma-informed approaches are becoming

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<sup>67</sup> Helen Nicholson, *Applied Drama: The Gift of Theatre* (London: Macmillan Education UK, 2015); Jenny Hughes and Helen Nicholson (ed.) *Critical Perspectives on Applied Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Anna Harpin and Helen Nicholson (ed.), *Performance Participation: Practices, Audiences, Politics* (London: Palgrave Macmillan Education, 2017); Helen Nicholson, *Theatre, Education and Performance: The Map and The Story* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

<sup>68</sup> Hughes and Nicholson, *Critical Perspectives*, p. 4.

<sup>69</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S., *SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for A Trauma-Informed Approach* (Rockville: MD, 2014), [https://www.cdc.gov/cpr/infographics/6\\_principles\\_trauma\\_info.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/cpr/infographics/6_principles_trauma_info.htm) [accessed 8 August 2020].

<sup>70</sup> V. J. Felitti, R.F. Anda, D. Nordenberg, D. F. Williamson, A. M. Spitz, V. Edwards, M. P. Koss & J. S. & Marks, 'Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults: The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study', *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 14:4 (1998), 245–258, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0749-3797\(98\)00017-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0749-3797(98)00017-8) [accessed 4 October 2020].

increasingly widespread across educational, carceral and therapeutic settings, and have influenced my own practice-based research methods, as described later in the thesis.<sup>71</sup>

## Learning Disabilities

Literature considering the usage of theatre with children and adults with learning disabilities is widespread and ranges from the specificity of a single model articulated in Kelly Hunter's Heartbeat Method (analysed in Chapters 1 and 2) to wider appraisals of the field such as Andy Kempe's monograph *Drama, Disability and Education*.<sup>72</sup> The literature can be broadly sectioned into two: the research focused on drama performed for/with audiences/participants with learning disabilities and that performed by actors with learning disabilities. There is relatively little specifically on Shakespeare, with the exception of Hunter's work which is the subject of a number of academic articles as well as her own monograph, the latter of which functions primarily as a handbook to playing the games which form the basis for her method. The Hunter Heartbeat Method (HHM) uses the rhythm of Shakespearean iambic pentameter verse to replicate a human heartbeat. She utilises the plot, with selected lines of text, to create a series of interactive games with which professional actors engage children with ASD as they watch and then enact snippets of the play. 'The feasibility and

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<sup>71</sup> Maxine Harris and Roger D. Fallot (eds.), *Using Trauma Theory to Design Service Systems* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001); Coral Muskett, 'Trauma-informed care in in-patient mental health settings: A review of the literature', *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing*, (2013), <https://www.psykiatri-regionh.dk/centre-og-social-tilbud/Psykiatriske-centre/Psykiatrisk-Center-Sct.-Hans/forskning/Nationalt-TBT-Center/Artikler/Documents/Muskett-%20Trauma-informed%20care%20in%20-%202013.pdf> [accessed 8 September 2020]; Patricia A. Jennings, *The trauma-sensitive classroom* (New York and London: W.W.Norton and Company, 2019); Kieran F. McCartan, 'Trauma-informed practice', *Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation: Academic Insights* 2020/05 (July 2020), <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2020/07/Academic-Insights-McCartan.pdf> [accessed 12 August 2020].

<sup>72</sup> Kelly Hunter, *Shakespeare's Heartbeat: Drama games for children with autism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015); Andy Kempe, *Drama, Disability and Education* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013).

acceptability of the Heartbeat Method and its potential benefit in addressing social and communication deficits' are the focus of one article which assessed the impact of the games on children in City School District.<sup>73</sup> In contrast Sonya Freeman Loftis, an academic with autism, questions what she feels is a method which is rooted in colonialism, deeply flawed with patronising rhetoric articulating 'a relationship founded on pity' in which the neurotypical is giving the gift of Shakespeare to those who are in some way *less* because of their autism.<sup>74</sup> My research examines this issue of 'Shakespearean charity', which Todd Landon Barnes explores rigorously in his 2020 book, focusing on the accusation of it within facilitation and media portrayals of theatre with marginalised communities.<sup>75</sup>

Clinical research into the use of drama with learning disabled people, published by the *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* describes a

Belief that theatre may provide an ideal environment to teach a variety of core skills that children with autism often lack.... We hypothesized that children with autism would demonstrate improvement in social perception (memory of faces, the expression of emotions and theory of mind), skills and adaptive functioning.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Margaret H. Mehling, Marc J. Tasse and Robin Root, 'Shakespeare and Autism: an exploratory evaluation of the Hunter Heartbeat Method,' *Research and Practice on Intellectual and Development Difficulties*, 4:2 (2017), 107-20 (pp. 118), DOI: [10.1080/23297018.2016.1207202](https://doi.org/10.1080/23297018.2016.1207202) [accessed 04 August 2020].

<sup>74</sup> Loftis, p. 266.

<sup>75</sup> Todd Landon Barnes, *Shakespearean Charity and the Perils of Redemptive Performance* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

<sup>76</sup> B.A. Corbett, J.R. Gunther, D. Comins et al. 'Brief Report: Theatre as Therapy for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder', *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 41 (2011), 505-11 (pp. 505), [doi:10.1007/s10803-010-1064-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-010-1064-1), [accessed 4 June 2020].

The initial findings of this research were relatively inconclusive given the small group size (8 participants) and the lack of a control group, but a further study in 2015 using 33 children demonstrated that 'SENSE Theatre facilitated gains in memory for faces and social communication skills'.<sup>77</sup> The work involved theatre games, role playing and improvisation, culminating in the group and their peer actors (same-sex and age as ASD participant) rehearsing and performing a 45-minute play. This study validated what many theatre practitioners have believed for decades; that drama improves communication skills for those with learning disabilities. The series of pre, post and 2-month follow up tests to gather data were extensive and included measuring independent play, facial recognition and social functioning compared to a randomised control group.

The University of Kent's project *Imagining Autism*, a drama and psychology collaboration using puppetry and play-acting to stimulate responses, adopted a similar approach.<sup>78</sup> The children were clinically evaluated at regular intervals during and after the interventions, using the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) which consists of four modules, each assessing multiple factors relating to social communication and sensory reactions. Improvements were noted for all participants when compared to the pre-testing, with all 22 children improving on at least one measure and five improving on 3 or more measures during follow up testing (5 months – 1 year after the intervention).<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> B. A. Corbett, A. P. Key, L. Qualls, L. et al. 'Improvement in Social Competence Using a Randomized Trial of a Theatre Intervention for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder', *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 46, (2016) 658-72 (pp. 669), [doi:10.1007/s10803-015-2600-9](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-015-2600-9), [accessed 5 June 2020]; SENSE Theatre is a theatrical intervention programme: Social Emotional Neuroscience Endocrinology.

<sup>78</sup> University of Kent, *Imagining Autism*, <https://www.kent.ac.uk/50/profiles/impact/imagining-autism.html> [accessed 5 November 2020].

<sup>79</sup> University of Kent, *Imagining Autism* <https://www.kent.ac.uk/50/profiles/impact/imagining-autism.html> Further details of the 4 modules included in the ADOS assessments are included in Vanessa Hus and Catherine Lord, 'The Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule, Module 4: Revised Algorithm and Standardized Severity Scores', *Journal of Autistic Development Disorder*, 44.8 (2014)

The 2017 Autism Arts Festival at the University of Kent provided one of the most notable evaluations of audience perceptions in the sphere of learning disabilities to date. This two-day event was designed to be ‘an entire festival that was as autism-friendly as possible’ and which one attendee described as ‘autistic space’.<sup>80</sup> The event also gave the organisers the opportunity to create a ‘qualitative curatorial feedback model of evaluation’ comprising of mixed-methods data collection around the audience experience, artists’ experience and suggestions for future accessibility improvements for the arts.<sup>81</sup> This project highlighted a number of developments which may help assuage the concerns of non-neurotypical attendees to events in the future, including plot synopses, sensory trigger lists and video trailers. As Ben Fletcher-Watson and Shaun May note, these adaptations are rarely available in theatres and live arts venues and their work may be influential in prompting the inclusion of these as the number of relaxed performances (productions adapted to avoid sensory triggers and provide pre-attendance information to special needs audiences) continues to increase. Fletcher-Watson and May’s findings resonate with the *Relaxed Performance Project* evaluation (currently the most comprehensive study of these performances) which states that ‘preparation and information are absolutely key, if audiences know what to expect there is less for them to worry about’, which I explore further in Chapter 2.<sup>82</sup> The concept of issuing illustrated handouts to introduce the staff and

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[https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4104252/#:~:text=Autism%20Diagnostic%20Observation%20Schedule%20\(ADOS\),diagnosis%20of%20autism%20spectrum%20disorders](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4104252/#:~:text=Autism%20Diagnostic%20Observation%20Schedule%20(ADOS),diagnosis%20of%20autism%20spectrum%20disorders). [accessed 5 November 2020].

<sup>80</sup> Ben Fletcher-Watson and Shaun May, ‘Enhancing relaxed performance: evaluating the Autism Arts Festival’, *Research in Drama Education*, 23:3 (2018), 406-20 (pp. 406-07).

<sup>81</sup> Fletcher-Watson and May, p. 412.

<sup>82</sup> *Relaxed Performance Project Conference: Executive Summary* (2 September 2013), <http://www.includearts.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Relaxed-Performance-Pilot-Project-Executive-Summary-September-2013.pdf> [accessed 10 February 2020].

cast ahead of the event is used widely by many companies who produce relaxed performances, including Flute Theatre, Firebird Theatre and Tell Tale Hearts.<sup>83</sup>

There is limited analytical research on the benefits of drama and theatrical experiences with children generally and specifically those with special educational needs (SEN). Perhaps the most comprehensive study for neuro-typical children is Winner, Goldstein and Vincent-Lancrin's 2013 publication *Art for Art's Sake?* which includes a chapter dedicated to the 'cognitive outcomes of theatre education' which they describe as having the strongest evidential basis for wider benefits than artistic creativity.<sup>84</sup> They sensitively address the issue of the difficulty of correlating dramatic educational activities with wider academic achievements but do note that 'classroom drama had a strong positive causal effect on six of the seven verbal outcomes examined'.<sup>85</sup> They also concluded that acting within the classroom had the effect of enabling learners to transfer their greater capability of understanding to new texts which they hadn't enacted, even though this transfer of skills was not explicitly taught.<sup>86</sup> Haseman and Osterlind criticize the study for its 'muddled use of terminology', categorisation and interpretation of theatre/drama studies, making valid points about the lack of clarity provided on why demarcations relating to language (drama education, theatre education, enacted theatre) have been made and at

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<sup>83</sup> Firebird Theatre Company, *Prospero Duke of Milan*, The Old Vic, Bristol (2014), relaxed performances included an advance-issued information guide, <http://www.firebird-theatre.com/performances.html#prospero> [accessed 26 September 2020]; Tell Tale Hearts, *The Wave* (adaptation of *The Tempest*), Nottingham Playhouse (2015), relaxed interactive performance for learning disabled participants aged 12-30, <https://www.telltalehearts.co.uk/downloads/Wave-Social-Story.pdf> [accessed 26 September 2020].

<sup>84</sup> E. Winner, T. Goldstein and S. Vincent- Lancrin, *Art for Art's Sake? The Impact of Arts Education* (Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Publishing, 2013), pp. 155-74.

<sup>85</sup> Winner et al., p. 159.

<sup>86</sup> Winner et al., p. 160.



times seemingly contradictory conclusions drawn from the material analysed.<sup>87</sup> This unjustified terminological instability in the original text seems to dismiss many nuanced developments in the field. The scale and breadth make the publication important as it draws on numerous studies globally, but the lack of clarity of definition and frequent acknowledgement that the findings are inconclusive and can be interpreted multifariously does make it problematic to use as significant source material. It is attempting to use pre-existing studies with differing aims and measures to draw consistent conclusions which may simply be impossible given the variation in evidence.

The other area of focus is that of learning-disabled actors. Matt Hargrave's monograph outlines his theory that there are three schools of thought on the topic of learning-disabled theatre: therapeutic intervention, its diametric opposite – empowerment through the 'process of *communitas*' in which a group coheres around an issue to instigate social change – and the touring of semi-professional disabled theatre companies.<sup>88</sup> This demarcation of the differing responses to learning disabled theatre is useful and one to which I will refer in Chapters 1 and 2. In their book, Palmer and Hayhow explore the importance of equality and authenticity, influenced by their experiences as practitioners and in which they assert 'this is not drama as a social activity, nor is it therapy'.<sup>89</sup> There is a growing demand for disabled actors to be judged on the quality of their artistic outputs rather than assessed through the lens of their disability, as was the case from the early

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<sup>87</sup> Brad Hasemand and Eva Osterlind, 'A lost opportunity: a review of *Art for Art's Sake? The Impact of Arts Education*,' *Research in Drama Education*, 19:4 (2014), 409-13 (pp. 410).

<sup>88</sup> Hargrave, p. 34.

<sup>89</sup> Palmer and Hayhow, p. 58.

examples of disabled theatre in the 1980s.<sup>90</sup> Hargrave identifies ‘the perceived inability of the learning disabled performer to be the sole, autonomous author of work and the expectation that such a performer may require additional support to embody a role’, but there is a desire for the work to be appreciated on its own merits more than it has been previously.<sup>91</sup> My own article ‘*The Tempest+* from Blue Apple Theatre Company’ aimed to foreground the artistic output rather than the disabilities of the company, considering the way their production unified Shakespeare’s text with current socio-political concerns in relation to Brexit.<sup>92</sup> This thesis examines the roles of disabled audiences and disabled actors and contextualises them against the wider lens of marginalisation, including examples of people who are disabled within the carceral environment as well as those outside the walls. This intersectionality adds a dimension not previously explored within academic research; taking a more holistic approach to marginalisation and the inherent trauma it causes allows the potential for interventions to be created which are appropriate for a broader group of people. When we move to a position of dismantling the silos which exist between work for people with learning disabilities, mental health issues, incarceration and homelessness it enables cross-fertilisation of creative practices.

## Mental Health Issues

Statistically, 1 in 4 people in the UK will experience mental health issues each year yet popular perceptions often remain skewed with 1/3 of the public thinking those with mental

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<sup>90</sup> Ruth Bailey, ‘What is Disability Theatre?’, *Disability Arts Online* (2014), <http://www.disabilityartsonline.org.uk/disability-theatre> [accessed 26 September 2020].

<sup>91</sup> Matt Hargrave, *Theatres of Learning Disability: Good, Bad or Plain Ugly?* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 217.

<sup>92</sup> Rowan Mackenzie, ‘*The Tempest+* from Blue Apple Theatre Company,’ *Drama*, 26:1 (Spring 2020), 25-31.

health issues are violent when in fact they are more likely to be victims of crime or to harm themselves than others.<sup>93</sup> The majority of the literature regarding theatre for those with mental health issues relates to the therapeutic value of drama for participants and audiences. The potential well-being benefits of arts is foregrounded in the MARCH network which was awarded over £1M ESRC research funding into social, cultural and community assets for mental health (2018-2021).<sup>94</sup> Whilst James Thompson raises the valid consideration that ‘the insistence that survivors “tell their stories” is a culturally particular approach that can become problematic if applied universally’ across Western cultures, the sharing of stories and dramatisations of traumatic events is widely accepted as having therapeutic benefits.<sup>95</sup> The field of dramatherapy is predicated on these benefits and there exists a broad body of literature on the topic, including publications by Sue Jennings, Helen Payne and Marina Jenkyns.<sup>96</sup> ‘Dramatherapy is a form of psychological therapy in which all of the performance arts are utilised within the therapeutic relationship’, with the focus firmly on the therapy rather than the artwork, with drama techniques as the basis upon which to achieve results.<sup>97</sup> A large proportion of dramatherapy is based on devised work in which the participants enact problematic scenes from their own lived experience as a methodology of resolving unaddressed trauma.

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<sup>93</sup> MHFA Website <https://mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/research-and-evaluation/mental-health-statistics/>, [accessed 9 February 2020].

<sup>94</sup> MARCH: Social, Cultural and Community Assets for Mental Health, (MARCH is an acronym for Mental – Assets for Resilient Communities – Health) Lead Researcher: Daisy Fancourt, University College London <https://gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=ES%2FS002588%2F1>, [accessed 3 September 2020].

<sup>95</sup> James Thompson, ‘Ah pava! Nathiye – Respecting silence and the performances of not-telling,’ in *Dramatherapy and Social Theatre: Necessary Dialogues* ed. by Sue Jennings (Hove: Routledge, 2009), pp. 49-62 (p. 49).

<sup>96</sup> Sue Jennings (ed.), *Dramatherapy: Theory and Practice (Volumes 1,2,3)* (London and New York: Routledge, 1988, 1992, 1997); Sue Jennings (ed), *Dramatherapy and Social Theatre: Necessary Dialogues* (Hove: Routledge, 2009); Helen Payne (ed), *Handbook of Inquiry in the Arts Therapies: One River, Many Currents* (London and Bristol, Pennsylvania: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1993); Marina Jenkyns, *The Play's the Thing: Exploring text in drama and therapy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996).

<sup>97</sup> The British Association of Dramatherapists website, <https://badth.org.uk/dtherapy> [accessed 1 September 2020].

There is a subtle yet important differentiation between dramatherapy and the therapeutic benefits of drama in its truly artistic incarnation: the former focuses on changing the participants' perceptions and relationships within their own lives whereas the latter aims to produce theatre whilst acknowledging that personal development may be a by-product. My research is firmly orientated towards drama and considers dramatherapy only briefly as a full examination of dramatherapeutic practices would be beyond the scope of this thesis. Bessel van der Kolk's seminal text *The Body Keeps Score* examines a multitude of case histories of those who have suffered immense trauma and he is 'convinced of the therapeutic possibilities of theatre'.<sup>98</sup> He cites 'the life-changing process...[he] witnessed in a workshop run by actors trained by Shakespeare and Company' for war veterans in which *Julius Caesar* was used to build tolerance of intense emotions.<sup>99</sup>

Much of Sue Jennings' work also uses Shakespeare as a medium to access previous trauma through the themes of the plays, for example her 'innovatory dramatherapy project' utilising *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with patients at Broadmoor Hospital 'as a focal point for dramatherapy exploration'.<sup>100</sup> The six-months project was analysed through a number of psychological tests against which each participant was assessed with the lack of consistency of scoring being attributed to 'the multidimensional nature of assessing and treating the dynamics of any individual case'.<sup>101</sup> Despite the inconclusivity of the results the researchers

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<sup>98</sup> Bessel Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps Score: Mind, Brain and Body in the Transformation of Trauma* (London: Penguin, 2015), p. 330.

<sup>99</sup> Van der Kolk, p. 345.

<sup>100</sup> Sue Jennings, John D. McGinley and Margaret Orr, 'Masking and Unmasking: Dramatherapy with offender patients, in *Dramatherapy: Theory and Practice Volume 3* ed. by Sue Jennings (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 83-112 (p. 83).

<sup>101</sup> Jennings, McGinley and Orr, p. 97.

asserted that ‘there was no doubt from all concerned that there had been an improvement in self-image both individually and collectively’.<sup>102</sup> Jennings acknowledges the way in which using text based drama, such as Shakespeare, serves as ‘a means of dramatic distancing’, allowing dramatherapy clients to explore themes in their own lives from a safe vantage point.<sup>103</sup> Brenda Meldrum writes that Jennings ‘believes that the roots of dramatherapy lie in the theatre and not in the clinic’ and this is borne out by Jennings’ own publications and interviews, many of which heavily feature Shakespeare.<sup>104</sup>

Jennings was also involved in organising the Royal Shakespeare Company performances at Broadmoor Hospital 1989-1991, about which *Shakespeare comes to Broadmoor* was written.<sup>105</sup> This edited collection combines recollections from staff, actors, patients and others connected with the ambitious project to host professional productions of four Shakespeare plays inside a secure psychiatric hospital. Murray Cox was the Consultant Psychotherapist at the Hospital from 1970 until his death in 1997 and wrote extensively on forensic psychotherapy, authoring *Structuring the Therapeutic Process*, and co-authoring *Shakespeare as Prompter* and *Mutative Metaphors in Psychotherapy*.<sup>106</sup> In *Shakespeare as Prompter* Cox and Thielgaard wrote ‘of particular importance to

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<sup>102</sup> Jennings, McGinley and Orr, p. 110.

<sup>103</sup> Sue Jennings, ‘Therapeutic journeys through *King Lear*’, in *Dramatherapy: Theory and Practice Volume 2* ed. by Sue Jennings (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 4-18 (p. 17).

<sup>104</sup> Brenda Meldrum, ‘On “Being the thing I am” An Inquiry into the Therapeutic Aspects of Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*’, in *Handbook of Inquiry in the Arts Therapies: One River, Many Currents* ed. by Helen Payne (London and Bristol, Pennsylvania: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1993), pp. 68-78 (p. 6); Author interview with Sue Jennings (Wells, Somerset, 19 October 2016).

<sup>105</sup> Sue Jennings, ‘Prologue: Personal Experience’, in *Dramatherapy and Social Theatre: Necessary Dialogues* ed. by Sue Jennings (Hove: Routledge, 2009), p. 1-14 (p. 7); Murray Cox (ed.), *Shakespeare comes to Broadmoor: The actors are come hither* (London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1992).

<sup>106</sup> Murray Cox, *Structuring the Therapeutic Process: Compromise with Chaos* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1988); Murray Cox and Alice Theilgaard, *Shakespeare as Prompter: The Amending Imagination and the Therapeutic Process* (London and Bristol, Pennsylvania: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1994); Murray Cox and Alice Theilgaard, *Mutative Metaphors in Psychotherapy: The Aeolian Mode* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1997).

Shakespeare's paraclinical precision is the range of different ways in which people relate' and much of the book focuses on the extent to which Shakespeare's psychological understanding is evidenced through his characterisation.<sup>107</sup> They argue that the characters can be used as prompts within the psychotherapy process with patients, particularly those who may initially be resistant to engagement. My research within prisons was approved by the National Research Committee partly to explore the potential for Shakespeare to be a precursor to participants engaging in therapy.<sup>108</sup>

*Mutative Metaphors in Psychotherapy* cites Gaston Bachelard's quotation 'but the image has touched the depths before it stirs the surface' as the central theme of their Aeolian Mode, in which the patient is able to be freed from the restrictive legacy of their past through narration.<sup>109</sup> The metaphors within Shakespeare are explored as pivotal to these opportunities through the 'dramatic distancing' Jennings records and which resonate throughout this thesis, allowing an individual to use the words of a character when they struggle to articulate their own experiences and therefore to reflect through that lens. As Brody, a member of Emergency Shakespeare, with a history of mental health issues, explains:

I can see why it's so easy to get caught up in the parts you play. As I am learning with Shakespeare so much of it is relatable or identifiable but you have to really break it down and feel it to be able to truly understand it.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Cox and Theilgaard, *Shakespeare as Prompter*, p. 232.

<sup>108</sup> Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service National Research Committee approval, Reference 2018-065 (granted 14 March 2018, unpublished).

<sup>109</sup> Cox and Theilgaard, *Mutative Metaphors in Psychotherapy*, p. xiii citing Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*.

<sup>110</sup> Brody, Emergency Shakespeare, *Othello Diary* (unpublished, August 2020).

For many, the opportunity to reflect through a character allows them to at once explore that constructed role and also their own connection to the embedded emotions.

### Criminal Justice System

The prison system within England and Wales is structured differently from other countries and a brief description is necessary to ensure clarity and understanding, both operationally and culturally. There were 79,164 adults incarcerated as of 23 October 2020, 75,913 in the male estate and 3,251 in the female estate. Youth custody figures are less readily available but there were an estimated 859 young people in custody each month in 2019.<sup>111</sup> The adult male estate has four security categories:

**Category A** - Prisoners whose escape would be highly dangerous to the public or the police or the security of the State and for whom the aim must be to make escape impossible.

**Category B** - Prisoners for whom the very highest conditions of security are not necessary but for whom escape must be made very difficult.

**Category C** - Prisoners who cannot be trusted in open conditions but who do not have the resources and will to make a determined escape attempt.

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<sup>111</sup> Ministry of Justice, *Prison Population Figures: 2020*, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/prison-population-figures-2020> [accessed 24 October 2020]; Ministry of Justice, *Youth Justice Statistics 2018/19*, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/862078/youth-justice-statistics-bulletin-march-2019.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/862078/youth-justice-statistics-bulletin-march-2019.pdf) [accessed 24 October 2020].

**Category D** - Prisoners who present a low risk; can reasonably be trusted in open conditions and for whom open conditions are appropriate.<sup>112</sup>

There are prisons to accommodate each individual security category, although Category A prisons also house Category B inmates and when a person is re-categorised there is often a significant delay in their being moved to a lower security institution, meaning that there are often mixed categories in many male prisons. Those people convicted of sexual offences are generally detained either in specifically designated prisons or Vulnerable Prisoner Units (VPUs), segregated from the main prison population.<sup>113</sup> VPUs also house those at risk from the general population for other reasons such as the nature of their crime, severe mental health issues or those who worked within the criminal justice sector prior to conviction. The adult female estate has four security categories but these are not the same as the male estate and in practice the highest category in use is 'restricted status' with the majority being categorised simply as 'open conditions' or 'closed conditions'.<sup>114</sup> Given the relatively low numbers of incarcerated women, multiple categories are usually accommodated within one prison.

The beneficial effects of creativity for those incarcerated are widely acknowledged by the Ministry of Justice, organisations connected with the prison service and academics. Dame Sally Coates, in her influential 2016 report, cited the importance of

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<sup>112</sup> Gabriella Garton Grimwood, *Categorisation of prisoners in the UK: Briefing Paper Number 07437* (London: House of Common Library, 29 December 2015), p. 4.

<sup>113</sup> Carol McNaughton Nicholls and Stephen Webster, *The separated location of prisoners with sexual convictions: Research on the benefits and risks* (HMPPS Analytical Summary, 2018), [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/749149/separated-location-prisoners-with-sexual-convictions-report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/749149/separated-location-prisoners-with-sexual-convictions-report.pdf) [accessed 24 October 2020].

<sup>114</sup> Garton Grimwood, p. 9.



greater provision of high-quality creative arts provision, and Personal and Social Development (PSD) courses. Both improve self-knowledge, develop self-confidence and therefore help tackle reoffending.<sup>115</sup>

This report was directly related to the changes in the way prison funding can be utilised and the introduction of the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) within Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Services (HMPPS) to enable Governors to engage non-core educational providers for activities such as music and drama sessions.<sup>116</sup> The combination of the Prison Education Framework (PEF) in 2018 and the DPS in 2019 was intended to 'enable governors to commission bespoke education in their own establishments', although the reality of the implementation has been problematic with accessibility and functionality issues delaying tender processes throughout 2019-20.<sup>117</sup>

A number of issues were highlighted in Angela Sanders' review of *Leadership in Prison Education* which identified the need for consistency of development for leaders but also acknowledged the reduced budgets some establishments had suffered as part of the PEF implementation whilst the pressure to deliver tangible outcomes remained unchanged.<sup>118</sup> Being able to measure the intermediate outcomes of commissioned

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<sup>115</sup> Dame Sally Coates, *Unlocking Potential: A review of education in prison* (Ministry of Justice, 2016), p. ii, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/524013/education-review-report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524013/education-review-report.pdf) [accessed 2 September 2020].

<sup>116</sup> Procurement for Prison Education, <https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/procurement-for-prison-education-dynamic-purchasing-system> [accessed 2 September 2020].

<sup>117</sup> Ministry of Justice, *Education and Employment Strategy* (May 2018), p. 13, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/710406/education-and-employment-strategy-2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/710406/education-and-employment-strategy-2018.pdf) [accessed 2 September 2020].

<sup>118</sup> Angela Sanders, *Leadership in Prison Education: Meeting the challenges of the new system* (London: The Further Education Trust for Leadership, 2020), p. 28-31.

interventions was considered significant enough to be allocated HMPPS funding for the development of the Intermediate Outcomes Measurement Tool, which was published in draft format in March 2019 alongside the research report into this field.<sup>119</sup> The intention was to move from anecdotal evidence to more formalised data collation across the topics of personal agency, wellbeing, impulsivity, interpersonal trust, motivation to change, hope, resilience and practical problems.<sup>120</sup> Initial piloting suggested validity in the usage of this as an appraisal tool if used at the start and end of interventions, although caveated that ‘until further testing is done, any results based on the instrument should be treated with caution.’<sup>121</sup> Due to the timing of this being made available (after both of the permanent theatre companies had been established) and the urged caution regarding the results, it was not appropriate to use this tool with my own research, although I would be keen to do so for future research projects within the carceral system. I utilised the topics suggested by this Tool in post-performance debriefs with the theatre companies with markedly positive responses relating to confidence, friendships with other inmates, a focus on the future and a desire to create a positive change in themselves.<sup>122</sup>

As well as the Ministry of Justice commissioned research into prison arts, the importance of creativity regularly features in reports from third sector organisations such as Prison Reform Trust (PRT), Prisoners’ Education Trust (PET), Prisoner Learning Alliance (PLA) and National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance (NCJAA).<sup>123</sup> The most recent *Bromley Briefing*

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<sup>119</sup> Maguire, et al.

<sup>120</sup> Maguire, et al., p. 26.

<sup>121</sup> Maguire, et al., p. 40.

<sup>122</sup> Debriefs of The Gallowfield Players following performances of *Julius Caesar* (June 2019) and *The Merchant* (January 2020) and Emergency Shakespeare following performances of *Macbeth* (September 2019).

<sup>123</sup> Prison Reform Trust website, <http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/>, Prisoners Education Trust website, <https://www.prisonerseducation.org.uk/>, National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance website, <https://www.artsincriminaljustice.org.uk/> [accessed 2 September 2020].

cited the importance of purposeful activity to aid rehabilitation during custodial sentences and the ways in which ‘arts, and informal learning [...] allow people to engage and progress during their sentence’.<sup>124</sup> The PET and PLA encourage dialogue and research through publications, conferences and seminars to foster collaborations, partnerships and positive outcomes for those incarcerated. The PET 2019 report on active citizenship stated

We believe in creating a space in the prison environment where talents and qualities of people are central and prisoners can feel recognised as human beings, work on a positive self-image, develop their talents and strengthen their relationships with others.<sup>125</sup>

My in-prison theatre companies were founded on these principles and their longevity has enabled these spaces to be firmly established both during rehearsals and outside of formal engagement. Creative projects are frequently conducive to developing those talents and relationships, as the NCJAA noted in their 2019 report which listed multiple benefits including that ‘participation in arts activities enables individuals to begin to redefine themselves’, positive engagement, self-management and individual autonomy.<sup>126</sup> These benefits summarised the research from an earlier collaboration between Northumbria

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<sup>124</sup> Matthew Halliday, *Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile: Winter 2019* (Prison Reform Trust), p. 49, <http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Bromley%20Briefings/Winter%202019%20Factfile%20web.pdf> [accessed 2 September 2020].

<sup>125</sup> Katy Oglethorpe, Amand Deweale and Gino Campenaerts, *Citizens Inside: A Guide to Creating Active Participation in Prisons* (November 2019), p. 5, <https://www.prisonerseducation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Citizens-Inside-A-guide-to-creating-active-participation-in-prisons.pdf> [accessed 2 September 2020].

<sup>126</sup> Jessica Plant and Dora Dixon, *Enhancing arts and culture in the criminal justice system: A partnership approach* (National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance, Clunks, June 2019), p. 5, <https://www.artsincriminaljustice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Enhancing-arts-and-culture-in-the-criminal-justice-system.pdf> [accessed 21 June 2020].

University, Bath Spa University and The Arts Alliance which ‘clearly indicated that arts projects can contribute to an individual’s journey to desistance’.<sup>127</sup>

Two of the most well-established prison theatre companies are Clean Break (founded in 1979 by two incarcerated women) and Geese Theatre (established in the UK in 1987 following the model of Geese Theatre US which began in 1980).<sup>128</sup> A number of academic volumes exist on the specific topic of prison theatre, with James Thompson and Michael Balfour’s edited collections laying the foundations for wider interest in the topic over the last two decades.<sup>129</sup> Thompson’s volume aimed to address what he identified as a lack of analysis of the ‘real role’ of prison theatre through provision of a forum for practitioners to explore ‘theory, description, guidance, history and analysis’.<sup>130</sup> At the time of editing this edition Thompson was Director of Theatre in Prisons and Probation (TIPP), an organisation affiliated with Manchester University.<sup>131</sup> This publication contained a reflection from Cox about the Broadmoor Shakespeare project, the legacy of which was the ‘establishment of dramatherapy as a professional enterprise within the broad range of psychotherapeutic initiatives’, the introduction of regular visiting theatre companies for performance, discussions and workshop facilitation and an initiative involving Geese

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<sup>127</sup> Charlotte Bilby, Laura Caulfield and Louise Ridley, *Re-imagining Futures: Exploring arts interventions and the process of desistance* (The Arts Alliance, 2013), p. 7, <http://www.artsevidence.org.uk/media/uploads/re-imagining-futures-research-report-final.pdf> [accessed 2 September 2020].

<sup>128</sup> Clean Break website, [https://www.cleanbreak.org.uk/about/#:~:text=40%20years%20ago%2C%20Clean%20Break,of%20the%20criminal%20justice%20system](https://www.cleanbreak.org.uk/about/#:~:text=40%20years%20ago%2C%20Clean%20Break,of%20the%20criminal%20justice%20system;); Geese Theatre website, <http://www.geese.co.uk/about/our-history#:~:text=Since%201987%20the%20company%20has,by%20Clark%20Baim%2C%20in%201987.> [accessed 2 September 2020].

<sup>129</sup> Thompson (ed.), *Prison Theatre*; Balfour (ed.), *Theatre in Prison*.

<sup>130</sup> James Thompson, ‘Introduction’ in *Prison Theatre*, pp. 9-23 (p. 11).

<sup>131</sup> Theatre in Prisons and Probation, <https://www.tipp.org.uk/> [accessed 2 September 2020].

Theatre within the Young Persons Unit.<sup>132</sup> Balfour's book brought together writing from academics, practitioners, ex-prisoners and prison officers, acknowledging that the essays do not 'create a vision of the field that is complete and harmonious'.<sup>133</sup> The first chapter was an abridged reprint of Zimbardo's Stanford University Prison Experiment which was intended to further understanding of 'the basic psychological mechanisms underlying human aggression', the results of which have become infamous for the marked aggression/submission which developed amongst equals within a matter of days.<sup>134</sup> Paul Heritage's essay on his practitioner work in Brazilian prisons makes reference to an earlier project in which he worked with juvenile offenders to produce *Romeo and Juliet*, which is the subject of a separate article in another publication.<sup>135</sup>

Jonathan Shailor's *Performing New Lives* addressed a broad range of, primarily US, prison theatre but with a definite bias towards the use of Shakespeare with contributions from Laura Bates, Curt Tofteland, Jean Troustine and Shailor himself, amongst others. Shailor is an academic and prison Shakespeare practitioner with over a decade of experience facilitating theatre in Racine Correctional Institution, who edited the collection 'in part from [his] own desire to build a community of prison theatre artists'.<sup>136</sup> Those listed above are all noteworthy prison Shakespeare practitioners in the US with programmes

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<sup>132</sup> Murray Cox, 'Shakespeare and Broadmoor: Timelessness Revisited', in *Prison Theatre* ed. by Thompson, pp. 209-213.

<sup>133</sup> Balfour, 'Introduction' in *Theatre in Prison*, pp. 1-18 (p. 9).

<sup>134</sup> Craig Haney, Curtis Banks and Philip Zimbardo, A Study of Prisoners and Guards in a Simulated Prison', in *Theatre in Prison: Theory and Practice* ed. by Michael Balfour (Bristol and Portland: Intellect, 2004), pp. 19-33, documents the random allocation of 22 selected college students into roles of either 'guard' or 'prisoner' within a simulated penal environment.

<sup>135</sup> Paul Heritage, 'Real Social Ties? The Ins and Outs of Making Theatre in Brazilian Prisons in *Theatre in Prison: Theory and Practice* ed. by Michael Balfour (Bristol and Portland: Intellect, 2004), pp. 189-202 (p. 195); Paul Heritage, 'Stealing Kisses' in *Theatre in Crisis? Performance manifestos for a new century* ed. by Maria M. Delgado and Caridad Svich (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002).

<sup>136</sup> Shailor, p. 21.

ranging from solitary confinement (Bates' work with Larry Newton) to Troustine's work in Framingham women's prison.<sup>137</sup> The work of Bates, Troustine and Tofteland is documented in detail, in their own books for the first two and in Niels Herold's monograph for Tofteland's Shakespeare Behind Bars (SBB) programmes which now operate in multiple institutions across three states.<sup>138</sup> Amy Scott-Douglass' *Shakespeare Inside* addresses the work of all three, although centralises SBB within the book which explicitly aims to question Shakespeare's performative function within modern society, and is based on observation of sessions in an academic rather than practitioner capacity.<sup>139</sup> *Prison Shakespeare*, published by Rob Pensalfini in 2016, attempted to survey the history of prison Shakespeare although acknowledged the disparate nature of the work and that it 'emerged without a cohesive theoretical narrative'.<sup>140</sup> Primarily focused on Anglophone interventions but noting the proliferation of non-English speaking Shakespeare programmes in prisons across the world, this text also draws on Joe White's comments of the 'steady erosion, throughout the prison system, of opportunities for prisoners to become actively involved in the making of theatre'.<sup>141</sup> Alongside a detailed case study of Queensland Shakespeare Ensemble's Shakespeare Prison Project, which Pensalfini founded, the volume also focuses on wider issues of the claims of this type of work and the specificity of Shakespeare's 'cultural status' as a methodology of validation of the inmate experience.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Bates, *Shakespeare Saved My Life*; Troustine, *Shakespeare Behind Bars*.

<sup>138</sup> Herold, *Prison Shakespeare and the Purpose of Performance*.

<sup>139</sup> Scott-Douglass, *Shakespeare Inside*).

<sup>140</sup> Pensalfini, *Prison Shakespeare*, p. 9.

<sup>141</sup> Pensalfini, p. 11, citing Joe White, 'The Prisoner's Voice' in *Prison Theatre: Perspectives and Practices* ed. by James Thompson (London and New York: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1998), pp. 183-96 (p. 183).

<sup>142</sup> Pensalfini, p. 214.

Ashley Lucas' *Prison Theatre and the Global Crisis of Incarceration* focuses on 'why incarcerated people think theatrical collaboration enriches their lives', a publication which resulted from 6 years of international research.<sup>143</sup> Lucas' perspective is heavily politicised regarding the issue of mass incarceration and this is reflected in the lexicon used. She contrasts those incarcerated with the 'free world' and argues that those in prison are no more in need of rehabilitation and empathy than any other group of people.<sup>144</sup> My own research does not engage with the appropriateness of the levels of incarceration as that is outside of the scope of this thesis and sits instead in the realm of judicial review. Whilst Lucas is arguing that incarceration is unjust on such a scale, my perspective is more focused on the theatrical interventions post-sentencing, not in debating whether that sentencing should have taken place. She also warns that to claim theatre 'makes people free or helps them escape' is inaccurate as it does not physically do so, a perspective in which I can see the logic but which is contradicted by the opinions of many of the incarcerated actors I have worked with.<sup>145</sup> Some elements of her book resonate with my own work, such as the desire to avoid derogatory labelling and her quoting of Eduardo Galeano's assertion that 'our identity resides in action and struggle', preferring instead to use pseudonyms to protect anonymity as required.<sup>146</sup> She also predicates her work 'on the assumption that prisons are dynamic spaces where growth, learning and cultural shifts can be possible', which is true but it is important to be cognisant of the way those spaces appear to many at the outset of such work.<sup>147</sup> This thesis evidences the way in which this spatial transformation from initial

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<sup>143</sup> Ashley E. Lucas, *Prison Theatre and the Global Crisis of Incarceration* (London: Methuen Drama, 2020), p. 5.

<sup>144</sup> Lucas, p. 10.

<sup>145</sup> Lucas, p. 14.

<sup>146</sup> Lucas, p. 15.

<sup>147</sup> Lucas, p. 8.

negative connotations to positive ones takes place and the permanence with which perceptions are altered.

Space within the prison estate is carefully controlled and tightly confined and as Rob (The Gallowfield Players) describes, ‘in prison people can be very conscious of the idea of personal space’ as they spend a lot of time queuing or bottlenecked around gates.<sup>148</sup> Carceral space is a form of control, demarcated with heavy iron gates, through which the inmates can pass only with the approval of officers. Time is another form of control; they can move from one location to another only when permitted. Foucault explored the way in which space can be used to enforce dominance and submission within prisons in his book *Discipline and Punish* and other academics have written extensively on the physicality of prison space and carceral geography.<sup>149</sup> Dominique Moran, Anna Schliele, Jennifer Turner and Kimberley Peters have all written influential texts in the field.<sup>150</sup> Social power structures are complex and multi-layered and often influence how individuals and groups feel within particular spaces – who has the right to be in a space, how the power dynamic within that space functions and whose agency is dominant. True creativity requires power to be owned by those who are working creatively and collectively; it cannot flourish in an environment of total subservience to another’s agenda. This is evidenced by my theatre companies within the English prison system where:

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<sup>148</sup> Rob, The Gallowfield Players, rehearsal diary *Julius Caesar* (unpublished, 2019).

<sup>149</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*.

<sup>150</sup> Dominique Moran, *Carceral Geography: Spaces and Practices of Incarceration* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015); Jennifer Turner, *The Prison Boundary: Between Society and Carceral Space* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); D. Moran and A Schliele, *Carceral Spatiality: Dialogues Between Geography and Criminology* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); J Turner and K Peters (eds.), *Carceral Mobilities: Interrogating Movement in Incarceration* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017).



all involved have a sense of ownership of [the theatre company], a possessiveness over a beautiful organism that grows in unexpected and wondrous ways. There is a sense of responsibility bestowed on everyone involved to act in a certain manner; to promote the best 'us' we can be.<sup>151</sup>

Ownership and incumbent responsibility is a topic frequently raised in the ethnographic study of my theatre companies and is a central theme which features across the thesis, allowing those involved to develop a positive identity from a sense of belonging to a community.

## Homelessness

Gaining accurate figures for the number of people homeless is extremely difficult as 'homelessness is recorded differently in each nation, and because many people do not show up in official statistics at all'.<sup>152</sup> Crisis wrote this in relation to UK data but the problem of accuracy of figures is exponentially worse if we consider homelessness on a global scale. In England alone Shelter estimates there to be in excess of 280,000 and internationally this figure is estimated to be over 100 million with 1.6 billion lacking adequate housing.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Michael, The Gallowfield Players, *Experiencing Freedom within the High Security Estate* (unpublished, March 2019), p. 2.

<sup>152</sup> Crisis website, <https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/about-homelessness/> [accessed 3 September 2020].

<sup>153</sup> Shelter press release '280,000 people in England are homeless, with thousands more at risk (18 December 2019), [https://england.shelter.org.uk/media/press\\_releases/articles/280,000\\_people\\_in\\_england\\_are\\_homeless,\\_with\\_thousands\\_more\\_at\\_risk](https://england.shelter.org.uk/media/press_releases/articles/280,000_people_in_england_are_homeless,_with_thousands_more_at_risk) [accessed 3 September 2020]; Global World Cup Foundation, 'Global homelessness statistics', <https://homelessworldcup.org/homelessness-statistics/> [accessed 3 September 2020].

Homelessness is thought likely to increase in the UK and other countries as a result of COVID-19 and the economic impacts of the pandemic and it is known that those who experience it 'can suffer from low self-confidence, self-efficacy and agency'.<sup>154</sup> There are a number of theatre companies who work primarily with people who have experienced homelessness with one of the longest running being Cardboard Citizens, founded in London in 1991 by Adrian Jackson.<sup>155</sup> Jackson remains at the helm today, making extensive use of Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed in making theatre for and with people who have experienced homelessness.<sup>156</sup> Nadine Holdsworth contextualises:

theatre would seem to be an irrelevance for those struggling from homelessness and statelessness but Cardboard Citizens combines a theatrical and social agenda to address citizenship-related issues for the homeless, refugees and asylum seekers through its use of Forum Theatre.<sup>157</sup>

Their repertoire has been extensive, from devised pieces to Shakespeare and a critically acclaimed production of *Cathy* (a modernisation of *Cathy Come Home*) in 2018. Michael Dobson reviewed their politicised version of *Pericles* as having the effect of identifying 'Shakespeare as a tool of oppressive state apparatus' within the construct that the audience were asylum seekers watching the play to 'contribute to [their] assimilation into British culture'.<sup>158</sup> Jackson himself stated 'I really like *Pericles*, it's so flawed' when

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<sup>154</sup> Mandie Iveson and Flora Cornish, 'Rebuilding bridges: homeless people's views on the role of vocational and educational activities in their everyday lives', *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 26:3 (2016), 253-67, (pp. 254).

<sup>155</sup> Cardboard Citizens website.

<sup>156</sup> Cardboard Citizens website.

<sup>157</sup> Nadine Holdsworth, 'Citizenship' in *Performance Studies*, p. 135.

<sup>158</sup> Michael Dobson, 'Shakespeare Performances in England, 2003' in *Shakespeare Survey (57): Macbeth and Its Afterlife*, ed. by Peter Holland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 258-89 (p. 272).

discussing the decision to interweave this rarely performed Shakespeare play with migrant stories gathered during research for the production.<sup>159</sup> Their *Timon of Athens* failed to impress Dobson a few years later where he described the most interesting element being the annoyance of ‘impecunious retired academics’ being asked to wear coloured stickers denoting their income levels.<sup>160</sup> In contrast Sonia Massai applauded the way in which the actors’ own accents ‘effectively punctured the patronising rhetoric peddled by the facilitators’ in the motivational workshop setting of the production.<sup>161</sup> The academic discourse surrounding Cardboard Citizens is focused heavily on the artistic and social-activist impacts of their work, rather than the social or personal effects on those participating in the creation of work, which contrasts with the media portrayal of Acting on Impulse analysed in Chapter 4.<sup>162</sup> My work seeks to find the delicate balance between the artistic and the social impacts of such work, recognising the talents of those involved as well as the benefits from their involvement. Building on Gilles Deleuze’s notion of difference as a productive element of individuation, my research does not seek to homogenise those who are different but it does challenge the marginalisation which results from such differences.<sup>163</sup>

Manuel Muñoz-Bellerin and Nuria Cordero-Ramos are two of the few academics to focus on the social implications for theatre with those experiencing homelessness, drawing

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<sup>159</sup> Adrian Jackson, interview with the author, London (16 December 2016).

<sup>160</sup> Michael Dobson, ‘Shakespeare Performances in England, 2006’, in *Shakespeare Survey (60): Theatres for Shakespeare* ed. by Peter Holland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 284-319, p. 314.

<sup>161</sup> Sonia Massai, *Shakespeare’s Accents: Voicing Identity in Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), p. 45.

<sup>162</sup> Acting on Impulse, established 2007 to give homeless people a voice through theatre and film, <https://www.actonimpulse.net/> [accessed 18 July 2020].

<sup>163</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Difference et Repetition*, trans. by Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 28.

on work in Seville in their 2020 article.<sup>164</sup> This article focused on the creation of devised work with people experiencing homelessness, using both individual and group interventions to work towards a performance. The ‘participants play themselves and put a spotlight on their stories, thereby exercising certain social and political rights’.<sup>165</sup> The article focuses on the methodology of their work, which is heavily influenced by social work training, undertaking ‘autobiography and one-on-one sessions’ to develop trust and encourage participants to share their narratives.<sup>166</sup> The culmination of the project was bringing together the marginalised group and a wider community to share a performance which addressed the issues of ‘discrimination and inequality’ before audience and performers engaged in dialogue about the topics highlighted.<sup>167</sup> The researcher-identified benefits of applied theatre allowing:

participants to gain a great awareness of their own situation, as well as those of the other members of the group, thereby encouraging them to engage (in the Foucauldian sense) of their complex circumstances

begins to suggest a sense that their view of the power balance between participant and social worker is an unequal one.<sup>168</sup> There is no sense that they saw themselves as equal with the participants, more a colonial perspective that their involvement somehow improved the lives of what Todd Landon Barnes describes as ‘self-defeating, self-marginalizing, failed

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<sup>164</sup> Manuel Muñoz-Bellerin and Nuria Cordero-Ramos, ‘The Role of Applied Theatre in Social Work: Creative Interventions with Homeless Individuals’, *British Journal of Social Work*, 50 (May 2020), pp. 1611-29.

<sup>165</sup> Muñoz-Bellerin and Cordero-Ramos, pp. 1624.

<sup>166</sup> Muñoz-Bellerin and Cordero-Ramos, pp. 1620.

<sup>167</sup> Muñoz-Bellerin and Cordero-Ramos, pp. 1624.

<sup>168</sup> Muñoz-Bellerin and Cordero-Ramos, pp. 1625.

individuals' for whom the arts held some redemptive power.<sup>169</sup> This redemptive narrative is problematic and undermines the validity of the marginalised person, suggesting that in some way they need to be healed or improved by those who facilitate Shakespeare with them. It is touched upon throughout the thesis and examined in detail in Chapter 4 and a consciousness of the social injustice of this perspective has influenced my own practice in which equality of participation is central.

Embodying this equality is the work of Théâtre du Bout du Monde which combined professional actors with people experiencing homelessness in a French version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 2010. Isabelle Schwartz-Gastine wrote of the project which aimed 'to reach people who otherwise feel excluded from society for personal, medical or social reasons' and which was the culmination of a series of workshops held in local communities.<sup>170</sup> Her account is that as well as encouraging pro-social behaviours and offering the cast the opportunity to find relief from the challenges of their usual existence it made 'a valuable contribution to the already rich understanding of the play'.<sup>171</sup> Through 'adjust[ing] the staging to their participants' the directors were able to accommodate the abilities of the participants whilst relying on the professional actors to offer on-stage support with lines if needed.<sup>172</sup> Vignettes from rehearsals and the performances were interspersed with backstories of those such as Emmanuel Peironnet and Pascale Rico who progressed from being workshop participants to employed professionally as a result of the

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<sup>169</sup> Barnes, p. 24.

<sup>170</sup> Isabelle Schwartz-Gastine, 'Performing A Midsummer Night's Dream with the Homeless (and Others) in Paris', *Borrowers and Lenders*, 8:2 (October 2013), <https://openjournals.libs.uga.edu/borrowers/article/view/2236> (p. 2).

<sup>171</sup> Schwartz-Gastine, p. 2.

<sup>172</sup> Schwartz-Gastine, p. 5.

work they undertook.<sup>173</sup> The project appeared to draw on the skills of all involved and to avoid patronising or creating a sense of inferiority, according to Gastine-Schwartz, although it is noted that much like Cox's book on Shakespeare in Broadmoor there was limited primary evidence cited from participants to substantiate these claims. Her affirmation that 'this is what can happen when the director believes in the ability of the cast to go beyond what they had thought were limitations: it was a dream come true' was bold and suggestive of immense benefits to those involved but is not supported by any primary evidence.<sup>174</sup>

This thesis is structured according to spatial dynamics as a way of distancing my work from the siloed cataloguing of marginalised groups which is prevalent in existing research. This allows me to develop the principle of equal participation between people marginalised for differing reasons and to remove the seeming need for a primary marginalisation marker (i.e. that a person either has learning disabilities or mental health issues or lived experience of prison or of homelessness, when in reality many people experience more than one of these). Instead the spatial dynamic allows me to consider people as individuals with their own complexities, categorising their experiences rather than their existence. Within the chapters there is still overlap as people are not easily contained within boxes of any kind, and their experiences bleed across spaces they inhabit. This structure allows me to develop my thesis according to spaces and times rather than people, acknowledging that we grow and develop based on our experiences and our circumstances.

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<sup>173</sup> Schwartz-Gastine, p. 4 and p. 7.

<sup>174</sup> Schwartz-Gastine, p. 8.

Chapter 1 focuses on the creative spaces of rehearsals and workshops, where Shakespeare is explored by groups who often previously felt that his work was not for them, building on the concept of space as a socially constructed entity which is moulded by the activity undertaken by the inhabitants. I consider the intersectionality of space, time and power to demonstrate the way in which long-term interventions can develop positive autonomy. I use the term positive autonomy as a definition that encompasses the freedoms developed within these programmes whilst acknowledging that total autonomy may not be possible or desirable for people with severe disorders or who are convicted of criminal activities. Underpinned by the principles of trauma-informed methodology, as defined by SAMHSA, I demonstrate the potential for emotional growth and communication development offered by the utilisation of Shakespeare's cultural capital and his multi-faceted characters.<sup>175</sup> My ethnographic research demonstrated that the work created a sense of community with its attendant emotional support network which thrived both in and outside of rehearsals. As Brody articulated, Emergency Shakespeare is 'a wonderful opportunity to express myself in a different way' and the extent to which his communication skills developed during the first six months was significant.<sup>176</sup> The element of temporality is important as it is through long-term interventions that significant developments can take place, where there is the time for mutuality and trust to develop and for peer support to become a central tenet of the work. A large proportion of creative work is focused on short-term projects although increasingly funding bodies are realising the benefits of support in excess of 24 months to enable development of semi-permanent groups.<sup>177</sup> My research findings support this longevity of

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<sup>175</sup> SAMHSA's *Concept of Trauma and Guidance for A Trauma-Informed Approach*.

<sup>176</sup> Brody, Emergency Shakespeare, *Macbeth* rehearsal diary (unpublished, August 2019).

<sup>177</sup> Esme Fairburn Foundation states the average length of their grants is 33 months and only 43% is now restricted to project costs with the remainder being available for core costs or unrestricted usage, <https://esmeefairbairn.org.uk/arts> [accessed 8 September 2020].

project as being a key component in the potential impact across all of the marginalised communities I worked with, drawing on an evidence base which spans short, medium and long-term interventions.

Chapter 2 is located in the realms of performance spaces where combining the artistic endeavours of marginalised people with the cultural capital of Shakespeare creates heterotopic potential. This concept of heterotopia has been developed by Marin, Hetherington and, recently, Tompkins in *Theatre's Heterotopias* where she outlines her methodology for isolating the heterotopia within a production.<sup>178</sup> My definition of heterotopias borrows much from Tompkins' methodology in terms of the constructed space of the theatrical intervention (whether in a theatre or other location). This constructed space is the one of the play-world, asking the audience to suspend their disbelief and engage with the world they see enacted before them regardless of the level of realism ascribed by the scenery, props and costuming of the production. However, in the context of marginalised groups engaging with theatre the abstracted space is instead an abstracted concept; drawing on Bourdieu's notion of 'cultural capital'.<sup>179</sup> The chapter considers both the demarcated spaces of traditional theatres and appropriated spaces, often repurposed from primary functions as school halls, chapels and visits halls. There is clinical research which suggests that 'recognition of personally familiar places may share neural mechanisms with episodic memory retrieval'.<sup>180</sup> Episodic memory retrieval 'includes the sensory, conceptual, and emotional experiences that define an event', suggesting that when a

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<sup>178</sup> Marin, *Utopics*; Hetherington, *The Badlands of Modernity*; Tompkins, *Theatre's Heterotopias*.

<sup>179</sup> Bourdieu, 'The Forms of Capital', p. 244.

<sup>180</sup> Motoaki Sugiura, Nadim J. Shah, Karl Zilles, and Gereon R. Fink 'Cortical Representations of Personally Familiar Objects and Places: Functional Organization of the Human Posterior Cingulate Cortex', *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*, 17:2 (2015), 183-98 (p. 183).



person recognises a familiar space they will automatically trigger emotional and conceptual remembrances from within that space.<sup>181</sup> Formal theatre spaces can add a sense of cultural validity to marginalised performances through what they represent, but can also be intimidating to some attendees in relation to the signifiers embedded within their primary function.

In contrast, appropriated spaces retain a differing set of signifiers pertaining to their predominant purpose which can be alternately beneficial or prejudicial for those attending a performance. They may have emotional connections, positive or negative, which are difficult to set aside during a theatre production. However, in both types of location there is the possibility for the performance to allow the audience to see the work 'as an alternative way of doing things' in which marginalised people are applauded for their artistic skill rather than judged for their otherness.<sup>182</sup> The appropriation of Shakespeare by marginalised groups, as this chapter evidences, enables the participants to be seen differently, appreciated for their artistic abilities rather than ostracised for their differences from mainstream society. As one audience member described 'I forgot I was in a prison and was lost in the play', evidencing the way in which this heterotopic combination enabled perceptions to be altered.<sup>183</sup>

Chapter 3 considers the antithesis of public displays and focuses instead on private and often solitary reflection on Shakespeare. Drawing on examples ranging from the internment

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<sup>181</sup> Arthur P. Shimamura, 'Episodic retrieval and the cortical binding of relational activity', *Cognitive, Affective and Behavioural Neuroscience*, 11:3 (2011), 277-91, (p. 277).

<sup>182</sup> Hetherington, p. viii.

<sup>183</sup> Invited audience feedback, The Gallowfield Players, *Julius Caesar* (June 2019).

camps of the second world war to modern experiences of incarceration and the additional isolation forced by the global COVID-19 pandemic, this chapter examines the way in which Shakespeare can be seen as a resource from which to develop resilience and personal agency. Michael described ‘I reflect the beauty of what has been achieved, the taste of freedom that is so sweet – in pages and escape the conflicted reality which is my life’ when writing about how he coped with the enforced isolation in prison during COVID-19.<sup>184</sup> It provided ‘a tether to the Gallowfield Players’ community’ which helped him to deal with the mental health impacts of total separation from family and friends during this period, enabling him to draw on the knowledge that the work would recommence in the future.<sup>185</sup>

Drawing on Lefebvre and Deleuze’s work on reflection, repetition and difference which I articulate in the introduction to this chapter, my research findings evidence the way in which these reflections can provide emotional and cultural sustenance during times of prolonged isolation and/or trauma. Bourdieu’s concept of ‘habitus’ applies to Shakespeare as a reflective source.<sup>186</sup> He argues that regardless of attempts to enforce systemic rules ‘the *habitus* inevitably reappears’ and for many of the examples in this chapter Shakespeare was a key component in their development of a resilient habitus which sustained them through challenging times.<sup>187</sup> It offers a mechanism by which those marginalised can pierce the surface of otherness and use this literary mirror of the imagination through which to reflect their own place in the world.<sup>188</sup> The evidence is that they drew from it a sense of continuity; they were able to mentally and emotionally connect with the theatrical

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<sup>184</sup> Michael, The Gallowfield Players, *Thoughts on reflective space* (unpublished, September 2020).

<sup>185</sup> Michael, *Thoughts on reflective space*.

<sup>186</sup> Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*.

<sup>187</sup> Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, p. 20.

<sup>188</sup> Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 182.

engagements and creative experiences which preceded this time of significant dislocation from the community and from that to reassure themselves that this dislocation would be temporary. The sense of connection to a cultural history, identified as key to trauma-informed practices, is provided by Shakespeare for some during times of duress or segregation from their normal lives. I explore the ways this is differentiated when the reflection is personal and individual compared to when it also contains reflections of group activities undertaken, such as was the case with the prison theatre companies during COVID-19. The memory of the collective trust was embedded within those in the theatre companies and provided them with additional social sustenance during challenging times, which went beyond Shakespeare's text to the support network of the group.

Chapter 4 considers the way in which media *presents* content of marginalised people engaging with Shakespeare, considering the term *presenting* both in terms of making it visible and also making it feel immediate and relevant to the social context of modern society. Against a backdrop of media and social media serving as portals to the world for many, and with increasing digitisation of theatre and other artistic events, there is an ever-growing place for media depictions of artistic endeavours. However, as Todd Landon Barnes warns, the media presence can be exploitative, manipulative and driven by a commercial agenda.<sup>189</sup> It is imperative to consider whose voices are being heard in the media narration; often it is not those who are marginalised. Instead there is the inherent risk that it becomes an 'unwelcome intrusion. It is easy for trust to become dependency, for generosity to be interpreted as patronage, for interest in others to be experienced as the gaze of

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<sup>189</sup> Barnes, p. 14.

surveillance'.<sup>190</sup> Through analysis of differing forms of media I identify best practices for mediated narration of these types of practices. I plot these forms on a spectrum from those most removed (news coverage) to those most closely linked to the actual practice (materials created by the participants themselves). Wherever possible the content should be defined and portrayed by or in conjunction with the marginalised people, ensuring that their perspective has centrality and the mediated output discourages manipulation or colonial undertones. Whilst frequently the voices foregrounded are not those of the community this does not have to be the case and through a combination of allowing people to develop their resilience, confidence and sense of autonomy it is possible to enable creative activism where those marginalised become centralised and their own perspectives can be shared, and more importantly, listened to.

Applied theatre is a field which continues to grow and diversify in response to the contemporary socio-political environment and this thesis contributes to this diversification through opening up new avenues of dialogue. Drawing together a diverse range of research across multiple groups both nationally and internationally, combining existing academic discourse, theoretical concepts, robust research as practice and detailed knowledge of policy considerations, this is a unique perspective on applied Shakespeare. It is hoped that the legacy of this work will inspire further research and open up accessibility for those wishing to engage with creative arts as well as becoming the foundation for policy developments and enhancements across the sector.

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<sup>190</sup> Nicholson, *Applied Drama*, p. 166.

## Chapter 1: Creative Spaces

Whilst the public face of theatre is the performative space where the audience engage with the work of the actors (analysed in Chapter 2), it is the rehearsal space where many of the most creative elements occur. As Gay McAuley writes in *Space in Performance*, rehearsal space is 'often ignored' in the consideration of theatrical spaces as it is 'part of the hidden domain of theatre production but can have a significant impact on the final production'.<sup>1</sup>

The rehearsal space is predominantly experienced only by those working in it and so is less open to the analysis of academic researchers. Texts such as *Performance and the Politics of Space* and *Theatrical Heterotopias* contribute significantly to the development of the lexicon of theatrical space but notably focus on the intersection of theatrical endeavors and audiences.<sup>2</sup>

This chapter considers the effect of working in this hidden domain on those who use Shakespeare to help them find a method of communication which may previously have eluded them. My work is not focused on the way in which rehearsal space is used by professional actors but on groups of marginalised people who develop an artistic outlet through the characters and narratives of his work. For many people who are marginalised by society this outlet may give them an opportunity to speak and to be heard by society (two things not necessarily synonymous), to be 'given a voice, no longer shadows in the

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<sup>1</sup>Gay McAuley, *Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theatre* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1999) p. 70.

<sup>2</sup>Erika Fischer-Lichte and Benjamin Wihstutz (eds.), *Performance and the Politics of Space: Theatre and Topology* (New York: Routledge, 2013); Joanne Tompkins, *Theatre's Heterotopias: Performance and the Cultural Politics of Space* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

daylight but people once more'.<sup>3</sup> Drawing on Lefebvre's concept of conceived spaces and the way in which spaces respond to the activities within them, I demonstrate that engaging with Shakespeare's work allows people to experience this social space differently to its usual form.<sup>4</sup> Subtly nuanced alterations can occur with even the shortest of interventions but repetition within a space enables development of its 'qualitative, fluid and dynamic' qualities which persist beyond the ending of the activity.<sup>5</sup> The case studies examined in this chapter are focused on two groups of people: those with learning disabilities and those incarcerated, using a number of different projects to prove that this creativity facilitates effective communication, positive autonomy and emotional growth.



1. Emergency Shakespeare rehearsing *Macbeth*, HMP Stafford (July 2019), Photo: Monica Cru-Hall

<sup>3</sup> Michael, The Gallowfield Players, verbal feedback (July 2019).

<sup>4</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Malden, Oxford and Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), p. 38-39.

<sup>5</sup> Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 42.

Time is a crucial element of this chapter; the majority of arts projects in community settings or with marginalised groups are short-term – typically a workshop or series of them, perhaps an intense period of work to create a production within a few weeks. A large proportion of funding is specifically for short-term projects with Arts Council stipulations that ‘you should not rely on receiving support year on year from Project Grants funding to deliver your core work’.<sup>6</sup> However, my research demonstrates the added efficacy of those interventions which offer an element of permanence. This longevity allows emotional growth and positive autonomy to be developed more rigorously and embedded into the lives of those involved. Rehearsal spaces allow participants the opportunity for emotional development as a result of using Shakespeare in a creative manner. Mark Rylance spoke of how the ‘plays created *catharsis* or healing or transformation’ when describing the Shakespeare project within Broadmoor High Security Hospital.<sup>7</sup> Whilst the plays can certainly have this effect on an audience I argue that this impact is magnified and deepened when one engages with a play to perform it in some guise. Those rehearsing a Shakespeare play will consider the emotional complexity of his characters and lines in a more prolonged and focused way than an audience watching a performance can possibly do, allowing them to use his work as a way of considering alternatives and choices for the characters and possibly for themselves which may not have previously been contemplated.

Rehearsing Shakespeare also enables the creation of positive autonomy, the development of a sense of personal freedom, whilst accepting that total autonomy may be

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<sup>6</sup> Arts Council England, *Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants: Repeat projects, ongoing overheads and salaries*, (12 February 2018), p.3, [https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Information\\_sheets\\_Repeat\\_projects\\_Project\\_grants.pdf](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Information_sheets_Repeat_projects_Project_grants.pdf), [accessed 14 September 2020].

<sup>7</sup> ‘Mark Rylance interviewed by Rob Ferris’, in *Shakespeare Comes to Broadmoor The actors are come hither* ed. by Murray Cox (London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1992, pp. 27-42 (p. 27).

unachievable. This is intrinsically linked to trauma-informed methods to enable participants to acquire the emotional space and opportunity to develop this positive autonomy. As Bessel Van Der Kolk writes in *The Body Keeps Score*, 'trauma by nature drives us to the edge of comprehension, cutting us off from language based on common experience or an imaginable past'.<sup>8</sup> People from marginalised groups have frequently suffered significant trauma through their personal experiences, their physical, mental or emotional limitations or the stigma and prejudice they experience within society. Much of the writing on trauma-informed pedagogy relates to the need for consistency and 'creating community expectations' which can only be achieved and implemented fully through ongoing work rather than fleeting sessions.<sup>9</sup> Speaking the words of Shakespeare, with his attendant cultural capital, offers people the opportunity to reconnect with language which trauma may have dislocated them from. Developing on from the consideration of trauma and the way in which it restricts an individual's access to language is the third element of this chapter: the way in which Shakespeare enables adults and children to find a method of communication which they were previously unable to. This in itself enables them to engage more successfully with others within society and can offer a range of long-lasting benefits including increased self-esteem, confidence, team-working and negotiation through empowerment.

The longer-term projects analysed here have been subjected to an ethnographic study, enabled through working with stable groups, which has facilitated the 'gather[ing of]

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<sup>8</sup> Bessel Van Der Kolk, *The Body Keeps Score: Mind, Brain and Body in the Transformation of Trauma* (London: Penguin, 2014), p. 43.

<sup>9</sup> Patricia A. Jennings, *The Trauma-Sensitive Classroom* (New York & London: W.W. Norton and Company, 2019), p. 71.



empirical insights into social practices which are normally “hidden” from the public gaze’.<sup>10</sup>

The shorter-term projects used similar methods – observing reactions, gathering anecdotal feedback and subsequent reflective interpretation but given the restricted timescales it was not possible to develop the same in-depth knowledge of the participants, meaning that interpretation was more reliant on extrapolation of my own and other research findings. Given the predominance of shorter-term projects over longer-term ones across the field of arts interventions, there is a stronger existing body of research on which to draw to supplement my own findings with shorter-term interventions. Conversely, I am more reliant on primary research for the effects of more permanent endeavours such as the establishment of collaborative theatre companies within prisons. Much of the existing academic work focuses on how theatre spaces both influence, and are influenced by, the activities conducted within them in both traditional theatres and site-specific locations. My intention is to build on this in the context of the less-studied rehearsal space by considering an additional element: a temporal principle. Longer temporal opportunities allow those participating to form stronger interpersonal bonds and view their agency as being more firmly entrenched. Foucault argues that ‘space is fundamental in any form of communal life; space is fundamental in any exercise of power’ and I will build on this through consideration of the effect of intersectionality of space, time and power.<sup>11</sup>

To fully explore this intersectionality between space and time within creative locations I have divided this chapter into short, medium and long-term projects, evidencing

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<sup>10</sup> Scott Reeves, Jennifer Peller et al., ‘Ethnography in qualitative educational research: AMEE Guide No.80’, *Medical Teacher*, 35 (June 2013), 1365-79 (p. 1365).

<sup>11</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (New York: Penguin Modern Classics, 1991), p. 252.

the more profound impact on emotional maturity, transferable skills and enhanced communication in long-term enterprises. The spatial impact is greater when activities take place on a prolonged basis, allowing the group to feel more relaxed and at home within the space and to manipulate the conceived space to a greater degree.<sup>12</sup> Marvin Carlson's concept of theatrical 'ghosting' is particularly relevant to these longer-term projects and will be explored further later in the chapter.<sup>13</sup> His writing is in reference to the text (which Barthes describes as a 'tissue of quotations'), physical costumes, sets and props used in multiple productions which an audience may see.<sup>14</sup> However, this ghosting also applies to the rehearsal space itself and the way the physicality of rehearsing imprints itself within the participants' minds affecting their ongoing perception of this social space. Many from marginalised groups of society may have seen engagement with cultural activities as being unattainable or outside of their sphere of reference, unrelated to 'their identity and culture'.<sup>15</sup> The enjoyable activity of creative playing can also become a positive and empowering method of communication. Anne Ubersfeld's 'scenic place' is relevant when analysing rehearsal space as it embodies the combination of the fictitious place of the play-world with the experiences of a specific group within society.<sup>16</sup> For many people this scenic place becomes a safe environment in which they can explore their creativity as a way of narrativising their personal stories in combination with the cultural richness of Shakespeare's texts.

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<sup>12</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Donald Nicholson-Smith (translator), (Malden, Oxford and Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), p. 38-39.

<sup>13</sup> Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage: The theatre as memory machine* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2001).

<sup>14</sup> Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text* (trans. by Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), p. 146.

<sup>15</sup> Francesca Skelton, *Rethinking Cultural Inclusion and Diversity: A Call to Action for Milton Keynes* (Milton Keynes: Arts and Heritage Alliance, 2020), p. 22.

<sup>16</sup> Anne Ubersfeld, *Reading Theatre*, trans. by Frank Collins (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), p. 154.

## Short-term Projects

By short-term projects I refer to one-off workshops, where participants engage, perhaps for the first time, with Shakespeare. In the space of a few hours they interact with a narrative, characters and dialogue from his works but often without significant context and perhaps no familiarity with the other participants or the person facilitating. In the consideration of the importance of trauma-sensitive methods of engaging marginalised groups this lack of familiarity poses some significant challenges. Few confident, well-adjusted adults would feel comfortable performing with a group of strangers so this is a demanding situation to place marginalised individuals in.

I will examine three such activities to consider the way in which these places where the workshops take place both shape and are shaped by Shakespeare activities. The first two involve special educational needs (SEN) children (one activity in a theatre space and one in an appropriated space) and the third is in a prison with high turnover of incarcerated persons. The SEN case studies fall within the ‘therapeutic application of drama’ which Matt Hargrave describes as one of the prevalent modes of thinking about learning disability and theatre.<sup>17</sup> The first is Kelly Hunter’s adaptation of *The Tempest*, first performed 2016, with many subsequent performances. Analysing both a one-off session of Hunter’s and also a medium-term series of interventions allows me to consider the additional benefits of longevity with this series of Shakespeare-inspired games. The data used for this intervention is a combination of observation during the sessions, a post-event research survey

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<sup>17</sup> Matt Hargrave, *Theatres of Learning Disability: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 34.

completed by care-givers and existing academic reviews of Hunter's work, including a longitudinal study.

Hunter describes in *Shakespeare's Heartbeat*, how she created these games based on the four elements of Shakespeare which Louis Zukofsky identifies as being fundamental – eyes, mind, reason and love.<sup>18</sup> Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) often struggle with a number of what would be everyday actions for neurotypical people, including eye contact and use of imagination.<sup>19</sup> Hunter worked within a SEN school for two years developing the original set of games which drew their inspiration from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and she then went on to create a further series of games based on *The Tempest*. *Shakespeare's Heartbeat* acts primarily as a manual on how the games should be facilitated to 'heighten the children's awareness of themselves and provide an opportunity to explore emotions'.<sup>20</sup> The evaluation of single interventions, to date, has been various news articles and a book chapter by Robert Shaughnessy.<sup>21</sup>

Her Hunter's Heartbeat Method (HHM) work was the subject of an Ohio State University (OSU) research project which focused on the repetition of activities over a 14-week period. The study identified some improvements in facial recognition capabilities from the children but which, in Hunter's opinion, did not do justice to other improvements in

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<sup>18</sup> Kelly Hunter, *Shakespeare's Heartbeat: Drama Games for Children with Autism* (London and New York, Routledge, 2015), p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> Atsushi Senju and Mark H Johnson, 'Atypical eye contact in autism: models, mechanisms and developments', *Neuroscience and Bio-behavioural Reviews*, 33:8 (September 2009) 1204-14 (p. 1204); Pamela J. Wolfberg, *Peer Play and the Autism Spectrum: The art of guiding children's socialization and imagination* (Kansas: Autism Aspergers Publishing Company, 2003) p. 5.

<sup>20</sup> Hunter, p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> Robert Shaughnessy, 'All Eyes: Experience, Spectacle and the Inclusive Audience in Flute Theatre's *Tempest*', in *Shakespeare: Actors and Audiences* ed. by Fiona Banks (London: Arden Books, 2019), pp. 119-38.

interactivity.<sup>22</sup> A further 18-month study was then conducted at OSU and the findings published November 2017, analysing the responses against specific criteria. The paper documented that ‘results indicate measured skill improvement across the three measurement time points in the domains of communication, social skills, friendship skills, and facial emotion recognition’.<sup>23</sup> However, the caveat was noted:

variable treatment response across individuals is common. Thus, although the effectiveness of a social skills intervention on a group level across multiple domains is compelling, it is of limited clinical utility in informing treatment recommendations for an individual child.<sup>24</sup>

Hunter facilitates one-off shows at theatres, two of which I attended at The Orange Tree Theatre in October 2016. The first participant group comprised of children whose parents had booked individually and the second was a school trip. This theatre was a space which the attendees would have been unfamiliar with and embedded with cultural signifiers such as the thrust stage, raked seating and lighting banks. Cultural signifiers are non-verbal cues which convey meaning about the activities which take place within the location, a way of reading the space from the layout and objects which are visible. The *Relaxed Performance Project* in 2013 engaged almost 5,000 people in exploring ways to make theatre trips more accessible for those with additional needs. The findings suggested that ‘preparation and

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<sup>22</sup> Kelly Hunter, interview with the author (Teddington, 5<sup>th</sup> September 2016).

<sup>23</sup> Margaret H Mehling, Marc J Tasse and Rebecca R Andridge, ‘Shakespeare and Autism: A Pilot Study Examining the Treatment Effects and Predictors of Treatment Response of the Hunter Heartbeat Method’, *Autism Open Access*, 7,5 (November 2017) p. 7, [DOI: 10.4172/2165-7890.1000222](https://doi.org/10.4172/2165-7890.1000222)

<sup>24</sup> Mehling, et al., p. 7.

information is key [...] to make people feel comfortable and secure'.<sup>25</sup> The project advocated the production of visual guides depicting the layout and appearance of the theatre and what to expect to simulate a sense of familiarity. The Orange Tree Theatre issued a guide to this effect and one parent commented that 'the visual guide helped as my daughter knew who she was going to be interacting with'.<sup>26</sup>



2. Flute Theatre, *The Tempest*, The Orange Tree Theatre (October 2016), Photo courtesy of Kelly Hunter.

Two-thirds of the attendees had not visited this location previously and upon arrival many looked uncertain about this unfamiliar space, populated with unknown people. One care-giver noted that 'starting off they were withdrawn, quiet and looked slightly worried/

<sup>25</sup> *The Relaxed Performance Project*, Arts of Festivals website, <https://artoffestivals.com/2013/10/20/the-relaxed-performance-project-theatre-for-all/> [accessed 14 September 2020].

<sup>26</sup> Flute Theatre, post-performance *The Tempest* survey sent to the adults who attended the event, anonymous responses collated and shared with the author (January 2017).

uncomfortable’ as they arrived into the theatre and were invited to form a circle on a floor-cloth of swirled blues and greens, around which six actors in basic costumes were seated.<sup>27</sup>

The circle created a conceived space within the theatre auditorium (demarcated by the floor-cloth and lighting) where the children were encouraged to explore their creativity.

Hunter introduced herself to the children and began the Hunter’s Heartbeat, patting her heart reciting ‘hel-lo’ and encouraging the children to do the same. This was then followed by ‘throwing the face’ where Hunter made emotional faces (happy, sad, angry) and “threw” it across the circle to a player who then showed that exaggerated emotional face before “throwing” to the next person.

The games then commenced, focusing on the elements of eyes, mind, reason and love mentioned earlier. When Miranda and Ferdinand first meet, Prospero comments that ‘they have changed eyes’ which led Hunter to create the game ‘Oh you wonder’ where both participants made ‘doyoyoyoing’ eyes at each other by making circles with their thumb and forefinger and rapidly moving them, enabling the children to make eye contact with another person through a parodic, cartoon device.<sup>28</sup> The actors made sure that they engaged with the children to whatever extent they were comfortable with. Tricia Gannon who played Trinculo went over to enact this game with a teenage girl from the school group who was unwilling to remain on the floorcloth, preferring the fixed seating. During much of the session the girl engaged little, moaning loudly and stimming (exhibiting self-stimulatory behaviours) but when Gannon made cartoon eyes at her she was rewarded with a giggle

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<sup>27</sup> Flute Theatre, post-performance *The Tempest* survey.

<sup>28</sup> William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. by Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1999), 1.2.442; Hunter, p. 166.

and the girl responded after a few attempts.<sup>29</sup> Her moaning continued at a lower volume throughout the rest of the games, suggesting that she had engaged to some degree with the interaction. Gannon demonstrated the importance of trauma-sensitive methodologies and what Patricia Jennings describes as having an ‘awareness of the present moment with an attitude of curiosity and openness’ through taking the game to the girl as she wasn’t comfortable coming to join the other players on the floor.<sup>30</sup>

One of the key benefits of using Shakespeare with marginalised groups is the way it creates the opportunity for communication where this ability has often been stymied through physical, emotional or cultural constraints. One game which directly addresses communication is ‘Teaching Caliban to speak’ which required ‘independence of mind from both players’ as they have the prospect of being both pupil and teacher.<sup>31</sup> Children are used to being taught but have little or no opportunity to teach someone else, but this game allowed them to do so.<sup>32</sup> Miranda and Caliban sat legs apart with their feet almost touching and Miranda taught him the syllables of his name using vocalization and Makaton symbols.<sup>33</sup> They then progressed to ‘sun’ and ‘moon’ drawing the shapes in the air before the whole circle made the symbols and sounds of ‘Ca’ ‘Li’ ‘Ban’, enabling even the non-verbal participants to have someone mirror and encourage their efforts at communication.<sup>34</sup> However, autistic academic Sonya Freeman Loftis challenges the

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<sup>29</sup> Karen Wang, ‘Autism and Stimming’, Child Mind Institute website, <https://childmind.org/article/autism-and-stimming/> [accessed 25 October 2020].

<sup>30</sup> Jennings, *The Trauma Sensitive Classroom*, p. 121.

<sup>31</sup> Hunter, *Shakespeare’s Heartbeat*, p. 141.

<sup>32</sup> Hunter, interview.

<sup>33</sup> Hunter giving notes to the company at Teatre Lliure during rehearsal (21 March 2017); Makaton is designed to support spoken language and the signs and symbols are used with speech, in spoken word order, <https://www.makaton.org/aboutMakaton/> [accessed 18 January 2020].

<sup>34</sup> Kelly Hunter (director), *The Tempest*, Orange Tree Theatre (25/26 October 2016).



appropriateness of this game in her article 'Autistic Culture' in which she notes that 'playing the game may evoke the frustration' that both neurotypicals and autistics experience in trying to communicate with each other.<sup>35</sup> She also challenges the concept that 'HHM seems to function on the premise that autistic people have no prior language or culture that is unique to the autistic community', in what she perceives as a colonial interpretation of Caliban as an ungrateful disabled being whilst Miranda is gracious and able-bodied.<sup>36</sup> Her perspective, that this belongs to 'the growing phenomenon of therapy/charity Shakespeares' is thought-provoking and has shaped my own practice.<sup>37</sup>

Whilst Loftis challenges HHM for being 'firmly wedded to the medical model of disability', which focuses on 'treatment for autism over the need for social acceptance for autistic people', she does acknowledge the empathy and compassion of the work which teaches educators 'to assume the competence of autistic children', a fact often overlooked.<sup>38</sup> Sifiso Mazibuko, who played Prospero in this production, explained 'it's never about the amount a child can do, but what they are able to get to experience'.<sup>39</sup> One parent articulated benefits which included that 'after the performance my child was unusually very confident and initiated an in-depth full-blown conversation with one of the actors in a way I've not seen before'.<sup>40</sup> The immediate positive impact on neurotypical communication for this child was significant although I was unable to maintain contact with the attendees to

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<sup>35</sup> Loftis, p. 265.

<sup>36</sup> Sonya Freeman Loftis, 'Autistic Culture, Shakespeare Therapy and the Hunter Heartbeat Method' in *Shakespeare Survey*, 72, ed. by Emma Smith (2019), 256-67 (p. 265).

<sup>37</sup> Loftis, p. 258.

<sup>38</sup> Loftis, pp. 257-60.

<sup>39</sup> Allya Al-Hassan, 'The Tempest, Orange Tree Theatre, 27 October 2016', *BroadwayWorld.Com*, 28 October 2016, <http://www.broadwayworld.com/westend/article/THE-TEMPEST-Orange-Tree-Theatre-27-October-2016-20161028>, [accessed 12 January 2020].

<sup>40</sup> Flute Theatre, post-performance *The Tempest* survey.

discuss whether this continued or was a short-term effect which dissipated over time.

Whether it was short or long term in its effects it was still important for the participants to experience this higher level of confidence and communication with the wider world as a result of the Shakespeare-inspired games they played.

The second short-term example are projects facilitated in SEN schools by 1623Theatre, a Derby-based theatre company, founded in 2005, who aim to 'give voices to marginalised people in response to Shakespeare' through community engagement.<sup>41</sup> This case study involved participants with a range of complex learning disabilities, utilising a space appropriated within the school, not an external theatrical space. Appropriation of an existing space has the benefit of familiarity which can trigger 'episodic memory retrieval', helping the children to feel comfortable in their known environment but also adds a challenge in them freeing their imagination in a place laden with codified meanings and connotations.<sup>42</sup> I observed a day in Fountaindale SEN School in March 2019. The capturing of research data was difficult in this environment and was naturally restricted to observation. In such a short-term intervention there was no opportunity for real emotional growth but the work demonstrated an underlying awareness of trauma-sensitive principles and allowed the children communication opportunities. Some communicated in a verbal way whilst others instead interacted with the external world through their physical engagement with the sensory opportunities made available to them.

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<sup>41</sup> 1623Theatre Company website, <http://www.1623theatre.co.uk/about/the-company>

<sup>42</sup> Arthur P. Shimamura, 'Episodic retrieval and the cortical binding of relational activity', *Cognitive, Affective and Behavioural Neuroscience*, 11:3 (2011), 277-91, (p. 277).

Prior to the children arriving into the space Ben Spiller (Artistic Director) created a nautical theme using a blue/green lighting-scheme, fabric lengths scattered in a circle to invite the children to experience the workshop in a tactile manner, sea-breeze room fragrance and a soundtrack of ocean waves. Spiller and I discussed the importance of preparation to differentiate the space from their usual experience of the school-hall and also to enable those who may struggle to understand the narrative of the story to engage using other senses.<sup>43</sup> The children (some of whom were in specially designed wheelchairs or confined to bed) were escorted into the transformed space by their teachers/teaching assistants who positioned them in a circle as Spiller began to tell a simplified version of *The Tempest*. The soundtrack of the sea became louder and more violent as the story of the shipwreck progressed. Although many of the children showed little evidence of cognitive comprehension of the story they appeared to be actively listening as Spiller used dramatic voice skills to add additional texture to his tale. The children were encouraged to use the fabric pieces to make the motion of the waves; some were able to do so unaided by working in pairs or small groups to emulate the rolling of the surf. Others had less mobility or coordination and were assisted by teachers, myself and Spiller but with an explicit intention to engage everyone to some degree in the multi-sensory experience. The rest of the hour-long session continued in much the same theme with children encouraged to immerse themselves in the fictional realm of the narrative which altered the space of the familiar school hall into somewhere new and unexplored for a brief period of time. The children appeared to have forgotten where they were and were instead allowing their imaginations to take them to the mystical land of which Spiller spoke. Whilst autistic people have long

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<sup>43</sup> Ben Spiller, interview (6 March 2019).

been believed to lack the ability to exercise their imagination, this assessment is being challenged by more recent research which suggests their imaginative ability exists but with differing manifestation and expression from neurotypical people.<sup>44</sup>

The space was used daily for assemblies and lunch; it therefore had its own set of social constructs and would have asked of the children certain behaviours which would become routine throughout their attendance at the school. A 2019 *Urban Planning* article hypothesized:

place is defined by an alignment of mental image, behaviour, and physical setting. A model within which mental image has an implicit temporal dimension where past experience is reflected in affective and cognitive responses to current physical settings.<sup>45</sup>

Whilst this description applies to place generically, Sally Mackey brings this to bear directly on theatrical locations. She acknowledges the thinking of spatial theorists such as Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau, who redefined the concepts of space and place, before making the argument that ‘theatre animates space into place’.<sup>46</sup> This definition suggests that perhaps Lefebvre’s representational space or social space which combines the mental with the physical could perhaps be more accurately termed *representational place*. Within the SEN

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<sup>44</sup> Nicola Shaughnessy, ‘Imagining Otherwise: Autism, Neuroaesthetics and Contemporary Performance’, *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews*, 38:4, (2013), 321-34 (p. 331) <https://doi.org/10.1179/0308018813Z.000000000062>, [accessed 15 September 2020].

<sup>45</sup> Mark Del Aguila, Ensiyeh Ghavampour and Brenda Vale ‘Theory of Place in Public Space’, *Urban Planning*, 4:2 (2019), 249-59 (p. 250).

<sup>46</sup> Sally Mackey, ‘Performing location: place and applied theatre’ in *Critical Perspectives on Applied Theatre*, ed. by Jenny Hughes and Helen Nicholson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 107-26, (p. 109).

school this representational place was superimposed on their school hall for only a brief time-period, however the transience of this appropriation does not undermine its validity. Theatre, by its very nature, asks the audience to suspend their disbelief and to engage with the performance unfolding before them. An audience in a professional production are aware that they are actively engaging in the experience of the theatrical endeavour, that the stage moves the place from London to Venice or Arden or Milford Haven. Whilst the children in this workshop would not have been so consciously aware of this mental shift of theatrical place they clearly chose to engage positively with the activities. For some of the children it was easy to see the joy they took from the experience, smiles and laughter evidencing their pleasure and the teachers commented on how they enjoyed the session. *Art for Art's Sake?*, despite its shortcomings, identified that 'drama classes enhance empathy, perspective taking, and emotion regulation' all of which are key elements of emotional development and positive communication abilities.<sup>47</sup>

The third case study of a short-term project differs widely in terms of participants but it too demonstrates emotional development and improved communication in its participants. Her Majesty's Prison (HMP) Leicester is a category B male remand prison housing approximately 308 men within the city confines. It has a 'short term transient population' with an average stay of only a matter of weeks, making it difficult to develop long-term activity within the establishment, and as a result, the majority of the workshops I have facilitated there have been discrete sessions.<sup>48</sup> In Her Majesty's Inspectorate of

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<sup>47</sup> Ellen Winner, Thalia R. Goldstein and Stéphan Vincent-Lancrin, *Art for Art's Sake? An Overview* (London: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Publishing, 2013), [doi.org/10.1787/9789264180789-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264180789-en).

<sup>48</sup> Peter Clarke, *Report of an Unannounced Inspection of HMP Leicester by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, 8-19 January 2018* (London: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons, March 2018), p. 5.

Prisons (HMIP) Report in 2015 the establishment was deemed unsafe but the 2018 inspection noted the concerted efforts of the Governor and staff to address the issues, although violence and drugs continued to be problematic.<sup>49</sup> My sessions were located in the small, windowless library which we repurposed into a place where debate and discussion could take place but which was not conducive to theatrical work. The cramped nature of the space posed challenges as there was barely room for the men to be seated and no hope of them being able to act with 12 of them in the two tiny inter-connected rooms. Unlike in the 1623 Theatre events there was no possibility of sensory engagement and we were restricted to interacting with the text as a way of unlocking the potential power of Shakespeare.

Bridget Keehan (Writer in Residence in HMP Cardiff 2004-2007) praised ‘the value of [Shakespeare] specifically in prison – a sense of being validated, of cultural ownership - richness of language, being able to speak this beautiful language’.<sup>50</sup> This cultural ownership was evident even within a single session; the participants grasped the opportunity to feel that they had in some small way appropriated Shakespeare’s work and made it their own. My research with individual sessions demonstrated a perception that the language was difficult to access and they were keen to use the themes of the scenes but translated into modern language which they felt was more reflective of their own vocabulary. For example, Iago’s warning to ‘beware, my lord, of jealousy! | It is the green-eyed monster, which doth mock the meat it feeds on’ became ‘beware of jealousy, it eats you alive’ and Othello’s response ‘oh damn her’ became ‘it’s over, she’s burnt my head out’.<sup>51</sup> Although Thompson

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<sup>49</sup> Clarke, *HMP Leicester*, p. 5-6.

<sup>50</sup> Bridget Keehan, interview with the author, University of Birmingham (12 April 2016).

<sup>51</sup> William Shakespeare, *Othello*, ed. by EAJ Honigmann (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1996), 3:3:167-169 and 3:3:478; HMP Leicester *Othello* workshop, Script excerpts rewritten by participants (unpublished, 18 October 2017).

and Turchi ‘caution against [...] translation-performance exercises’ as they do ‘not allow the class as a whole to grapple with the dynamism of Shakespeare’s language’, my assertion is that it has a place early in engagement with Shakespeare.<sup>52</sup> This desire to make the language more accessible was a similar experience with all of the initial prison workshops I have facilitated, although with a longer timeframe of working together (as will be explored later in the chapter) this was overcome and the participants began to see using Shakespeare’s language as a cultural achievement.

I published in *Critical Survey* on the first Shakespeare session I facilitated in HMP Leicester as part of the 2017 Talent Unlocked Arts Festival.<sup>53</sup> This article focused on the way in which the group dynamic altered from disparate individuals to a collective with a common purpose as they became absorbed in their task of rewriting *Othello* speeches into modern parlance. The two-hour workshop was attended by a mix of ages and nationalities and it became apparent that a number of the men struggled to read the text. Morey and Crewe write about the ‘implication in a good deal of prison sociology...that men are...fearful of appearing in any way vulnerable’, although they partially challenge this commonly held view with the results of their ethnographic research which included admissions of some supportive, empathetic friendships within the prison system.<sup>54</sup> I was surprised to see the men support each other so readily with the potential vulnerability of illiteracy in a short-term remand prison where

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<sup>52</sup> Ayanna Thompson and Laura Turchi, *Teaching Shakespeare with Purpose: A Student-centred approach* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2016), p. 53.

<sup>53</sup> Rowan Mackenzie ‘Producing Space for Shakespeare’, *Critical Survey*, 31:4, ed. by Rowan Mackenzie and Robert Shaughnessy (New York: Berghahn Journals, 2019), 65-76.

<sup>54</sup> M. Morey and B. Crewe, ‘Work, Intimacy and Prisoner Masculinities’, in *New Perspectives on Prison Masculinities* ed. by Matthew Maycock and Kate Hunt (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), pp. 17-41 (p. 38).

many of them were unknown to each other at the beginning of the session. This contradicted my expectation of:

the machismo of the prison environment, the tendency of prisoners to impugn signs of weakness and femininity, and the subsequent impulse for prisoners to “mask” emotional expression and put on “fronts” of bravado and aggression.<sup>55</sup>

There were a number of participants for whom English was not their primary language who experienced difficulties reading the Shakespearean text or the modern translations derived by the group. Our session culminated with a table-reading of the created work, during which the inmate sitting closest to each of them would quietly read the words, enabling them to repeat them at normal volume as though reading. As well as enabling communication in a positive way this demonstrated a level of empathy about the way the men may feel about being unable to read the text, emotional maturity and compassion, things often deemed to be lacking within the criminal justice system. In a very short space of time the space became a supportive one in which some fragile social bonds had been formed, although given the rapid turnover at the prison it was not possible to follow up on whether this session had given rise to the formation of any friendships or alliances which endured. The inmates were asked self-assess four areas pre and post-workshop and they reported increased confidence in public speaking, communication through speech, written communication and empathy to others following the session

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<sup>55</sup> Ben Crewe, ‘Not Looking Hard Enough: Masculinity, Emotion and Prison Work’, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 20:4 (March 2014), 392-403, pp. 396.



(Appendix 1).<sup>56</sup> Feedback such as ‘these sessions develop communication skills’, ‘they bring people together’ and ‘it gives me a better understanding of life’ evidenced the impact that even a single session had through allowing them to use dramatic distancing as a way of contemplating themselves and their situation.<sup>57</sup>

I delivered a series of individual workshops in HMP Leicester throughout 2018. Although there is a limit to the depth of potential change which can be engendered in a singular event, there was a specific session which is worthy of consideration in the context of this chapter. I facilitated a session on the scene between the Macbeths following Duncan’s murder – a tense dialogue as the implications of their crime begin to infiltrate their consciousness.<sup>58</sup> The men involved, including two who had attended the *Othello* session, worked positively and productively adapting the text into modern language. There were healthy debates about the meaning of the lines and the depth of emotion both characters would feel given the enormity of their regicide. One participant commented that he had learned he ‘can challenge others from a mature point of view instead of criticism of the personality’ – a significant emotional development in an environment where tensions frequently run high with violent consequences. The men asked for an additional session so they could ‘give it a go acting it’, an unexpected request.<sup>59</sup>

Governor Novis approved the request for an additional workshop three weeks later, by which time only four of the group remained. I split them into two pairs, one taking the Shakespearean text and the other their translation. None of them had acted beyond school

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<sup>56</sup> HMP Leicester Post Workshop Questionnaires quantitative data (18 October 2017).

<sup>57</sup> HMP Leicester Post Workshop Questionnaires (18 October 2017).

<sup>58</sup> William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. by Kenneth Muir (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1951) 2:1:14-74.

<sup>59</sup> Verbal comment made by a participant following the *Macbeth* workshop at HMP Leicester (01 June 2018).

and initially there were some reservations from them about ‘looking silly’ in front of their peers.<sup>60</sup> Senior Public Health Lecturer, Nick De Viggiani writes that inmates are in a ‘social environment in perpetual flux as “actors” jostle to acquire social literacy, legitimacy and status’ and nowhere is this more apparent within the prison estate than in local remand prisons where inmate turnover is rapid with a high concentration from surrounding communities.<sup>61</sup> This melting pot of local affiliations and tensions along with a range of accused crimes from theft to murder, coupled with ongoing addiction issues leads to potentially high levels of violence, as has been seen in prisons including HMP Birmingham and HMP Nottingham over recent years.<sup>62</sup> So their trepidation about displaying any kind of vulnerability was understandable as it could have potentially led to subsequent repercussions on the wing.

We did an initial group read-through of each version before they split into their respective pairs in the two small library rooms. There was no potential to create any form of theatrical environment given the constraints of the space and I felt that they would feel uncomfortable playing drama warm-up games so we focused on the text they were using and the emotions they felt the characters would be experiencing as they addressed the enormity of their crime. Cox writes of the Shakespeare performances in Broadmoor:

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<sup>60</sup> Verbal comment made by a participant during the second *Macbeth* workshop at HMP Leicester (22 June 2018).

<sup>61</sup> Nick de Viggiani, “‘Don’t Mess With Me!’ Enacting Masculinities Under a Compulsory Prison Regime”, ed. by Matthew Maycock and Kate Hunt *New Perspectives on Prison Masculinities*, (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), pp. 91-122, p. 92.

<sup>62</sup> Peter Clarke, *Unannounced Inspection of HMP Birmingham by HM Inspector of Prisons 30 July – 9 August* (London: Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Prisons, September 2018), p. 5. Deemed ‘appalling’ following riots 2016 and 2018, resulting in the invocation of the Urgent Notification Protocol; *Report on Announced Inspection of HMP and YOI Nottingham by HM Inspector of Prisons 11-12 December 2017 and 8-11 January 2018* (London: Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Prisons, March 2018) noted ‘persistent and fundamental lack of safety’ for staff and prisoners resulting in the invocation of the Urgent Notification Protocol.

All psychotherapy undertaken at Broadmoor must [...] involve the confrontation with self in which a patient needs to move beyond Macbeth's understandable reluctance to face what he has done.<sup>63</sup>

This reluctance or emotional inability to face what Macbeth had done was discussed at length by the four men who explained the 'need to pretend it's not real' after committing a crime to retain some semblance of normality.<sup>64</sup> This identification of similarities between their situation and Macbeth's was unprompted and demonstrated a deeper emotional connection to the work than I had anticipated. It was also the catalyst for them engaging fully with the business of enacting the parts as they worked tirelessly on refining and rehearsing their characters prior to performing for each other and myself at the end, in what, for a brief period, became a theatre space.

They created distinctly different characterisations: the Shakespearean version featured a belittled husband whose wife mocked him for being 'infirm of purpose!'<sup>65</sup> In contrast, the modern language adaptation had a more equal alliance where both recognised that they were 'bang to rights'.<sup>66</sup> During the short debrief they acknowledged that skills gained from the session included 'a deeper understanding of Macbeth' and 'empathy of viewing others past my fixed point of view'.<sup>67</sup> This correlates positively with the findings of

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<sup>63</sup> Cox (ed.), *Shakespeare Comes to Broadmoor*, p. 133.

<sup>64</sup> Verbal comment made by a participant during the second *Macbeth* workshop at HMP Leicester (22 June 2018).

<sup>65</sup> William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. by Kenneth Muir (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1951), 2:2:51.

<sup>66</sup> HMP Leicester *Macbeth* workshop, Script rewritten by participants (unpublished, 01 June 2018).

<sup>67</sup> Verbal comment made by a participant during debrief of the second *Macbeth* workshop at HMP Leicester (22 June 2018).

the pilot study conducted in HMP Winchester with Bear Faced Theatre in 2018 where learner self-assessments identified increases in empathy, confidence and impact on others, albeit using a devised rather than textual theatre project.<sup>68</sup> In HMP Leicester, the character engagement was immediate and despite no attempt to create a stage area, scenery, costumes or props the space was altered by the work taking place within it, the staging briefly 'became real'.<sup>69</sup> Their attention to each other was total, a phenomenon rarely seen within the prison estate, evidencing the impact it had made on them. Unfortunately, due to the nature of HMP Leicester all but one had moved before my next visit and there was no way of following up whether they had retained any of this enhanced empathy after the session concluded. Bear Faced Theatre's pilot study identified that 'sporadic attendance appeared to be a significant barrier to establishing a transformational learning environment and achieving deep learning', which I would concur with from my own research experience of short-term projects in prisons.<sup>70</sup>

These short-term case studies demonstrated that within a few hours in a rehearsal room environment it is possible to unlock some sense of engagement with Shakespeare and theatre; to open up new possibilities for people who may never have explored this type of creativity previously. The conceived space becomes one in which participants are able to explore their imagination, to behave differently than they would usually do and this alters the way the place feels for them. The creative activities undertaken evidence that in a very

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<sup>68</sup> Alexandra Russell and Adrian Barton, *Research Report: HMP/YOI Winchester Applied Theatre Pilot* (November 2018) published via National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance on their Evidence Library <http://www.artsevidence.org.uk/media/uploads/181114-bearface.pdf>, [accessed 22 April 2020].

<sup>69</sup> Verbal comment made by a participant during debrief of the second *Macbeth* workshop at HMP Leicester (22 June 2018).

<sup>70</sup> Russell and Barton, *Research Report*.

short period of time people are able to begin to use the mechanism of dramatic distancing to at once reflect the character and themselves. One participant commented that he had found a deeper understanding of ‘the outcome of crimes on the psyche’ from the *Macbeth* workshop in HMP Leicester.<sup>71</sup> A parent who attended the Flute Theatre production noted her daughter was ‘still talking about it and describing it as “amazing” to people she meets.’<sup>72</sup> These can lay the foundations for marginalised people to develop their communication skills but a longer period of involvement is required to allow this to really embed on a social and a spatial level and for participants to develop positive autonomy.

### Medium-term projects

On the spectrum of temporality are a body of interventions I classify as medium term: those with a limited timeframe articulated at inception. These offer a deeper opportunity for the creation of positive autonomy, a sense of community, enhanced communication and emotional development than individual sessions but entail their own issues with regards to longevity of impact and the emotional toll induced upon culmination. To explore this hypothesis, I will examine two projects: HHM in Barcelona and a one-month collaborative event in HMP Leicester. With projects which involve some level of recurrence there is the opportunity for the space to become more than simply a receptacle for the activity and for permeable symbiosis to take place wherein the space is altered in the minds of those involved by the Shakespeare they have created within it. Carlson argues that ‘all theatre.... is a cultural activity deeply involved with memory and haunted with repetition’ and whilst he

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<sup>71</sup> HMP Leicester Post Workshop Questionnaire following the first *Macbeth* workshop (1 June 2018).

<sup>72</sup> The Orange Tree Theatre, post *The Tempest* survey sent to the adults who attended the event, anonymous responses collated and shared with the author (January 2017).

makes this point in reference to audiences at professional theatres this applies for those creating theatre too, in whatever location is available to them.<sup>73</sup>

In 2017 a collaboration between Flute Theatre and La Kompanyia Lliure brought Hunter's adaptation of *The Tempest* into a local SEN school.<sup>74</sup> This used the same games described earlier but was the first time that the same group of children would play the games in their school environment and then transfer this into the theatre, where their families would be invited for a final performance. My role as researcher involved observing rehearsals, school workshops and the theatre performance during the two-week period. This enabled me to build some degree of rapport with the actors and the children and witness the development of relationships from the interactions. The children's complex needs meant that semi-structured interviews would have been inappropriate and I instead undertook observations and brief (interpreted) actor interviews.

The actors worked in the school with the children for three half-days, starting each session with the heartbeat circle and then moving into *The Tempest* games.<sup>75</sup> These workshops took place in a large classroom used for creative activities, appropriated as a drama space. Windows along one side of the room provided abundant natural light whilst a large chalkboard covered the opposite wall. The children were familiar with the space having previously used it for music lessons, so the assumption was that they would be at

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<sup>73</sup>Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as a Memory Machine* (Michigan: University of Michigan, 2003), p. 11.

<sup>74</sup> Collaboration between Flute Theatre (Artistic Director Kelly Hunter) and Teatre Lliure in conjunction with Centre d'Educacio Especial Montserrat Montero, funded by Sabadell Fundacio and Damm Fundacio and supported by British Council (2017).

<sup>75</sup> Hunter, *Shakespeare's Heartbeat*.

ease in the location. This type of appropriated space is what Bachelard described as ‘felicitous space’, the space of familiarity and homeliness where an individual can relax and feel safe.<sup>76</sup> However, the subtle changes to the dynamics of the space were not without impact – the staff supporting the children sat at the side of the room and throughout the initial part of each workshop the children regularly looked to their assistants for reassurance and affirmation. The children were encouraged to sit around the circle, demarcated with tape on the floor, with the actors dispersed amongst them. The ownership of the space was an interesting dichotomy as the school room was familiar to the children but the fact that the theatre company had come in and created the circle rendered it at once both familiar and unknown to the children. This repurposing of it from their music room into a theatrical space with a number of unknown people in it was no doubt linked to their initial reassurance-seeking.

Gradually the children’s focus shifted to the games inside the circle, although a number of them returned to their carers for periods of time. As the workshops progressed they began to trust the actors, need less reassurance and engage more fully. Although there was no formal seating arrangement the participants chose to sit in exactly the same formation each session, gravitating to the same actors. This desire for continuity is human nature and is magnified for those with ASD. According to research, even those with high functioning ASD ‘usually present with severe difficulties in social communication; behavioral inflexibility; coping with changes; restricted, repetitive, and/or stereotypical behaviors; and sensory processing disorders’.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* trans. by Maria Jolas (New York: Penguin, 1964), p. 28.

<sup>77</sup> Tsameret Ricon, Rachel Sorek and Batya Engel Yeager, ‘Association between Sensory Processing by Children with High Functioning Autism Spectrum Disorder and their Daily Routines’, *The Open Journal of Occupational*



3. Actors from La Kompanyia Lliure playing Hunter's Heartbeat games from *The Tempest* with children at Centre d'Educacio Especial Montserrat Montero (March 2017), Photo: Adan Lorca

This tends to lead to them requiring a high level of consistency and routine within their environment to diminish distress and allow them to function comfortably. With those with more severe ASD this requirement becomes more prevalent and the majority of the children in this project had complex ASD. The need for the participants to have consistency of where they sat and who they engaged with was not unexpected but the preciseness of the group formation each session was noticeable. Many autistic people crave continuity and one of

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*Therapy*, 5:4 (October 2017) p. 1, <https://scholarworks-wmich-edu.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1337&context=ojot>, [accessed 10 March 2020].



the boys asked actor Quim Avila directly: ‘can we do this forever?’<sup>78</sup> This indicated how much they were enjoying the sessions and wanted them to continue.



4. Actors from La Kompanyia Lliure rehearsing Hunter’s Heartbeat games from *The Tempest* at Teatre Lliure (March 2017), photo: Adan Lorca

The Barcelona production featured a more intense element of music and rhythm than its English counterpart brought about, not as a result of any directorial prerequisite but due to the natural musicality of the region and the company. Hunter herself commented on the added dimension the music gave; what in the UK was a way of interlinking scenes and signifying the end of a game became a much more integral part of the performative ambience in this iteration.<sup>79</sup> The musicality of the workshops and performance culturally

<sup>78</sup> Quim Avila (La Kompanyia Lliure) discussing a question asked by one of the students during the second workshop at Centre d’Educacio Especial Montserrat Montero (21 March 2017).

<sup>79</sup> Hunter, discussing *The Tempest* during the first full run through with the cast at Teatre Lliure (22 March 2017).

embedded the work in the Catalan region and made it more recognisable to the children as familiar entwined with the unfamiliar. Whilst Josep Marti counsels against homogenising any culture into a single entity, he does acknowledge that 'the use of Catalan in different music manifestations of the city constitutes an excellent sign for the social absorption of a given musical style as one's own'.<sup>80</sup> The game 'Trance Ariel' in which Ariel engaged the dejected Ferdinand and made him forget his grief for his shipwrecked father was here started by the rhythmic sounds Prospero made which brought Ariel to life and inspired him to interrupt the sighs of the young nobleman. When Ferdinand then stood to follow the 'beautiful music' it was accompanied by the percussion and vocal sounds of all participants and his response was a rhythmically hypnotic dance as he followed Ariel's palm stretching his body towards 'th'air' and 'th'earth'.<sup>81</sup> Many learning-disabled children have a limited range of movement and this game encouraged them to experience stretching, which was particularly noticeable with one girl (Dania), who initially demonstrated a very limited range of movement and verbal responses, sitting mutely hunched over. According to staff this was her usual state so it made it all the more inspiring to see her, during the subsequent sessions, unbend herself and start to use her body to take an active role in the games. She became confident enough to initiate a translated conversation with me during a break, evidencing positive autonomy and enhanced communication.<sup>82</sup>

The second of the games based on the concept of trances required the children to close their eyes and follow the noise of the finger-cymbals Ariel played as he led them

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<sup>80</sup> Josep Marti 'Music and Ethnicity in Barcelona', *The World of Music*, 43:2 (2001), 183-92 (p. 186).

<sup>81</sup> William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. by Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T Vaughan (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1999) 1:2:388.

<sup>82</sup> *The Tempest* workshops at Centre d'Educacio Especial Montserrat Montero (March 2017).

around the circle. A number of the children struggled with keeping their eyes closed and trusting their aural capabilities without sight. Studies of autistic children suggest that their social concept of trust is developed differently to that of neuro-typical children.<sup>83</sup> One particularly innovative response to this challenge of keeping her eyes closed for one young girl, Imma, was solved by the actress, Raquel Ferri suggesting she feigned sleep.<sup>84</sup> She felt



5. Raquel Ferri assisting Imma at Centre d'Educacio Especial Montserrat Montero (March 2017),  
Photo: Adan Lorca

that in order to 'play at sleep' she needed something to cushion her head, using her discarded sweatshirt during the workshops.<sup>85</sup> On this basis she was happy to close her eyes and engage fully with the sounds of the game; however, during the theatre performance, she had no discarded clothing available. Ferri improvised by taking off her own waistcoat for

<sup>83</sup> Yiyi Yang, Yuan Tian, Jing Fang et al. 'Trust and Deception in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders: A Social Learning Perspective', *Journal of Autism*, 47 (2017), 615-25.

<sup>84</sup> Raquel Ferri, actress with la Kompanyia Lliure, 2017.

<sup>85</sup> *The Tempest* workshops at Centre d'Educacio Especial Montserrat Montero, discussion with Raquel Ferri following the school workshop (21 March 2017).

her to use. Given the challenges that autistic children often find with changes to their routine or being confronted by the unfamiliar it was amazing to see her readily accept this foreign article of clothing and lay her head on it, testament to the trust she had developed in Ferri over the course of the interactions.

During the final rehearsal in the school a number of the children began drawing on the chalkboard during a break, collectively creating a sea-creature which related to their interpretation of games on a desert island. This was unprompted by the actors or school staff and appeared indicative of the level of ownership they felt of the location at that time. They sought no permission to draw on the board, feeling able to freely express their



6. Part of the children's drawing is visible as they play *The Tempest* games at Centre d'Educacio Especial Montserrat Montero (March 2017), Photo: Adan Lorca

creativity in an embodiment of Ubersfeld's 'lieu scenique', combining the physical location of the classroom with the fictional realm of the theatrical island.<sup>86</sup> This was significant both in their ownership of the space and the evidencing of their imaginative powers, a topic now being re-examined in the context of autism.<sup>87</sup> Their confidence and ownership of the space grew with each time they worked in this place and they appeared demonstrably more comfortable each session. They began to come into the space uninvited which demonstrated the way in which it had become a social space, not a location in which they did only as directed but one in which they felt empowered and emboldened to be freely inventive. Their appropriation of the space extended beyond the organised games as they took creative ownership of it. It was clear that the children began to become accustomed to a routine of theatre-making with the actors after only a few sessions and the actors continued to work voluntarily within the school for a period of time after Hunter left due to the children's enthusiasm. Understanding the impact on the children's engagement with the room when it returned to its primary function would have added further evidence to my research. Unfortunately, due to the language barrier and my return to the UK this was not something I was able to assess but it will be embedded in future research design.

The second medium-term project was a collaboration between myself, HMP Leicester and Drum and Brass (a Leicester-based social enterprise working primarily on community music projects).<sup>88</sup> Following a chance conversation with Julie Maxwell, one of the founders of Drum and Brass, we agreed to run a series of four workshops inviting

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<sup>86</sup> Anne Ubersfeld, *Reading Theatre* trans. by Frank Collins (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), p. 155.

<sup>87</sup> Nicola Shaughnessy, 'Imagining Otherwise: Autism, Neuroaesthetics and Contemporary Performance', *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews*, 38:4 (2013), 321-334, <https://doi.org/10.1179/0308018813Z.00000000062>

<sup>88</sup> Drum and Brass website, <http://drumandbrass.co.uk/>, [accessed 16 September 2020].

inmates to engage creatively with the themes from *Romeo and Juliet*. Maxwell and I facilitated sessions with no pre-determined outcome in mind, to allow the men to respond to themes of dysfunctional families, forbidden love and gang allegiance. Recruitment in HMP Leicester is a challenge given the high turn-over already discussed and there is also a large number of local gang members incarcerated so access to activities is tightly managed. The group was formed of a number of rowdy younger men who were friends on the wing and attended together. Initially there was also a couple of older men, including a Peer Mentor, Derek, who had attended every session I facilitated in there as he had a love of Shakespeare. Peer Mentors offer support to other inmates for a variety of areas including inductions, functional skills assistance, access to education and support services.<sup>89</sup>

Sadly, due to the raucous and frequently difficult behaviour of the younger contingent the older men decided they no longer wanted to continue attending after the second session. This decision was particularly sad in the context of Derek who was passionate about Shakespeare. Managing group dynamics is always challenging, exacerbated within an environment of incarceration and further so when the men involved have issues such as violent tendencies which have not begun to be addressed and ancillary problems such as drug dependency. Van der Kolk asserts that 'athletics, playing music, dancing and theatrical performances all promote agency and community', which I agree with completely but with the caveat that the creation of such community takes time, patience and resilience on the part of both the facilitator and the participants.<sup>90</sup> With the length of this project and the complexity of the relationships within the group it was not

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<sup>89</sup> Derek spoke to me openly about his passion for Shakespeare during several conversation in the library at HMP Leicester (2018).

<sup>90</sup> Van Der Kolk, p. 355.

possible to create a community where all felt comfortable and this was something which concerned me deeply on a personal level. Whilst from a research perspective it informed my work across the prison estate in terms of the need for longevity of projects and the time needed for social cohesion within a group of people who have both inflicted and suffered deep-rooted trauma, as a human I felt sadness that this man no longer felt able to share the Shakespeare activities. In an attempt to compensate for this, I visited him each week outside of the group and we worked on a number of monologues he chose which he wanted to learn more about.<sup>91</sup>

Maxwell wanted to use improvisational activities with Shakespeare as a springboard into creative exercises such as writing raps and spoken word performances (Appendix 2), which differs from my facilitation in other prisons. We used short pieces of text coupled with the basic plot to start conversations and then asked the men to respond using experiences from their own lives. The first session saw them in two groups writing raps based on *Romeo and Juliet's* prologue. Subsequent sessions focused on the gang dynamic between the two households and resulted in the creation of a short piece of theatre entitled 'The wretched rat catcher' and a number of discussions around forbidden love and familial tensions. The sessions were held in a cramped room on the main wing which was inadequate for the activities; there was no space for men to work in smaller groups or to rehearse. This location made the sessions challenging as noise levels quickly became unmanageable if multiple people were talking and the furniture in the room meant physical movement was severely restricted resulting in the sessions having to be predominantly

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<sup>91</sup> William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, ed. by John Russell Brown (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1955), 4:1:180-201; William Shakespeare, *King Richard III*, ed. by James R Siemon (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2009), 5:3:177-206.



static. Much of the benefit of drama is that it enables those who may struggle with traditional education to learn in a physically active way; however, in this location there was no possibility of this. Prison ethnographer Kate Herrity, who studies the aurality of prisons, writes that ‘sound is a powerful medium for emotion’ and the combination of the high level of noise from the prison wing seeping into the room and the volume of their discussions within the room created a claustrophobic, tense atmosphere.<sup>92</sup> The noise of movement outside the room made concentration difficult and when a fight broke out on the wing during one session the men surged to the tiny window to witness the spectacle and were unwilling to return to their seats for a considerable time. Whilst much of my research focuses on the creation of social space and how this can often make the location feel very different as participants engage with Shakespeare and each other, in this instance the oppressiveness of the room made this impossible to achieve to any great degree and likely affected the ability of the men to fully focus on the sessions.

There were undoubtedly some beneficial moments of these workshops, as demonstrated by the example of Colin, whose criminal record began as a child, sparking a cycle of incarceration. He initially played the role of the class clown – making jokes to his friends, giggling at inappropriate moments and lacking any real sense of engagement. However, a couple of weeks in he began to engage more positively and to contribute well to sessions, admitting ‘I never dare speak in group therapy, I go to the toilet when it’s my turn, but here it’s different’.<sup>93</sup> He explained that he felt fear about speaking in such situations,

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<sup>92</sup> Kate Herrity, ‘“Some people can’t hear so they have to feel...” Exploring sensory experience and collapsing distance in prisons research’ (November 2019), [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337391906\\_Some\\_people\\_can't\\_hear\\_so\\_they\\_have\\_to\\_feel\\_exploring\\_sensory\\_experience\\_and\\_collapsing\\_distance\\_in\\_prisons\\_research](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337391906_Some_people_can't_hear_so_they_have_to_feel_exploring_sensory_experience_and_collapsing_distance_in_prisons_research) [accessed 10 March 2020].

<sup>93</sup> Verbal feedback from Colin in the *Romeo and Juliet* project, HMP Leicester (September 2018).



suggesting low self-esteem and perhaps that his views had been previously dismissed or ridiculed, however he enjoyed speaking the lines of Shakespeare and this helped him to find the courage to use his voice in a group context. He contributed thoughtfully to the sessions and within a short period of time I witnessed him begin to mature. He became a more rounded individual as his confidence increased but with a clear sense of social conscience. He would often challenge the others in the group if they became too silly and was supportive of the facilitators in keeping the sessions on track.

Another younger individual who seemed to benefit from the sessions was Jack, whose behaviour was initially challenging. During the session where we began to discuss the challenges of a romance where the families are feuding he chose to share his personal experience of this in relation to the mother of his child. They concealed their relationship until she was heavily pregnant, wanting to avoid attempts at coercing her into aborting the foetus. As I described in a book chapter:

this level of emotional outpouring was not something I expected given the dynamic of the group but the others listened respectfully and expressed their sympathy with him as he explained how the level of interference from the families ended their relationship and made his son's formative years difficult.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Rowan Mackenzie, 'Shakespeare Unbarred', in *International Handbook of Therapeutic Tales and Narratives* ed. by Sue Jennings and Clive Holmwood (London: Routledge, anticipated publication March 2021).

He appeared comfortable explaining his experiences, linking them to the Montagues and Capulets in what was seemingly a turning point for him with his attitude being very supportive and positive after that outpouring. He became the one who engaged most positively with the sessions and he and Derek worked together during the remainder of that session to create a duologue. Jack appeared to have realised Derek's discomfort with some behaviour and chose to work with him on a piece which they intended to perform at the Talent Unlocked festival but sadly Jack was relocated prior to the event.

The final session was missing another individual, Jamil, who was in the segregation unit. He was a difficult character, inciting much of the rowdiness which made Derek and Brian leave. Jamil was a disruptive individual whose confidence often manifested as arrogance and who embodied the description Maycock gives that 'muscularity and size are key aspects of being seen as "hard"'.<sup>95</sup> He alternated between antagonising the other men and making inappropriate, suggestive comments to me, which I dismissed and asked him to refrain from. When the altercation described earlier took place he was the main ringleader in trying to leave the room to bear witness to, or perhaps engage in, the ensuing fight outside. On the third session he arrived clearly under the influence of something, my assumption would be Spice as it is a common issue in many UK prisons. His behaviour was more erratic than ever and he spent much of the session clearly disengaged from the work, trying to remove his clothes. This, combined with a number of other incidents resulted in the Governor deeming it appropriate to remove him from the main wing and place him in segregation.

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<sup>95</sup> Matthew Maycock, 'They're All Up in the Gym and All That, Tops Off, Fake Tan' in *New Perspectives on Prison Masculinities*, pp. 65-90 (p. 70).

The *Romeo and Juliet* project demonstrated some benefits in terms of enabling the opportunity for emotional development and building transferable skills such as confidence, teamwork and empathy, all of which will be invaluable upon their release. As the 2017 thematic review of resettlement noted ‘many prisoners needed substantial help before they were released’ and often this is not consistently available across the prison estate.<sup>96</sup> Interventions which help to equip inmates with the skills they will need on release to help with securing employment and dealing with the authorities and agencies they will need to interact with are extremely beneficial. Whilst there was a limited opportunity for the skills and benefits to be embedded, given the length of the programme, it gave them the opportunity to engage positively and to see the world a little differently, to ‘grow a bit in confidence’.<sup>97</sup> The outcomes were mixed with noticeable improvements in communication from Colin and Jack as they began to use the space to articulate their views and experiences in ways society finds appropriate, developing positive autonomy. In contrast to this Derek’s decision that he was unable to tolerate the loudness and lewdness from some members of the group was a clear indicator that it was not a total success.

In summary, medium-term projects create some form of consistency for participants, allowing them to get to know each other and the facilitators to some degree. Given that the majority of people feel inhibited when initially asked to act if they have not done so before, this familiarity with the participants and surroundings can be extremely

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<sup>96</sup> Dame Glenys Stacey and Peter Coates, *An Inspection of Through the Gate Resettlement Services for Prisoners Serving 12 Months or More* (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, June 2017), p. 8.

<sup>97</sup> Feedback questionnaire completed by Colin in the *Romeo and Juliet* project, HMP Leicester (September 2018).

beneficial in building the confidence of those involved. The work in Barcelona showed the children developing a sense of agency within the rehearsal room and their bonds with the actors became more apparent throughout each session. The project in HMP Leicester was constrained by the space in which it was held and the results were mixed with some engaging positively whilst others chose to remove themselves in the case of Derek, or behave negatively in the case of Jamil. As Kristin Souers and Pete Hall counsel in their book *Fostering Resilient Learners*, 'we want instantaneous success' but we need to accept that often a number of different strategies may be tried before one has the desired effect when working with those who have suffered trauma in any form.<sup>98</sup> It takes time for people to develop trust and openness and to become comfortable in their surroundings, particularly if the rehearsal space may have previously restrictive connotations, such as a school hall or a prison location. The conceived space which offers freedom to explore creativity takes time to develop as participants become more engaged with the activities and they begin to feel the space is one very much entwined with their theatre-work. It is for this reason that longer-term projects provide benefits which are exponentially more profound and effective than short or medium-term interventions. I will now go on to examine programmes which are ongoing in nature and where a supportive community has formed and continues to nourish and sustain participants as they grow collectively and individually in ways which these medium-term enterprises are unable to fully create.

### Longer-term projects

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<sup>98</sup> Kristin Souers and Pete Hall, *Fostering Resilient Learners: Strategies for Creating a Trauma-Sensitive Classroom* (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2016), p.126.

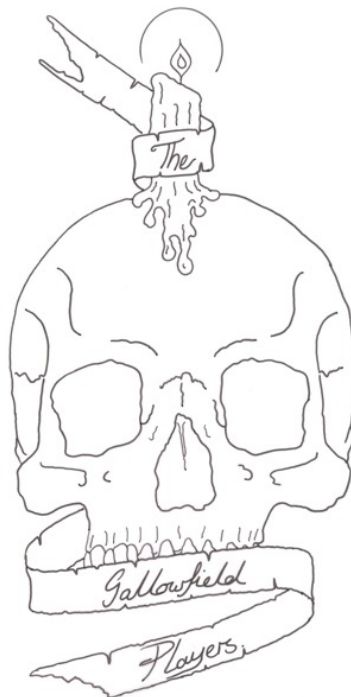
Those interventions which are more permanent in nature are often provided by theatre companies. Obviously, individuals will join and leave over time but the permanence these groups offer alters the way in which participants engage with the activity as they do not have the worry of cessation of sessions. It allows people time to become more comfortable with each other, the surroundings and the actuality of acting. This section will consider four projects of this nature: two based in different prisons and two with learning disabled participants, one working with children and one which is a professional, adult company. The methodology for my research with these ventures was ethnographic combining observation, questionnaires (where appropriate and taking into consideration the issues of gathering feedback from learning disabled participants as explored in the introduction), rehearsal diaries within the prisons, semi-structured interviews and group debriefs to give as full an understanding of the work which was undertaken as possible. When writing about these projects I write in the past tense about specific productions and occurrences but in the present tense about the benefits of the work and the plans these companies have for the future. Whilst this can be difficult from a phenomenological perspective it accurately encapsulates their longevity and permanence. These are not discrete research projects which have ended, they continue to develop and thrive and will do so beyond this thesis.

In March 2018 I began a project in HMP Gartree which is a category B prison of circa 700 male prisoners, predominantly convicted of murder. Her Majesty's Prison Inspectorate Report in 2017 noted

641 prisoners were serving a life sentence, and the remaining 63 an indeterminate sentence for public protection. Half of the

prisoners were within the first few years of their indeterminate sentences. 90% of prisoners (635 out of 708) were assessed as presenting a high risk of harm to others. One-third of prisoners were from a black and minority ethnic background and almost one in six were foreign nationals.<sup>99</sup>

The Shakespeare project was approved for an initial period of 6 months but given the successful outcomes demonstrated within that time period it became a permanent part of the Reducing Re-offending work at the prison and it has continued to flourish. It developed into a theatre company named The Gallowfield Players, owned collectively by myself and the actor-inmates.<sup>100</sup>



7. The Gallowfield Players logo designed following collaborative discussions and drawn by Michael, HMP Gartree (December 2018). Courtesy of Michael.

<sup>99</sup> Peter Clarke, *Report on Unannounced Inspection of HMP Gartree by HM Inspector of Prisons 13-23 November 2017* (London: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons, January 2018), p. 7.

<sup>100</sup> Governor Barker announced the permanent inclusion of the Shakespeare group following the performance of *Macbeth*, HMP Gartree (October 2018).

Dame Sally Coates in her 2016 Report *Unlocking Potential: A review of education in prisons* stated:

Education in prison should give individuals the skills they need to unlock their potential, gain employment, and become assets to their communities. It is one of the pillars of effective rehabilitation. Education should build social capital and improve the well-being of prisoners during their sentences.<sup>101</sup>



8. Governor Barker, The Chapel, HMP Gartree – announcing the permanence of the drama group which became The Gallowfield Players following the performance of *Macbeth* (October 2018), Photo: Milton Keynes College Education Department.

<sup>101</sup> Sally Coates, *Unlocking Potential: A review of education in prisons* (London: Ministry of Justice Report, May 2016), p. 3.

Whilst the Gallowfield Players is not formal education it is aligned with Coates' holistic vision of the provision of education within the criminal justice sector and it has allowed the participants to unlock previously unknown potential. As one psychologist commented in feedback on the second production, an edited *Julius Caesar*, 'doing more practical education seems to be enjoyed more, you could tell it helped the men'.<sup>102</sup> Coates' desire for them to 'build social capital' resonates strongly with my thesis that this work enables them to find methods of communication and grow emotionally through their engagement with the cultural capital of Shakespeare and the sense of achievement created through long term programmes. Social capital has been deemed integral to the desistance narrative by Sam King and other criminologists and although Christopher Kay challenges the validity of the centrality attributed to this concept (arguing the assumptions made ignore fundamental nuances and present an overly homogenised perspective of people who commit crime) it continues to feature heavily in the lexicon of desistance.<sup>103</sup> Ben is an actor with The Gallowfield Players and his mother spoke to me of her surprise at his involvement in the group given that he 'had really struggled to learn to read and write' and had always been shy about public speaking.<sup>104</sup> Ben performed Mark Anthony with such authenticity that he reduced many of the audience to tears. It is testament to the powerful confidence he developed during the rehearsals that he wanted to play such an iconic role and did so with pathos and passion.

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<sup>102</sup> HMP Gartree staff questionnaire, *Julius Caesar* (June 2019).

<sup>103</sup> Sam King, *Desistance Transitions and the Impact of Probation* (London: Routledge, 2014); Christopher Kay, 'Rethinking social capital in the desistance process: The 'Artful Dodger' Complex', *European Journal of Criminology* (2020), 1-17, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1477370820960615>

<sup>104</sup> Feedback from Ben's mother after The Gallowfield Players' performance of *Julius Caesar* (June 2019).



When I began working in HMP Gartree I was allocated the library for our sessions: a large, book-lined room with one door containing a small window onto the main corridor. This location was distanced from the Education corridor and I was told early on that being in Education would discourage some inmates from engaging as many have negative associations with formal education.<sup>105</sup> The library was a more neutral location, although it was described by Michael as ‘a repository of knowledge closed to most of us most of the time’.<sup>106</sup> Michael described education as ‘classrooms to sit and quietly absorb regurgitated lessons on nothing practically useful’ and this was the initial impression I had of how they also felt about the Shakespeare sessions.<sup>107</sup> The first to join thought it was an educational discussion group and admitted to attending out of a sense of vague interest and a potential relief from the monotony rather than a desire to act. I have written in detail about the challenges of those formative early months in my article ‘Action is Eloquence’.<sup>108</sup> The building of this group took time and persistence as asking men to expose themselves to the vulnerability of acting was challenging in a location where being vulnerable is dangerous.

As we began rehearsing the room transformed from a windowless prison library into a creative space. A stage area was created by moving the tables to one side and arranging the chairs in a gentle crescent, with a central aisle and entrances on either side of the ‘stage’. I always arrived before the actors and prepared the stage area so that they arrived not to a library but to a theatre. Rob reflected:

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<sup>105</sup> Discussion with a Peer Mentor within HMP Gartree regarding recruitment for the project (April 2018).

<sup>106</sup> Michael, The Gallowfield Players, *Reflections on Creative Space in HMP Gartree* (unpublished, October 2019).

<sup>107</sup> Michael, The Gallowfield Players, *Reflections on Creative Space in HMP Gartree* (unpublished, October 2019).

<sup>108</sup> Action is eloquence: Creating Space for Shakespeare in HMP Gartree’, *Drama Research*, 11:1 (April 2020), <https://www.nationaldrama.org.uk/journal/> [accessed 1 October 2020].

each week it only takes a few minutes to transform half the library into our play area – I mean that in the sense of the play but also where we play and have fun.<sup>109</sup>

The impact of this playfulness within the group cannot be underestimated – this is one place within the prison that the actors can set aside their protective personas and be themselves.

Jennings asserts:

play is a developmental activity through which human beings explore and discover their identity [...] Play encourages symbolic thought and action [...] In play we learn to create as well as to set limits; we learn about freedom as well as its boundaries.<sup>110</sup>

Their communication with each other and with me developed significantly during the formative months and continues to do so. As they arrive each week many of them will initiate positive physical contact with each other in the form of hugs, a gesture unseen throughout the prison for fear of showing weakness or accusations of having homosexual desires. Research into the effects of life-imprisonment on young adults suggests that positive physical contact as commonplace as hugs or sitting side by side on a sofa can be

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<sup>109</sup> Rob, The Gallowfield Players, *Reflections on Creative Space in HMP Gartree* (unpublished, October 2019).

<sup>110</sup> Sue Jennings, *Dramatherapy with Families, Groups and Individuals: Waiting in the Wings* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1990), p. 15.

beneficial to feelings of wellbeing.<sup>111</sup> The actors are keen to share how their week has been and to enquire about each other's and mine in their identification as a 'family in this hostile place'.<sup>112</sup> The empathy demonstrated bolsters them and this stronger support network increases their 'well-being' whilst they are completing their custodial sentences and should equip them with tools for 'effective rehabilitation' upon release.<sup>113</sup>

The atmosphere within the room is often loud and jovial and the social space we have collectively created is 'safe and supportive'.<sup>114</sup> During rehearsals the actors free themselves from inhibitions and try various ways of acting out their roles, thinking of ways to express the emotions of their character and looking for ways to balance pathos, humour and humanity. There is much written about the beneficial effects of playing as a creative outlet, including publications by Sue Jennings, Lois Carey and Paula Crimmens.<sup>115</sup> Donald Winnicott argues that 'in playing and perhaps only in playing, the child or adult is free to be creative' and in this creativity 'the individual discovers the self'.<sup>116</sup> Professor Gabrielle Ivinson specializes in learning for marginalised adults and children who have suffered personal, societal or intergenerational trauma. She describes that trauma-informed methods require educators to facilitate 'a pedagogy not about who [people] were in the

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<sup>111</sup> Susie Hulley, speaking at the book launch for *Life Imprisonment from Young Adulthood: Adaptation, Identity and Time* by Ben Crewe, Susie Hulley and Serena Wright (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), online event (30 October 2020).

<sup>112</sup> Wayne, The Gallowfield Players, *Rehearsal Diary – Julius Caesar* (unpublished, 2019).

<sup>113</sup> Coates, p. 66.

<sup>114</sup> Michael, The Gallowfield Players, *Experiencing Freedom within the High Security Estate* (unpublished, March 2019), p. 1.

<sup>115</sup> Sue Jennings, *Introduction to Drama Therapy* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1997); Sue Jennings (ed.), *Drama Therapy: Theory and Practice 1, 2 and 3*; Lois Carey (ed.), *Expressive and Creative Arts Methods for Trauma Survivors* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2006); Paula Crimmens, *Dramatherapy and Story Making in Special Education* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2006).

<sup>116</sup> Donald W Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (London: Tavistock Publishers, 1971), p. 62-63.

past but open up a passage into the future.’<sup>117</sup> This future focus is important for the Gallowfield Players as they consider their eventual return to society, but it is grounded in the longevity of the company existence, allowing the development of deep bonds and trust. Wayne wrote in his diary the extent to which his ‘confidence is growing and feels comfortable with everyone in the group, the importance of being accepted for being me’.<sup>118</sup>

To return to the intersectionality of space-time-power which is fundamental to this chapter, the combination of the ‘play area’ of the library and the longevity of the theatre company has impacted on power and autonomy. It allowed the actors to develop personal agency previously stripped away upon entering the penal system. Jason Warr states that ‘the deprivation of autonomy is potentially the most destructive of the pains of imprisonment as it confers a direct assault on one’s sense of self and erodes any positive notion of the self’.<sup>119</sup> Inmates are allowed to make almost no decisions affecting their daily lives which psychologist Craig Haney describes as infantilising and, over time, results in passivity to authority.<sup>120</sup> The Gallowfield Players to some extent reverses this infantilisation and within the group there is a respectful sharing of power. I minimise the distinction between us; we all drink from the same plastic prison-issue mugs, all take turns directing the group and we collectively agree all decisions. Agreement on how a play is to be adapted and developed is achieved through discussion and they have developed positive autonomy

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<sup>117</sup> Professor Gabrielle Ivinson, ‘Rethinking Pedagogy’ paper at *Prison Learning Academic Network seminar*, Manchester, (6 November 2019).

<sup>118</sup> Wayne, *The Gallowfield Players, Rehearsal Diary – Julius Caesar* (unpublished, 2019).

<sup>119</sup> Jason Warr, ‘The prisoner: inside and out’, in *Handbook on Prisons: Second Edition*, ed. by Yvonne Jewkes, Jamie Bennett and Ben Crewe (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 586-604 (p. 593).

<sup>120</sup> Craig Haney, ‘The psychological impact of incarceration: implications for post-prison adjustment’, *National Policy Conference – From Prison to Home: the effect of incarceration and re-entry on children, families and communities*, 30-31 January 2002, Washington, <https://aspe.hhs.gov/basic-report/psychological-impact-incarceration-implications-post-prison-adjustment> [accessed 11 April 2020].

and ‘a sense of what life used to be like before prison’.<sup>121</sup> The actors instigated monthly production meetings, created and submitted funding applications and wrote the company business plan. Significant trust has been nurtured amongst the group which has allowed them to be truthful and honest in how they feel about the work we do together. Keith wrote in his diary that rehearsals ‘make me feel normal and it is a place I belong’, a sharp contrast to the sense of social and societal dislocation triggered by imprisonment.<sup>122</sup> Rex Bloomstein has spent much of his career filming documentaries depicting authentic prison life and asserts ‘trust is such a fundamental thing for people’ in the context of positive prison relationships.<sup>123</sup> It is common for one or more of the actors to assume a directorial role, offering their reflections on how a scene can be improved, employing Boalian forum theatre techniques to pause the action and suggest alternative interpretations.<sup>124</sup>

Within the prison environment there is latent underlying aggression which takes little to trigger it; a comment taken as an insult, a bump against another inmate or some perceived slight can provoke anger. Initially the actors would seek input only from me as the facilitator but this has changed and they now seek and give their own opinions freely – any feedback is meant for the purpose of improving the company and production. These positive developments equip them not only within the rehearsal space but with their interactions both within the prison and, in due course, upon their release. They eagerly seek inspiration from recordings of productions, group discussions and reading they choose to undertake in their own time from a small library of books on Shakespeare, drama and

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<sup>121</sup> Michael, The Gallowfield Players, *Rehearsal Diary – Julius Caesar* (unpublished, June 2019).

<sup>122</sup> Keith The Gallowfield Players, *Rehearsal Diary – Julius Caesar* (unpublished, 2019).

<sup>123</sup> Rex Bloomstein, interview with the author, London (28 November 2019).

<sup>124</sup> Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, trans. by Charles A and Maria-Odilia Leal McBride and Emily Fryer (London: Pluto Press, 2008), p. 117-20.

theatre gathered from various sources. This collaborative directing at times means that the scenes may take longer to become cohesive as the multitude of ideas can be time-consuming and leads to debates, however I believe that their voices being heard and opinions being given credence is as important as the end production. The positive autonomy is evidenced through diary entries which note 'it's come together, today it felt like we achieved, we did this together and we did it well!' describing a positive run-through of *Julius Caesar* many months prior to performance.<sup>125</sup>

Our repurposing of the library does bring with it its own challenges: from the mundane, such as the regular interruptions of inmates wanting to return or borrow books (the library is closed during rehearsals), to the more profound emotional connections which can be triggered. Michael is a highly intelligent, complex individual but who, by his own admission, finds emotional connection with people to be very challenging since his imprisonment. Early in 2019 he arrived for rehearsal very distracted and struggled to engage during the early part of the session. When we took a coffee-break he sought me out to explain that he had been in the library the day before and had suffered what he described as a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) flashback when he saw someone who reminded him of a significant person in a previous traumatic event. The effect was so severe that it made him shaky and blurred his vision and he had asked to be escorted back to the wing. For this reason, he was scared to attend the rehearsal but told me that he had done so to face his fear and because the group means so much to him. 'Being in here today has exorcised the terror of yesterday' he told me, allowing him to tackle his Pavlovian response

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<sup>125</sup> Michael, The Gallowfield Players, *Rehearsal Diary – Julius Caesar* (unpublished, March 2019).

to the panic attack of the previous day.<sup>126</sup> The trust within the group is crucial in enabling this type of trauma-informed conversation to take place and for him to feel confident in expressing his feelings, knowing that the group would be supportive.

Michael underwent a prolonged hunger strike in the summer of 2019 in protest about a number of issues in the way he and his belongings were treated by the institution. This was a very difficult time for him and his previous similar protests have resulted in violent outbursts. However, this time he continued to engage with the group throughout the duration and he spoke to me regularly about his physical and mental health. His deterioration was distressing for all involved and he was closely monitored with regular blood tests. In some rehearsals he was too weak to take an active part but continued to attend regardless and the other actors escorted him around the prison, carrying his bag when it was too heavy for his weak frame and ensuring he was accompanied in case he collapsed. He wrote in his rehearsal diary that ‘without this to look forward to I don’t know how I’d get through the week’ and he did not miss a single session even whilst faint from the effects of prolonged starvation.<sup>127</sup> After several weeks his Personal Officer sought me out to tell me they had resolved the issues and he had agreed to eat again, but would not do so until rehearsal. Michael came in carrying a bag of dried mango and told me that he had agreed to end his hunger strike earlier that week but waited until Friday to eat for the first time. We sat together as a group whilst he ate a few pieces of the fruit and this acknowledgement of the importance of the symbolism of that act resonated with me long after the day concluded. What that demonstrated was the creation of a far deeper social

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<sup>126</sup> Michael, The Gallowfield Players, verbal comment to author (April 2019).

<sup>127</sup> Michael, The Gallowfield Players, Rehearsal Diary- *The Merchant* (unpublished, August 2019).

solidarity than the rehearsing of Shakespeare and this social aspect of the group has become more apparent during the prolonged period of time we have worked together.

This social cohesion was highlighted poignantly during a rehearsal in summer 2019. The previous week I had stressed to the group the importance of focusing on improving the current production so that they would be proud of their work (occasionally rehearsals deteriorate into silliness and puerile humour). A young actor, Wayne, had taken the message very much to heart and at this particular rehearsal was very short tempered when the inevitable joking camaraderie came to the fore. His outburst was out of character and had clearly rankled with the group so I guided the group to move on, intending to speak to him at the coffee-break about the cause. However, before I had the opportunity, Michael took him to one side for a quiet conversation and explored Wayne's perspective and rationale for his outlook, balancing it with the overall need for the group to both produce theatre but to enjoy the process too. This engagement between the two diffused the tension completely. Whilst this may appear insignificant to people used to resolving disagreements with verbal dexterity, to witness this from two men both convicted of violent crimes was incredibly powerful.

At the end of rehearsal, when we sat in our customary circle on the 'stage' discussing the session Wayne chose to apologise for his outburst, explaining to the group that he had taken my words too literally. The level of self-realisation and confidence required to publicly acknowledge the situation showed emotional maturity which was not evident when he joined the group. Wayne was incarcerated aged 20 and appeared emotionally immature when he joined The Gallowfield Players but his reactions began to demonstrate maturity, as



this example exemplified. Detention is acknowledged to ‘impair the normal course of adolescent development’ and those imprisoned at a young age can often be released in middle age with no external developmental experiences beyond their teens.<sup>128</sup> The ‘forms of social and relational maturation that long-term imprisonment denies’ limits the ability of those incarcerated to emotionally develop and instead fosters harmful coping mechanisms which are detrimental to mental health.<sup>129</sup> Paterson-Young et al.’s study *The Social Impact of Custody on Young People in the Criminal Justice System* examines the way in which custody stagnates emotional maturity and limits ‘opportunities to learn independence skills and develop resilience....which are central elements to reducing recidivism’.<sup>130</sup> However, the sense of agency, positive autonomy and emotional resilience which is evidenced within the Gallowfield Players suggests that some interventions can reverse this stagnated development. The sample size is naturally small with this type of work but my findings concur with those of other prison Shakespeare academics and practitioners including Jonathan Shailor, Niels Herold and Jean Troustine who identifies it as a ‘catalyst for transformation’, albeit one which is difficult to measure.<sup>131</sup>

One such opportunity for me to role model behaviour occurred in January 2020 when The Gallowfield Players were together for additional sessions during performance week. This was Dean’s first production and throughout the rehearsal process it had become very clear that he deeply resented any form of authority. During a seated session where we

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<sup>128</sup> Rob Allen, ‘Young people and prison’, in *Handbook on Prisons: Second Edition* ed. by Yvonne Jewkes, Jamie Bennett and Ben Crewe (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 529-48 (p. 529).

<sup>129</sup> Ben Crewe, Susie Hulley and Serena Wright, *Life Imprisonment from Young Adulthood: Adaptation, Identity and Time* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), p. 328.

<sup>130</sup> Claire Paterson-Young, Richard Hazenbarg and Meanu Bajwa-Patel, *The Social Impact of Custody on Young People in the Criminal Justice System* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), p. 135.

<sup>131</sup> Shailor, ‘Prison Theatre and the Promise of Reintegration,’ *Performing New Lives*, pp. 180-96; Herold, *Prison Shakespeare*; Troustine, p. 235.

were running lines (the room allocated to us was too cramped to allow any form of acting) he appeared disengaged and spent much of the time looking at a book when not directly involved in a scene. I had repeatedly asked him not to and when he continued I snapped at him in front of the rest of the group. He did not retaliate and sat silently for the rest of the session but chose not to return that afternoon. Michael said that Dean had explained ‘his head wasn’t in a fit state and he would be back the following day’, adding his own opinion (expressed in the spirit of openness fostered within the group) that I had been unduly harsh with my reprimand.<sup>132</sup> After reflecting on the comment overnight it was apparent that my own tension about the production had resulted in me behaving out of character. When Dean arrived in the library I publicly apologised and asked him to shake hands, which he did. He then commented later to Michael that it was the first time anyone had apologised to him in his life and that he was touched by the way I had handled the situation. His attitude changed significantly and he has demonstrated a much warmer personality since that occurrence.

The Gallowfield Players’ sense of community permeates throughout the prison and although this will be explored more fully in Chapter 3 it is worth considering briefly here as it effectively bridges the chasm between the work we do as a collective and their life for the remainder of the week. Jenna Dreier’s research on the Shakespeare Prison Project contrasts starkly with this as her focus groups revealed that the actors would never ‘do the warm up exercises they had done in rehearsal’ outside of the specific rehearsal space, a view she endorsed, quoting Shailor’s concept of ‘sanctuary space’.<sup>133</sup> However, the ‘creative place’

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<sup>132</sup> Dean’s comment relayed verbally to the author via Michael, The Gallowfield Players (January 2020).

<sup>133</sup> Jenna Dreier, ‘From Apprentice to Master: Casting Men to Play Shakespeare’s Women in Prison,’ *Humanities*, 8:123 (July 2019), <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-0787/8/3/123/htm>, [accessed 25 October 2020].

The Gallowfield Players have conceived within the library is taken back to the wings with them as 'running lines has become so commonplace that it's normal for others just to ignore it or simply see it as an everyday occurrence'.<sup>134</sup> The creativity permeates the prison because the social capital continues to flourish beyond the physical confines of the location and the time-bound confines of the session; they can access the support and emotional wellbeing that has become integral to the group at any time and place. 'Association' several times a week is an opportunity for inmates to socialize with men from their wing and the actors put this time to use discussing the play, rehearsing or working on amendments for scenes we have rehearsed that week. It is common to arrive on Friday to discover that a number of them have tackled a problematic piece of blocking or amended stage directions to improve the flow between scenes. During the COVID-19 pandemic they used their limited time out of cells to work on costume designs, programme content and script edits.

However, this permeation on the wings is wider than the actors; it is now common to hear Shakespeare quoted on landings in HMP Gartree. The men trade Shakespearean slurs with others on the landings as a way of intersecting prison culture in which 'insults [...] are usually brutal'.<sup>135</sup> The cultural capital of these famous lines appears to diffuse the usual underlying menace which is usually prevalent and to have brought an element of felicitous space to the prison estate. The jostling for supremacy on the wings cannot be overestimated as these men are spending decades of their lives away from their families and the distractions of work, leisure and daily living, leaving them with little on which to focus. Tensions frequently run high but this permeation of Shakespeare onto the wings can

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<sup>134</sup> Michael, The Gallowfield Players, *Reflections on Creative Space in HMP Gartree* (unpublished, October 2019).

<sup>135</sup> Michael, *Reflections on Creative Space*.

allow insults to have a more jocular meaning than they would otherwise. The inmates' adoption of phrases such as 'do you bite your thumb?' (despite this not being a play we have worked on) demonstrates the extent to which Shakespeare has permeated the culture of the prison in unexpected ways and further evidence of the emotional maturity which is being fostered.<sup>136</sup> Finding alternative ways to navigate and ameliorate interpersonal tensions which could otherwise escalate into violence is hugely beneficial within the prison overall.

Rosie Reynolds (Prisoners' Education Trust) commented that 'I thought it was something that might seem small (a few hours a week) but was actually having this huge impact both for the men in the Players and the staff around them'.<sup>137</sup> This is perhaps because it is not just the space that we have changed through the work we do together in HMP Gartree. We have changed the people involved (I include myself in this process of transformation) and this has a wider impact on their interactions within the prison. They and I are not the same as when this project began; they often speak of the way in which they have grown, as Wayne succinctly describes 'I am proud to say that my identity has changed from being a Gallowfield Player'.<sup>138</sup> The trust they have created is powerful and allowed them to develop inner-resilience which many felt they lacked previously. The importance of trust and positive relationships is one acknowledged by leaders within the prison service but is often hard to facilitate within this environment, yet with tenacity and

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<sup>136</sup> William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, ed. by Rene Weis (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2012), 1:1:42.

<sup>137</sup> Rosie Reynolds, email to the author (June 2019).

<sup>138</sup> Wayne, The Gallowfield Players, Rehearsal Diary – *Julius Caesar* (unpublished, 2019).

perseverance and the addition of much humour we have achieved this within the Gallowfield Players.<sup>139</sup>

After attending a rehearsal Ben Spiller tweeted ‘inspirational teamwork. They really care about each other and the stories they are telling together. Lots of big laughs, meaningful conversations and bear hugs too. Life affirming’.<sup>140</sup> The company agree visitor invitations in advance and they continue to be themselves and work authentically demonstrating immediate trust, not feeling the need to perform a role as they frequently do in the carceral environment. There is a growing body of work considering the dynamic of audience engagement with theatre, including the Theatre and Performance Research Association (TaPRA) working group, the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) supported International Network for Audience Research in Performing Arts (iNARPA) and publications from Gareth White, Kirsty Sedgman and Ben Walmsley.<sup>141</sup> As I noted earlier, McAuley describes the hiddenness of rehearsal space by its very nature; it is the place where the actors work prior to sharing with external attendees. This raises the interesting question of how actors may be subtly different when an observer attends, which is an area I intend to research more fully in the future. To combat this, I insist visitors take an active role, whether reading in for an absent actor, leading warm-up games or giving directorial notes (depending on their specialism) to remove the feeling of an assessing observer. Where initially there would have been a reticence to engage with anyone seen to be linked

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<sup>139</sup> Liz Walker, Deputy Governor HMP Leicester, Panel discussion following screening of *A Second Chance*, University of Leicester (5 November 2019).

<sup>140</sup> Ben Spiller, Artistic Director 1623Theatre, Tweeting after attending a rehearsal for *The Merchant*, HMP Gartree (22 November 2019).

<sup>141</sup> Gareth White, *Audience Participation in Theatre: Aesthetics of the Invitation* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Kirsty Sedgman, *The Reasonable Audience: Theatre Etiquette, Behaviour Policing, and the Live Performance Experience* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); Ben Walmsley, *Audience Engagement in the Performing Arts* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

to any form of authority, symptomatic of their shunning of the external world from which they feel excluded or marginalised, there is now an openness on their part to positively engage. They want academics and practitioners to see the work they are doing as they have a sense of pride in their creation and they also want the underpinning themes to be made available more widely within the prison estate to provide rehabilitative opportunities for others.

This desire to disseminate and share rehabilitative culture is also prevalent in the second long-term prison case study. HMP Stafford is a category C male prison with 750 inmates convicted of sexual offences and which was assessed relatively positively in the last inspection in 2016.<sup>142</sup> Governor Lubkowski passionately adhered to the mantra of ‘releasing citizens not offenders back into our communities’ and proactively supported the provision of creative activities and the incumbent Governor who replaced him continues this legacy.<sup>143</sup> Sex-offender prisons tend to have lower levels of violence and drugs than the general prison population, an overall ‘calmer atmosphere’ but have aging populations and the residents are often found to be more likely to be manipulative.<sup>144</sup> In March 2019 Lubkowski engaged me to create an ongoing drama group to run alongside the short-term interventions provided by Ride Out.<sup>145</sup> The prison recruited a dozen men to attend the first session where I introduced the concept of how this programme would work but was keen that the company was created by the men themselves, not a formulaic methodology of a

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<sup>142</sup> Peter Clarke, *Report of an Unannounced Inspection of HMP Stafford by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, 8-19 February 2016* (London: Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Prisons, April 2016), p. 5.

<sup>143</sup> HMP Stafford’s mission statement (2019).

<sup>144</sup> Manipulative tendencies of sex offenders stressed during author’s Corruption Prevention Awareness Training as part of Staff Induction, HMP Wakefield (9 January 2020).

<sup>145</sup> Rideout website, <http://www.rideout.org.uk/purpose.aspx>, [accessed 12 March 2020].

replicated 'prison theatre company' such as Shakespeare Behind Bars.<sup>146</sup> The group dynamic was noticeably different in HMP Stafford than HMP Gartree, which can largely be attributed to the characters involved. Of the original recruits, a number decided that acting was not for them but those who continued recruited others and attendance was never a significant issue.



9. The Visits Hall, HMP Stafford, where Emergency Shakespeare rehearsals are held (August 2019),  
Photo: Rowan Mackenzie

Rehearsals were held in the Visits Hall, a large, airy space in a separate building and which the men would have previously attended only for visits from friends and family (those who have maintained external contact as some had no visitors at all during their sentence).

The group spanned five decades of ages with a range of backgrounds and ethnic origins.

HMIP noted:

<sup>146</sup> Shakespeare Behind Bars, founded in 1995 by Curt Tofteland, all of the programmes in three states follow his model of 'circles of trust' [www.shakespearebehindbars.org](http://www.shakespearebehindbars.org) [accessed 11 April 2020].

the relationships between staff and prisoners were generally good, with 85% of prisoners saying they were treated with respect. However, the perceptions of black and minority ethnic prisoners of their treatment was less favourable<sup>147</sup>

The enrolment of one Asian and two black men was a positive step and one of these, Mark, went on to play the lead role in the first production whilst a third black man was enlisted to assist with music for the performance. Racial tensions never became an issue with Emergency Shakespeare (or The Gallowfield Players which is also multi-cultural).

However, there were challenges to deal with; one individual in particular, Liam, antagonised the group throughout with his assumed superiority on the topic of Shakespeare and his often-unpleasant comments to other members of the group. His interpersonal skills were evidently underdeveloped and he lacked the ability to either understand or care that his behaviour and comments were causing anger. A number of disagreements arose during sessions but these were usually calmed relatively quickly and the group able to move on productively. Several members of staff suggested that I remove him from the group but my opinion was that in the external world they would all have to deal with people they disliked and so to expel him would not be beneficial.<sup>148</sup> I was however very mindful of the mistake Patricia Jennings identifies that many who work with people who have suffered trauma 'ignore inappropriate behaviour'.<sup>149</sup> This required me to speak to him on a number of

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<sup>147</sup> Clarke, *Inspection of HMP Stafford 2016*, p. 5.

<sup>148</sup> Discussions with staff, HMP Stafford (2019).

<sup>149</sup> Jennings, *The Trauma Sensitive Classroom*, p. 72.



occasions outside of the sessions, tackle some of the most challenging comments within the context of the group and request that staff address with him his behaviour and the consequences of its continuance. He began to temper his outbursts, which would usually be over his not feeling he had a large enough role, some slight he imagined or his antagonising the group over some element he wanted to insist on when the rest of the group had reached a different consensus. Ray wrote in his rehearsal diary that he ‘could never work with him again’ emphasising the difficulty of the interpersonal relationships with this particular individual.<sup>150</sup>

However, generally the group worked well together and there were clear instances where emotional development occurred along with improved communication, as evidenced by the quantitative data in Appendix 1 where confidence levels rose across all four areas assessed.<sup>151</sup> One such example is Brody who, during the first few sessions demonstrated very challenging behaviours with an air of simmering anger which seemed likely to explode at any time. I was warned by staff that he had been asked to leave Education due to clashing with a tutor and that they felt I was ‘wasting my time with him’.<sup>152</sup> In one of the early sessions he became ‘frustrated’ about the pace of the work and after verbally challenging me he ‘switched off halfway through the session’.<sup>153</sup> His demeanor worried me but I felt it appropriate to keep him within the group and gradually over the weeks he appeared to relax and to enjoy the rehearsals more. However, it was not until he asked me to read his

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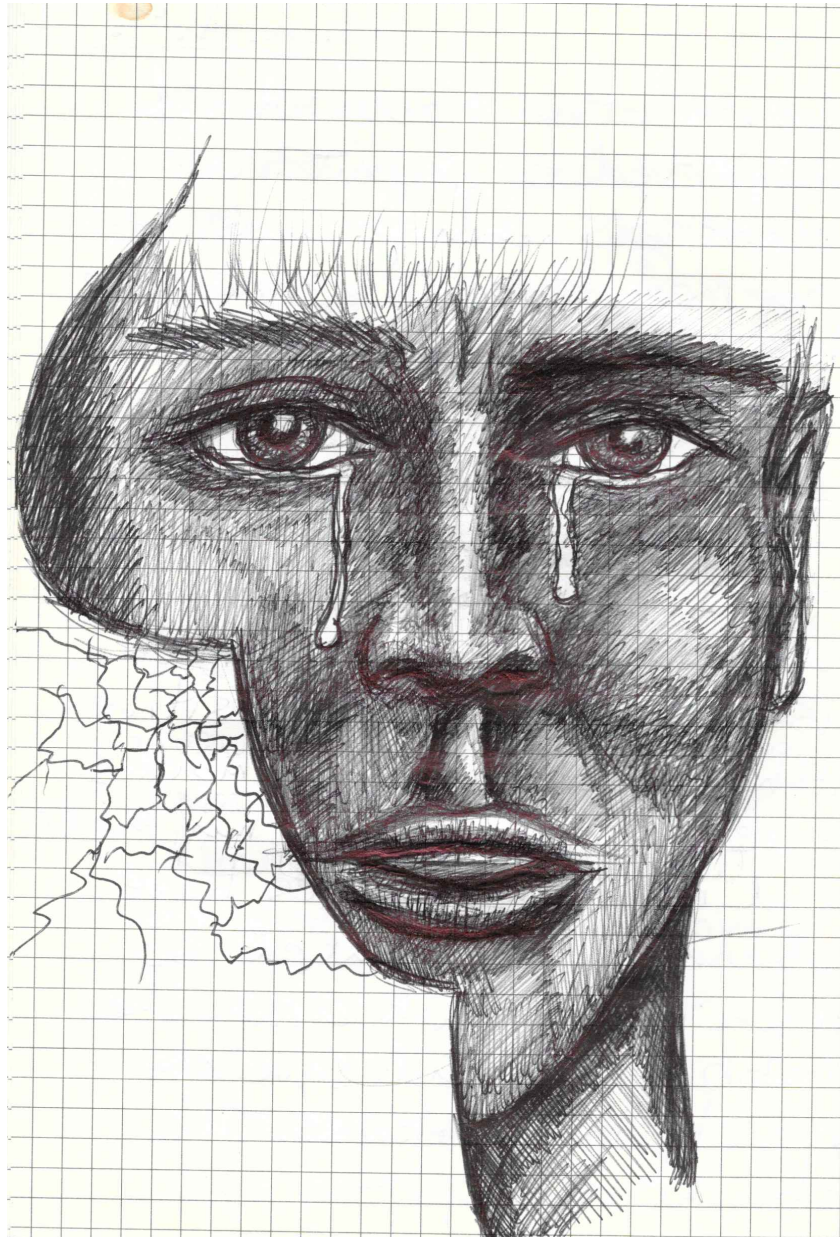
<sup>150</sup> Ray, Emergency Shakespeare, Rehearsal diary *Macbeth* (unpublished, September 2019).

<sup>151</sup> Emergency Shakespeare, self-assessment of confidence in ‘public speaking, communicating through speech, communicating through written word and empathy with others’ pre and post-intervention, completed by 20 participants (2019), Appendix 1.

<sup>152</sup> Informal comment made by member of staff at HMP Stafford regarding Brody during the formation of Emergency Shakespeare (April 2019).

<sup>153</sup> Brody, Emergency Shakespeare, Rehearsal diary *Macbeth* (unpublished, June 2019).

rehearsal diary that the full extent of what had happened during his involvement in the first Shakespeare production became apparent:



10. A sketch from Brody's rehearsal diary for *Macbeth*, drawn amidst the pages detailing his mental health issues (June 2019), Courtesy of Brody

A little over six months ago I was as close to suicide as I have ever been, I can't forget just how strong the intensity was. From there I nearly lost it completely as I struggled with my internal conflict. The medication settled that and the anxiety and depression faded. It was whilst being on the medication that Mark suggested

that I join the group. However, in the back of my mind I still felt the lure of the darkness I had succumbed to, just how far could I push my mind? Could I really fracture myself? The desire to return to that torn mental state was a feeling which was formulating into a plan. The medication kept me in a state of limbo and I wanted to come off the pills. As I did I hoped I would find the darkness I had begun to miss, but it never came. Taking all factors in: gym, chilled working environment, counselling to help me understand, art, this group. Emergency Shakespeare has given me a way to express myself in another form, it's something I've wanted to do for a while. It has been a positive factor in the transformation of my thinking [...]

So what does the drama group give me? I'm committed to it, I enjoy it. I know I can use the spectrum of emotions that I have struggled with for years now; especially within the group. I'd like to challenge myself more, yet I am also conscious of my mood changes around Xmas time. Will I be setting myself up for a fail by committing to the next play? Quite possibly, I will just have to wait and see. Maybe I will be different this year, I do have something to look forward to – *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.<sup>154</sup>

As Gabrielle Iverson affirms 'the last thing we need to do when someone is in this meltdown is abandon them – we need to stand with them, to witness' and whilst she made this comment in the context of teaching traumatised children it has the same validity to the way in which Brody needed support while he worked through his 'meltdown' and reached a

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<sup>154</sup> Brody, Emergency Shakespeare, Rehearsal diary *Macbeth* (unpublished, 17 September 2019).

more emotionally stable place.<sup>155</sup> This substantial extract from his diary demonstrates self-identified progress with communication through alternative forms of expression and in emotional growth with his articulation of utilising the spectrum of emotions he has



11. Brody discussing a directorial decision with me during rehearsals for *Macbeth*, Emergency Shakespeare, The Visits Hall, HMP Stafford (September 2019), Photo: Monica Cru-Hall.

previously struggled with. He was able to recognise a likely mood dip during the festive period and he was the one who asked if we could rehearse on 29<sup>th</sup> December 2019. His level of engagement remained high and when we spoke he told me that he felt more mentally balanced due to the continuity rehearsals provided.

<sup>155</sup> Professor Gabrielle Ivinson, *Rethinking Pedagogy*, paper given at Prison Learning Academic Network seminar, Manchester (6 November 2019).

Another actor, Batu, described himself as ‘severely autistic’ and initially found rehearsals difficult, spending much of the first few months in near silence and when asked to speak his lines as Macduff would do so without any apparent emotion.<sup>156</sup> He wrote in his diary ‘on a personal level I struggle a lot with my words and actions’ and though he attended every week he exhibited few external signs of enjoyment.<sup>157</sup> He studiously avoided any physical contact and was often defensive when any feedback on his acting was given, taking it as criticism rather than an attempt to help him improve. Difficulties interacting with others was identified as a superordinate theme in a recent study of prison experiences for those with autism.<sup>158</sup> My sense is that if the sessions had taken place over a short period of time they would have left him uncomfortable and without the opportunity to gain tangible benefits from the experience. However, during the six months of rehearsals for the first production he began to improve both in his acting (becoming more free in his movements and expression) and in his cohesion with the group. He presented as extremely introverted during early sessions but he appreciated ‘focusing on our actions and portrayal of emotions’ and repeatedly wrote of his enjoyment and the support he felt within the group as he developed and refined his emotional communication strategies.<sup>159</sup> He used the felicitous physical and mental space of Sunday morning rehearsals to explore emotional expression which helped him with communicating more successfully with the group and the wider prison population. He epitomised the description Van Der Kolk gives of his own child’s growth when enrolled in drama classes: ‘theater gave him a chance to deeply and physically

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<sup>156</sup> Batu, Emergency Shakespeare, Rehearsal diary *Macbeth* (unpublished, July 2019).

<sup>157</sup> Batu, Emergency Shakespeare, Rehearsal diary *Macbeth* (unpublished, July 2019).

<sup>158</sup> Luke P. Vintner, Gayle Dillon and Belinda Winder, ‘“People don’t like you when you’re different”: exploring the prison experiences of autistic individuals’, *Psychology, Crime & Law* (June 2020), [doi.org/10.1080/1068316X.2020.1781119](https://doi.org/10.1080/1068316X.2020.1781119).

<sup>159</sup> Batu, Emergency Shakespeare, Rehearsal diary *Macbeth* (unpublished, August 2019)..

experience what it was like to be someone other than the learning-disabled, oversensitive boy that he had gradually become'.<sup>160</sup> This appeared to be the case for Batu, his self-confidence grew to such a degree that he asked for a larger role in the second play. He began to make jokes within the group expressing a dry sense of humour which the others had not seen before and began to laugh at his own foibles in a group setting, demonstrating enhanced self-awareness and confidence.



12. Batu and Mark enacting the confrontation scene between Wade (Macbeth) and Macduff during dress rehearsal in the chapel, HMP Stafford (September 2020), Photo: Rowan Mackenzie.

Batu's experience resonates with the experiences within the learning-disabled theatre companies I now wish to explore. In both contexts we see the benefits of

<sup>160</sup> Van Der Kolk, p. 331.



communication, trust and autonomy develop within longer-term initiatives. The first learning disabled company is Blue Apple Theatre, founded in 2005, with the aim 'to challenge prejudice and transform the lives of people with a learning disability'.<sup>161</sup> They have a strong agenda for addressing disability issues through their core company, outreach projects, research initiatives and advocacy work. They commissioned a Big Lottery Fund supported *Evaluation Report* on the impact of their work in 2019 which used self-assessment analysis tools to quantify the impact in a range of areas such as social networks, community participation, social skills and behaviours.<sup>162</sup> The findings suggested 'positive improvements in members' confidence levels in accessing new places in the community and asking for help', 'member's social skills were beginning to increase through the drama-based games, activities, skills and experiences' and 'an increase in social network members'.<sup>163</sup> This independent evaluation provides quantifiable evidence which aligns with my own ethnographic research about the benefits of the work in developing confident communication and supporting emotional growth.

As part of their 2019 theme of reconciliation they performed an adaptation of *The Tempest* and invited me to work with them as both Shakespeare consultant and researcher. I attended several rehearsals and conducted semi-structured interviews with some of the more experienced cast members. Blue Apple Theatre and I co-convened a workshop at the *Applying Shakespeare II Symposium* in June 2019 and I subsequently published on it in

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<sup>161</sup> Blue Apple Theatre, <http://blueappletheatre.com/> [accessed 12 August 2020].

<sup>162</sup> Michelle Collard, *Blue Apple Community Drama and Dance Projects Evaluation Report* (August 2019) <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/55f7cab7e4b0c173c6bf223c/t/5e149d5ef98bf1711b3bbbf1/1578409312124/Blue+Apple+Evaluation+Final+Report+-+August+2019.pdf> [accessed 12 April 2020].

<sup>163</sup> Collard, p. 23-25.

*Drama*.<sup>164</sup> My inclusion of it here is specific in scope and not a general overview of their rehearsal methodology. Artistic Director Richard Conlon edited the script and cast the play before they undertook a table reading and proceeded to rehearsals.<sup>165</sup> Rehearsals took place in various studios at the University of Winchester where the company are based and the shift of location for the ten core members seemed to have little impact on their ability to focus during rehearsals. The majority of the core members have been working together for many years so the sense of cohesion within the group is strong, which perhaps made this spatial relocation less of an issue. They were evidently familiar with the spaces themselves, primarily lecture theatres on the campus, and the company had been using these for over a year at the time this production was in rehearsal so none were unfamiliar locations. This suggested that the specific physical space began to take on less importance once the social space of the group was embedded within the university campus. Unfortunately, as Conlon himself identifies, ‘these people have been brought up to be compliant so they will often tell us what we want’, so it is unlikely they would have raised concerns about the various locations.<sup>166</sup>

The larger, non-core cast, many of whom require more specific support, predominantly worked separately from the core group until final rehearsals and they used the plot as a starting point from which to create new, improvised scenes based on their reaction to discovering they were shipwrecked on an island. Conlon’s view was that this would give them the opportunity to be involved at a level they were capable of; for some

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<sup>164</sup> Rowan Mackenzie and Blue Apple Theatre, ‘“I do forgive thy rankest fault” Workshop’, *Applying Shakespeare II Symposium*, Guildford School of Acting (1 June 2019); Rowan Mackenzie, ‘I do forgive thy rankest fault: *The Tempest* from Blue Apple Theatre Company,’ *Drama*, 26,1, (2020), 25-31.

<sup>165</sup> Richard Conlon, interview with author, University of Winchester (19 January 2019).

<sup>166</sup> Conlon, interview.



this would be as simple as a few lines whilst others created elaborate backstories for their fictional characters. These new scenes are discussed at length in my article, considering the way in which they reflected the plot of *The Tempest* yet also gave the actors the opportunity to speak back to the political turmoil which the world experienced during 2019 – a time of protracted Brexit negotiations and concerns about President Trump’s behaviour. The play was organised so that the new scenes could be included for the performances in June 2019 but removed for the subsequent planned tour. The tour (which has been indefinitely postponed due to COVID-19) would involve only the core actors and was due to include an abridged performance and talkback opportunities. This decision for the size of the tour cast was taken due to practical considerations of costs and the reality of touring for those members who are less independent and would have needed greater levels of care and support. However, they had the opportunity to work within the main company and experience the excitement and commitment of putting on a professional theatre production with the intention that in time some of them may develop skills which would enable them to step up into the core company.

During rehearsals the non-core group was asked to think about how they would feel as the lowest echelons of ship’s crew arriving on an unknown island and the scenes were then built from their responses. One girl spoke only single words, responding to the turmoil in which she found herself with an outraged ebullition of ‘scraps?’ in response to the concern that when the nobility left the island those remaining would be forced to ‘live off scraps’.<sup>167</sup> In contrast, young actor Kym Nash created Sam Pigeon, a cabin boy who had

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<sup>167</sup> Richard Conlon, *The Tempest - New Scenes* (unpublished, 2019), p. 10.



13. Kym Nash working on physicality for his character Sam Pigeon during rehearsals for *The Tempest*+, watched by Richard Conlon and other members of the cast, University of Winchester, Blue Apple Theatre (April 2019), Photo: Rowan Mackenzie

endured a life of drudgery prior to arrival on the island. Nash spoke about Pigeon's initial desire to achieve social mobility in this new world but that he then 'realises it's hard and he wants to go home.'<sup>168</sup> The environment for newer cast members to feel comfortable and confident to express themselves and their opinions was empathetically created through simple warm up games, clear introductions of any new person or activity and the support of a team of dedicated volunteers.<sup>169</sup> Nash described his enjoyment of being involved with Blue Apple as 'I just enjoy the friendship and the love the cast gives each other, even if one of us is feeling down, we're like a family'.<sup>170</sup> This description is so similar to the words

<sup>168</sup> Kym Nash, semi-structured interview, University of Winchester (16 April 2019).

<sup>169</sup> Blue Apple Theatre Company rehearsals are supported by a number of volunteers who assist Conlon and the company, supporting those who need additional support.

<sup>170</sup> Kym Nash, tweet (@nashertv\_yt) (12 January 2020).

Wayne used in HMP Gartree where he described ‘the Gallowfield family’.<sup>171</sup> Whilst the two locations and life experiences of these young men could not be more different, they have both suffered the trauma of marginalisation and their references to the actors as family demonstrates a strongly bonded sense of community which transcends the physical, appropriated place in which they rehearse.



14. James Elsworthy and Katy Francis sharing a short scene they had worked on during rehearsal for the rest of the group, Blue Apple Theatre, University of Winchester (February 2019), Photo: Rowan Mackenzie

In contrast to the varied locations of Blue Apple Theatre rehearsals is the methodology of Acting Up!, the SEN youth theatre of York-based Riding Lights Theatre Company. This company of 11-19-year olds rehearses and performs in the Friargate Theatre,

<sup>171</sup> Wayne, The Gallowfield Players, Rehearsal diary *Julius Caesar* (unpublished, September 2019).

directed by Kelvin Goodspeed. In 2016 they performed an adaptation of *The Tempest* (their first Shakespeare production), with which I was involved. This gave me the opportunity to explore with the group their theatrical experience throughout rehearsals and performance. The decision to rehearse in the same location as the performances was a conscious one to allow the young people to become familiar with the space. The small, black-painted theatre had a cave-like quality to it and by using the same staging from day one of rehearsals there was never the potential issue of transference and the added complexities which this can bring in terms of entrances and exits. For children with complex needs the movement to a new location can be disconcerting and impact on their ability to focus on the production whilst their senses are being bombarded with new aural and visual cues.

Patricia Jennings writes that trauma-informed teaching must ‘at all costs, avoid responses that might trigger the students’ feelings of powerlessness and fear’.<sup>172</sup> The decision to work in the same location throughout provided a sense of consistency which alleviated fear responses and encouraged the cast to feel comfortable in the space, developing a sense of ownership. Those with more complex needs required assistance onstage and Aerial became a choral role with multiple individuals sharing his much-edited lines to allow the less experienced members of the group to experience speaking a few lines in their debut performance. There was also a conscious directorial decision to use props from the outset to facilitate familiarity with them, again reminiscent of Carlson’s concept of theatrical ghosting.<sup>173</sup> Interestingly, the availability of props throughout the rehearsal

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<sup>172</sup> Jennings, p. 90.

<sup>173</sup> Carlson, p. 11.

process as being a positive way of enabling naturalness with them was also requested by Martin, one of The Gallowfield Players when reflecting on the rehearsal process.<sup>174</sup>

Goodspeed and Assistant Director Jenna Drury worked hard to balance the spectrum of needs; from younger, largely non-verbal participants to a high functioning autistic young man (Tom) who played Prospero. The play underwent two edits – an initial, shortened text was handed out scene by scene as the actors worked through the story together (to avoid confusion or over-facing anyone), then additional cuts were made based on the cast's ability to perform each line and scene. A number of lines of the script were annotated with brackets signifying that the plot would continue to make sense if these needed to be cut late into the process. Many of the lines were reduced to simple phrases or at times just a single word to allow the actors to embody their role where verbal communication was a significant issue. Scenes such as the one involving Trinculo, Stephano and Caliban at the mouth of Prospero's cave became very physical theatre with few spoken lines and focus directed to the spectacle of their theft of the garish garments. The actors performed an almost farcical comedy routine where they grabbed and dropped the clothing whilst running around in an apparently drunken state.

Tom memorised Prospero's lines in a single week but struggled with group interaction and became agitated if progress was slow. He usually sat apart from the group, listening to music as this appeared to calm him. Goodspeed told me that Tom had been prone to outbursts and that controlling his temper was a challenge.<sup>175</sup> However, during the

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<sup>174</sup> Martin, The Gallowfield Players, *Reflections on Creative Space in HMP Gartree* (unpublished, October 2019).

<sup>175</sup> Kelvin Goodspeed, conversation following rehearsal, Friargate Theatre, York (May 2016).

course of the rehearsal process he became more willing to engage with the others and at times proactively helped some of the newer cast. One such example was Goodspeed's own son (Gary) who often needed assistance to be at the right place on stage. Tom calmly guided him through a scene and offstage with gentle physical contact, in much the same way as one of the volunteers would have done, a significant act as physical contact was something Tom avoided. Aversion to social touching is common for people with autism and it was evident with both Tom and Batu.<sup>176</sup> Tom overcame this aversion, demonstrating empathy with Gary and a desire to assist, making the play run more smoothly. Tom's level of self-awareness was apparent in the post-performance debrief where they were each asked to draw the outline of a person on flipchart paper and then to add details of the parts they had liked and disliked and how they resembled or differed from their character. Many of them took this activity at a superficial level, likening themselves to their character because 'I like to be silly' and 'I like to play music'.<sup>177</sup> However, he reflected more deeply, stating that he had 'encountered antagonistic relationships in the past' and he offered the explanation that both he and Prospero found it 'difficult to engage with others, preferring to be loners than part of a group.'<sup>178</sup> His unprompted engagement of me in conversation was significant progress and for him to share such a deeply personal acknowledgement was unexpected.

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<sup>176</sup> Ilone Croy, Helen Geide, Martin Paulus, Kerstin Weidner and Hakan Olausson, 'Affective touch awareness in mental health and disease relates to autistic traits: An explorative neurophysiological exploration' *Psychiatry Research*, 245 (30 November 2016), 491-96.

<sup>177</sup> Acting Up! debrief drawings (unpublished, October 2016).

<sup>178</sup> Tom, verbal comment during Acting Up! debrief session, Friargate Theatre, York (October 2016).



the external world are temporarily separated from the theatrical endeavours.<sup>179</sup> Goodspeed told me that a number of these children were in the care system with little or no familial contact but this regular commitment of weekly rehearsals and the ability to develop their creativity appeared to allow some of that sense of family to develop within the group. There were occasional arguments and frayed tempers during rehearsals but an acceptance that everyone had a contribution to make and differences required resolution. They became more at ease within the space and would often comment on the spatiality in relation to the play even when the stage was bare. This became their social space in which they felt comfortable and were able to focus on Goodspeed's mantra that 'your lines are your character's thoughts' rather than on feeling self-conscious or being distracted by an overload of sensory cues.<sup>180</sup>

## Conclusion

This chapter examined the use of Shakespeare in creative settings, whether for the purposes of rehearsing a performance or simply using his work as an engagement mechanism. Analysis of the case studies on the intersectional continuum of space- time- power considered the extent to which shorter term projects can sow the seeds for change but only those with a longer time frame enabled those seeds to take root and flourish. The key elements of emotional growth, positive autonomy, development of communication and the importance of trauma-informed methodology can be seen to some degree across interventions of all lengths. However, the very nature of developing consistent and robust

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<sup>179</sup> Doreen Massey, *For Space* (Los Angeles & London: Sage, 2005), p. 7.

<sup>180</sup> Kelvin Goodspeed, during rehearsals for *The Tempest*, Friargate Theatre, York (May 2016).



processes by which marginalised groups can begin to possess positive autonomous power requires time. Whilst much funding for the arts is done on a short-term basis this limits the impact of work with marginalised groups, either through the delivery of stop-start work or an uncertainty of the future of projects which are continually seeking funding. As Mark (Emergency Shakespeare), who undertook a two-week Rideout project commented

there's a real low when a project finishes but when I went to my cell after our performance I knew we were starting again on Sunday and that made it all good – I could enjoy the buzz.<sup>181</sup>

Whilst it is problematic to attribute an individual's emotional growth or their increased communication skills to a singular source, given the complexity of human nature and the way in which we are all influenced by a myriad of experiences and external factors, my research demonstrates that it plays a part in imbuing participants with the desire and the ability to communicate.

Shakespearean scholar Ramona Wray challenges the evidence frequently presented of the efficacy of prison Shakespeare projects, stating 'prisoner statements [...] are rarely interrogated and tend to be taken at face value'.<sup>182</sup> At an individual project level this claim has some validity, especially in the context that many of the accounts are written by practitioners with a personal involvement and the continuation of the project is likely to be dependent on funding secured from the reporting of achievement against certain success

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<sup>181</sup> Mark, Emergency Shakespeare, conversation with the author (29 September 2019).

<sup>182</sup> Ramona Wray, 'The Morals of *Macbeth* and Peace as Process: Adapting Shakespeare in Northern Island's Maximum Security Prison', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 62:3 (2011), 340-63, (p. 343).

criteria. Resonating with this is Conlon's comment that many of those with learning disabilities will aim to please those facilitating the work by giving answers they think are being sought. However, against this backdrop of personal testimonials and the inherent challenges of securing funding, wider conclusions can be drawn. Rob Pensalfini devotes a chapter of his monograph to the validation of 'the claims of prison Shakespeare' where he considers the overall body of evidence in relation to impacts on individuals, culture, community and artists.<sup>183</sup> The breadth of interventions with marginalised groups across all strata of society and the positive outcomes documented by practitioners, participants, academics and researchers cannot be dismissed as being without evidence. Whilst pinpointing the specifics of how and why these interventions are so successful is difficult, my attempt to define the effect across the strands of emotional growth, positive autonomy, developed communication and trauma-informed methodology opens up new opportunities for dialogue in this area. The consideration of the impact of longevity on effectiveness is one which is rarely explicitly considered with these types of project but it demonstrates the importance of the time needed for changes to take root and be nurtured as those stifled by societal expectation use the cultural capital of Shakespeare to make their voices heard.

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<sup>183</sup> Rob Pensalfini, 'The Claims of Prison Shakespeare' in *Prison Shakespeare: For these deep shames and great indignities* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 130-188.



16. Blue Apple Theatre Company, *The Tempest+*, Theatre Royal, Winchester (June 2019), Photo: Mike Hall Photography.

## Chapter 2: Performative Spaces

Without an audience, a performance is a rehearsal. Audiences have an intrinsic and complex role to play in the live production of any work and this interaction between audience and actors is what differentiates live theatre from its filmed counterpart. Mark Rylance describes how a performance ‘is a conversation really. If it is just a one-way presentation then it is dull. It is dead, it’s got to be a two-way thing’.<sup>1</sup> This chapter explores the ways in which juxtaposition of Shakespeare’s cultural capital with marginalised voices can create heterotopias in which the world appears differently from expectation; instigating changes in



17. Prospero and Ariel (Tommy Jessop and James Benfield), Blue Apple Theatre, *The Tempest*+ Winchester Royal Theatre (June 2019), photo: Mike Hall Photography.

<sup>1</sup> Mark Rylance interviewed by Rob Ferris in *Shakespeare Comes to Broadmoor: The actors are come hither* ed. by Murray Cox, (London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishing, 1992), pp. 27-42 (p. 31).

social perception. To draw on Tompkins' description of heterotopias enabling 'other possibilities for socio-political alternatives to the existing order', appropriating Shakespeare as their own enables marginalised communities to demonstrate their ability to possess cultural capital which is frequently denied them.<sup>2</sup> Social exclusion is a negative experience for those affected and public performances of Shakespeare are often exclusive, an academic and social bastion into which the great actors and critics of the world are admitted. Peter Brook argued 'each line in Shakespeare is an atom. The energy that can be released is infinite – if we can split it open'.<sup>3</sup> Traditionally that atomic power has lain with the middle and upper-classes but inverting the cultural capital of Shakespeare means it can be possessed and harnessed by those otherwise marginalised. Tompkins theorises that between 'the concrete space of the theatre venue, the imagined locations depicted in that venue and/or the social context for the performance' the heterotopia is created.<sup>4</sup> In this chapter the focus is on how these intersect and the ways in which marginalised people engaging with performances of Shakespeare 'demonstrate the rethinking and reordering of space, power and knowledge'.<sup>5</sup>

I focus on two different types of performative space: demarcated space and appropriated space. The former constitutes a theatre venue with the intrinsic cultural signifiers which inspire an expectation of the performance; it is the disruption of these expectations which gives the power of potential change to the heterotopia created. In contrast, appropriated spaces are those locations which have a primary use other than theatre and therefore the

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<sup>2</sup> Joanne Tompkins, *Theatre's Heterotopias: Performance and the Cultural Politics of Space* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p.6.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Brook, *Evoking and Forgetting Shakespeare* (London: Nick Hern Books, 1998), p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> Tompkins, p. 16.

<sup>5</sup> Tompkins, p.6.

act of a theatrical performance disrupts existing embedded signifiers. A chapel, dining hall or visits hall becomes a place of theatrical performance, intrinsically altering the fabric of the location in the minds of those involved; often long after the performance has concluded. There are further differentiating factors in consideration of performances: the composition of the cast and the composition of the audience will also be considered. My hypothesis within this chapter is that the use of Shakespeare as a performative vehicle enables the creation of a heterotopia by engaging people through the use of his cultural capital and then revealing the unexpected through the way that capital is owned by marginalised people. This inversion of the cultural capital whilst at the same time drawing some validation from it allows marginalised groups to assert their rights to access culture but also challenges perceptions frequently held about those groups.

Recent decades have seen rising academic interest in the interaction between performers and audiences including publications by Susan Bennett, Bruce McConachie, Caroline Heim, Kirsty Sedgman, Ben Walmsley and John Lutterbie.<sup>6</sup> Bennett builds on seminal texts from the 1980s which examined the role of the audience (including Daphna Ben Chaim and Jill Dolan) to articulate her arguments about:

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<sup>6</sup> Susan Bennett, *Theatre Audiences: A theory of production and reception, Second Edition* (London: Routledge, 1997); Bruce McConachie, *Engaging Audiences: A Cognitive Approach to Spectating in the Theatre* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Caroline Heim, *Audience as Performer: The changing role of theatre audiences in the twenty-first century* (London: Routledge, 2015); Sedgman, *The Reasonable Audience*; Ben Walmsley, *Audience Engagement in the Performing Arts: A Critical Analysis* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan: New Directions in Cultural Policy Research, 2019); John Lutterbie, *An Introduction to Theatre, Performance and the Cognitive Sciences* (London: Methuen Drama, 2020).

the explosion of new venues, companies, and performance methods, there is a non-traditional theatre which has recreated a flexible actor-audience relationship and a participatory spectator/actor.<sup>7</sup>

McConachie examines the cognitive impact of being a member of a theatre audience and the intersectionality between genetic cognition and cultural memory. He challenges the way theatre scholars have classified spectators and often likened 'audience experience to a version of reading', instead focusing on the 'spectator action and interaction'.<sup>8</sup> He argues that the cognitive impact of being an audience member differs wildly from the act of reading text. He brings the work of J.E.Malpass on the 'synthesis of experience, space, place, knowledge and humanity' into the context of theatre and explores the importance of the placing of the audience physically, socially and culturally in a way which resonates with my practice-based research in which common humanity is explored through Shakespeare.<sup>9</sup> Heim develops this role of participatory audience further, arguing that:

similar to the onstage actors the audience perform for an audience [...] they play a role and they wear a costume [...] The audience only actualise as a troupe of performers in the presence of their co-troupe, the actors.<sup>10</sup>

I am unconvinced that all audiences play a conscious exterior role presented expressly for others in the audience to view. However a blurring of the lines between audience and actors

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<sup>7</sup> Bennett, p. 18.

<sup>8</sup> McConachie, p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> McConachie, p. 132.

<sup>10</sup> Heim, p. 20.

occurs to some extent where theatre with marginalised groups takes place, particularly where immersive, multi-sensory engagement is encouraged. Sedgman explores the 'binary division between active and passive spectatorship', tracing the development of etiquette expectations of behaviour in this context.<sup>11</sup> She examines the rhetorical power of 'discourses of reasonableness' regarding audience behaviour, although primarily in the context of neurotypical audiences, acknowledging that disruptions can be outside of the scope of personal control for some people.<sup>12</sup>

Walmsley's monograph puts forward an agenda for interdisciplinary audience research and his conclusion is that:

performing arts audiences are brimming within untapped potential: as the very people who make performance manifest, they are the only people who can make sense of and confer meaning on art.<sup>13</sup>

These diverse perspectives on the role of the audience articulate differing facets of a truly non-homogeneous grouping. Audiences are collections of individuals often brought together solely for a production and each attend with their own perceptions and experiences. The notion of 'conferring meaning on art' is a complex one; each of us as audience-member has their own personal experience which will be reflective of emotional, sociological and physical baggage which we have acquired throughout life, although some commonality may be detected across audience responses to productions. Lutterbie suggests

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<sup>11</sup> Sedgman, *The Reasonable Audience*, p. 23.

<sup>12</sup> Sedgman, *The Reasonable Audience*, p.88 and p. 104.

<sup>13</sup> Walmsley, p. 239.



dynamic systems theory (repurposed from the field of mathematics) as a model for understanding performance, identifying the four elements of boundary conditions (defining the limits within which the performance can take place such as the physical theatre), control parameters (flexible limitations such as choice of play), perturbation (unanticipated audience responses) and emergence (of the actors' adaptive behaviours).<sup>14</sup> Claire Bishop argues the 'desire to activate the audience in participatory art is....a drive to emancipate it from a state of alienation'.<sup>15</sup> In many instances of applied theatre the audience are asked to undertake a different role than in mainstream professional theatre, invited to engage in a slightly different way. The complexity of audience – actor – performance intersectionality becomes more pronounced and nuanced when it involves those from marginalised groups, as this chapter demonstrates. Drawing on the heterotopic potential of inverting Shakespeare's cultural capital, people otherwise on the fringes of society are able to instead be appreciated for 'their creative talents, projecting their best selves' and claiming ownership of his iconic works, whether as artists or audience-members.<sup>16</sup>

The space within which performance takes place, whether demarcated or appropriated also nuances the reception due to the cultural signifiers embedded within the location. The traditional theatre space of a purpose-built stage is *demarcated space*: it was intended for the purpose of putting on performances carrying a series of cultural connotations and expectations, as examined by academics such as Keir Elam and Marvin

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<sup>14</sup> Lutterbie, p. 20-21.

<sup>15</sup> Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London and New York: Verso, 2012), p. 275.

<sup>16</sup> Feedback questionnaires, The Gallowfield Players' *The Merchant*, The Visits Hall, HMP Gartree (29 January 2020).

Carlson in their work on theatrical semiotics.<sup>17</sup> This demarcated space informs audiences about the type of event they are going to see, bringing either anticipation at the thought of a production or triggering anxiety regarding expectations and etiquette. The exception is



18. Blue Apple Theatre, *The Tempest+* optimised the lighting and ambience of the Winchester Royal Theatre (June 2019), photo: Mike Hall Photography.

people with more complex learning disabilities who may not be involved in the decision-making process or comprehend the signifiers and where the decision was made by caregivers. Whilst those who are regular theatre-goers may find pleasure in the attendance at a location designed for this purpose, many from marginalised groups may feel intimidated by the experience. They may feel that this is not for them, be uncomfortable about what to wear or how to act or be concerned that they themselves or the person they

<sup>17</sup> Keir Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* (London: Methuen, 2002); Marvin Carlson, *Theatre Semiotics: Signs of life* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990).

are accompanying will not behave in the way society deems appropriate for the theatre. What McConachie describes as ‘our contemporary custom of engaging with performers through studied attention, emotional charged silences and occasional laughter’ may be impossible, given marginalised audiences’ physical or mental impairments, or implausible, given their mental health or their lack of experience of this mode of behaviour.<sup>18</sup>

This frequently leads to marginalised groups avoiding the experience of attending a theatre, as outlined in the Arts Council 2016 Report which documented the ‘ongoing concern about reaching out to audiences from different socio-economic backgrounds’ and that ‘only 6-8% of [London theatre goers] identified as having a disability’.<sup>19</sup> An increase in Arts Council grants for inclusive productions and initiatives such as *The Relaxed Performance Project* demonstrates a commitment to changing this reality but, as yet, the issues remain significant in encouraging attendance from marginalised groups. Demarcated space however, does serve as a validation of the authenticity of the experience; it adds additional cultural capital from performance in a space designed for this specific purpose. It also allows the production to utilize the trappings of theatre in the portrayal of the story, focusing audience emotions, encouraging ‘joint attention’ or applying sensory muting as required.<sup>20</sup>

In contrast *appropriated space* encompasses locations which have a primary usage other than theatre but have been repurposed for a period of time, however short or long-

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<sup>18</sup> McConachie, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> Arts Council England, *Analysis of Theatre in England* (London: BOP Consulting, 13 September 2016), [https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Analysis\\_theatre\\_England\\_16112016.pdf](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Analysis_theatre_England_16112016.pdf) [accessed 29 February 2020].

<sup>20</sup> M. Scaife and J.S. Bruner, ‘The capacity for joint visual attention in the infant’, *Nature*, 253 (1975), pp. 265-66 (p. 265) <https://www.nature.com/articles/253265a0> [accessed 3 October 2020].

term. Site-specific theatre became popular from the 1960s and has been influenced by Peter Brook and Deborah Warner amongst other directors, providing an opportunity to ‘disorder, distort and circulate texts’.<sup>21</sup> In recent years many buildings have been adapted to create theatrical locations for particular productions written or adapted for a specific site; Punchdrunk’s *Sleep No More* being one of the most famous (an immersive adaptation of *Macbeth* where the audience ‘create their own journeys through a film noir world’ in the McKittrick Hotel, New York), with other notable examples including Shakespeare in Yosemite and Grid Iron’s numerous works.<sup>22</sup> Theatre critic Andy Field railed against the



19. Emergency Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, performed in the appropriated space of the Visits Hall, HMP Stafford (17 September 2019), photo: George Vuckovitch Photography

<sup>21</sup> Peter Brooke, *The Empty Space* (London: Penguin Classics, 2008); Deborah Warner website, <https://www.deborahwarner.com/about> [accessed 3 October 2020]; William McEvoy, ‘Writing, texts and site-specific performance in the recent work of Deborah Warner’, *Textual Practice* 20:4 (2006), 591-614, (pp. 592), <https://www.tandfonline-com.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/doi/full/10.1080/09502360601058821> [accessed 3 October 2020].

<sup>22</sup> Punch Drunk website, <https://www.punchdrunk.org.uk/project/sleep-no-more/> [accessed 18 September 2020]; Shakespeare in Yosemite website, <https://yosemiteshakes.ucmerced.edu/> [accessed 18 September 2020]; Grid Iron website, <http://www.gridiron.org.uk/> [accessed 18 September 2020].

stretching of the term site-specific into a 'suffocating umbrella' encompassing all performances in non-theatre spaces.<sup>23</sup> For the productions I include within this thesis, the choice of setting is driven not by artistic design or site-specificity but by practicalities: an available room large enough to house the performance. This pragmatic choice is one often required by schools, community organisations and prisons, where there is no ability to locate performances within a purpose-built theatre. This appropriation of familiar space creates a different dynamic, presenting at once the familiar and the unknown. The space may have been used many times for its predominant purpose but now asks the audience and performers to suspend these memories to inhabit the stage-play world. It provides a known locale which may ease the nerves of those fearful of new places. However, it requires those engaging to utilize a different set of cultural and behavioral signifiers than they would usually do in that particular space.

Whilst divided by types of space in which the performance takes place, this chapter considers productions across two axes – the performers and the audience. The majority of theatre and performance studies focus on mainstream performances for mainstream audiences as these make up the majority of theatrical events with Arts Council research evidencing that '92% of customers purchasing theatre tickets were white, 92-94% did not identify as disabled'.<sup>24</sup> This thesis considers events where marginalised actors perform for mainstream audiences, mainstream actors perform for marginalised audiences and

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<sup>23</sup> Andy Field, 'Site-specific theatre? Please be more specific', *The Guardian* (6 February 2008), <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/theatreblog/2008/feb/06/sitespecifictheatrepleasebe>, [accessed 29 February 2020].

<sup>24</sup> Arts Council England, *Analysis of Theatre*, p. 55.

marginalised actors perform for their peers within marginalised groups. Matthew Reason makes an argument about the impact of learning disability theatre, which is equally applicable across other marginalised groups, when he states:

There is *something* about the intersection of audiences / aesthetics / learning disabilities / theatres that does *something* or asks *something* about the nature of spectatorship and our experiences of art.<sup>25</sup>

He does not attempt to crystalise this *something*, acknowledging it not to be a singular entity as theatre makers and audiences are not homogenous, but he does assert that this type of theatre 'disrupt[s] the very fundamentals of theatre'.<sup>26</sup> He attributes this to the actors blurring boundaries of reality and fiction and to the audience being asked to self-contemplate, 'provoking awareness of and reflection on their own act of perception'.<sup>27</sup>

Measuring the heterotopic effect of theatre is challenging as all research with audiences and actors is naturally subjective and does not lend itself easily to quantifiable outcomes. Whilst feedback can be and often is sought at the end of performances there is a very real possibility that the deeper impacts of the production may be felt more keenly after some time for reflection. Changes in perception and opinion may never be entirely attributable to a single production but the combined life experiences of which the performance may be one amongst many. Walmsley asserts that:

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<sup>25</sup> Matthew Reason, 'Ways of Watching: Five Aesthetics of Learning Disability Theatre', in *The Routledge Handbook of Disability Arts, Culture and Media*, ed. by Bree Hadley and Donna McDonald (London: Taylor and Francis, 2018), pp. 163-75 (p.164).

<sup>26</sup> Reason, 'Ways of Watching' p.173.

<sup>27</sup> Reason, 'Ways of Watching' p.173.

Audience research is inherently and inevitably cross-disciplinary. This is because any deep and rigorous understanding of audiences' experiences of the performing arts needs to draw on a range of complimentary methods drawn from different theoretical and empirical traditions and perspectives.<sup>28</sup>

He also acknowledges that 'audience studies [struggles] to cohere around a set of agreed methods and approaches' which he believes is needed for 'greater credibility'.<sup>29</sup>

My research base in this field utilises mixed methodology, combining audience questionnaires, semi-structured interviews with actors and audiences, anecdotal evidence captured during sessions and debriefs and published work within the field. Reports such as *Key Research Findings: The case for cultural learning* provide statistical evidence of the benefits of cultural and creative engagement.<sup>30</sup> My research then builds on this to extrapolate the specific benefits of heterotopic experiences using Shakespeare with marginalised audiences through qualitative evidence gained through my practice-based research. Assessing and understanding the direct impact on audiences and performers is a field which continues to grow but currently remains embryonic. A deeper understanding of the qualitative benefits can only be gained through ethnographic research, as articulated in the introduction.

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<sup>28</sup> Walmsley, p. 111.

<sup>29</sup> Walmsley, p. 112.

<sup>30</sup> Cultural Learning Alliance, *Key Research Findings: the case for cultural learning* (2017), <https://culturallearningalliance.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/CLA-key-findings-2017.pdf> [accessed 29 February 2020].

## Demarcated Spaces

In this section I draw on examples of marginalised performers in the case studies of Out of Character, Firebird Theatre and Acting Up! theatre companies as well as Flute Theatre where professional actors and learning-disabled children perform together. I will also examine some of the relaxed performances designed for marginalised audiences performed by non-marginalised actors. With marginalised performers, the heterotopia is a more conscious one; encouraging the audience to overcome any perceptions they may have about the limitations of those with learning disabilities or mental health issues to perform text-based work. These perceived limitations often preclude the idea that a marginalised group could tackle the complexity of Shakespeare's language. However, by making the performance their own these theatre companies demonstrate that he does not belong only to the economically or intellectually elite but to any who choose to engage with his themes and narratives. Performing or watching Shakespeare within a demarcated theatre space adds a validation to the experience especially for those usually marginalised; they too can take part in one of the highest forms of cultural capital in a location filled with theatrical signifiers.

There have been multiple campaigns over recent years to tackle the stigma of mental illness, confirming the continued reticence for people to speak up about mental ill-health.<sup>31</sup> Out of Character, a York based company founded in 2009, comprised entirely of performers who have been mental health service users, specifically challenges perceptions

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<sup>31</sup> Campaigns include World Mental Health Day, Mental Health Week, Men's Mental Health Month and Green Ribbon Campaign, <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/our-work/campaigns> [accessed 9 February 2020].



and stigma related to this topic.<sup>32</sup> They perform locally but also tour NHS events and academic institutions to provoke discussions about mental illness and service provision. They work with a combination of devised and textual pieces and are perhaps most famous for their productions which engage directly with service users' experiences.

In 2014 they created a pastiche of Shakespearean characters within a mental asylum entitled *Disturbing Shakespeare*. The aim of this production was to use Shakespeare to explore mental health from an unusual angle and they performed it at various venues including a number of university theatres. I have published an article in *Shakespeare Studies* on the heterotopic qualities of this production which I will summarise here as it is pertinent to the chapter.<sup>33</sup> The constructed space of the play was 'Bedlam'; the infamous psychiatric hospital during Shakespeare's era and to which the audience were transported through a combination of disparate beings muttering to themselves in the opening moments, Jacques' direct references to the place and the inhabitants' evident madness throughout the production.<sup>34</sup> The cultural capital of Shakespeare was employed by mental health service users enacting some of Shakespeare's most famous characters portraying visible signs of mental illness. Artistic Director, Paul Birch assumed audiences would be familiar with Ophelia's descent into madness, Lady Macbeth's 'come you spirits' and King Lear's tirade 'blow winds and crack your cheeks', amongst others.<sup>35</sup> Using these familiar lines in an

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<sup>32</sup> Out of Character Theatre Company website, <http://outofcharactertheatre.squarespace.com/about> [accessed 9 February 2020].

<sup>33</sup> Rowan Mackenzie, 'Disturbing Shakespeare and Challenging the Preconceptions', *Shakespeare Studies*, 40:7, ed. James R. Siemon and Diana E. Henderson (Plainsboro, NJ: Rosemont Publishing, 2019), pp. 49-60.

<sup>34</sup> Paul Birch throughout the script for *Disturbing Shakespeare* spelled Jaques as Jacques.

<sup>35</sup> Paul Birch, Artistic Director, Out of Character Theatre Company, interview with author (18 April 2016) William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. by Harold Jenkins (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1982), 4.5.1-73; William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. by Kenneth Muir (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1984), 1.5.40-54; William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, ed. by R.A. Foakes (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1997), 3.2.1-9, 3.2.14-24.

unfamiliar setting created a heterotopia through the way in which the stage-play world of the archetypal mental institution of Bedlam echoed with Shakespearean lines. Hearing classic lines associated with the theatre-going experience but portrayed in this production as the ramblings of a psychiatric unit inpatient was designed to have the effect of making the audience realise that mental ill-health is not something 'other', to be locked away in psychiatric units. Instead, it is an intrinsic part of society much as Shakespeare is, affecting individuals from all elements of the social strata. As Birch explains, Shakespeare created 'convincing and empathetic figures struggling with ill health'.<sup>36</sup>

The play combined comedy with tragedy and made social comment on the contentious issue of restraint of mental health patients through the gagging and physical removal of Bottom. A literal enactment of Titania's line 'tie up my love's tongue, bring him silently' saw him bound, gagged and dragged from the stage.<sup>37</sup> The *Mental Health Crisis Care* report documented over 100 instances of physical injury following mental health related restraint in England in 2012 and this inversion of the traditionally comic love scene in the forest into one of physical restraint within a secure hospital was jarring and powerful.<sup>38</sup> The magical world of the besotted lover was reimagined into the constrained world of Bedlam making the audience aware of the tangible and borderline-brutal effects of physical restraint within the mental health system.

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<sup>36</sup> Paul Birch, *Out of Character Blog* (31 August 2015), <http://outofcharactertheatre.squarespace.com/blog/2015/8/22/disturbing-shakespeare-is-put-to-rest>, [accessed 13 February 2020].

<sup>37</sup> William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, (ed.) Harold F. Brooks, (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1979), 3.1.194.

<sup>38</sup> MIND, *Mental Health Crisis Care: Physical Restraint in Crisis – A Report on Physical Restraint in Hospitals in England*, (foreword Dr. S.P. Sashidharan) (June 2013), [https://www.mind.org.uk/media-a/4378/physical\\_restraint\\_final\\_web\\_version.pdf](https://www.mind.org.uk/media-a/4378/physical_restraint_final_web_version.pdf) [accessed 24 July 2020].

This production toured a number of UK universities and included a post-show talk back session where the audience had the opportunity to discuss the performance with the cast, encouraging consideration of the changes of perspective brought about by the show's heterotopic nature. The feedback during the 18 months the company worked on and performed the piece was 'extremely warm' and the company have said they may choose to reprise it in the future.<sup>39</sup> Unfortunately there was no formal collation of audience feedback through questionnaires with which to support my research. However, I was able to interview the cast and have attended a number of their other productions which used theatre to explore mental ill-health in thought-provoking ways. The cast were initially nervous of performing Shakespeare as they felt it was going to be difficult and only two of them had previous experience of his work.<sup>40</sup> If they felt that Shakespeare would be challenging for them then it seems reasonable to extrapolate that audiences may have felt Shakespeare to be too demanding for a theatre company of mental health service users.

However, they took a 'deeply personal approach' to Shakespeare, augmenting the selected scenes with material written by the company to give an unexpected twist to the work, including a fervent defense of Richard III penned by an actor who is an avid Plantagenet enthusiast.<sup>41</sup> The company's approach is always to take mental health as the starting point but to push the work in unexpected directions, as they did with this pastiche and with their more recent *Fresh Visions* trilogy. *Fresh Visions* uses a science fiction paradigm to move away from the constraints of the realms of reality and demonstrate 'both values and criticism of different social models to demonstrate that healthcare is a lot more

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<sup>39</sup> Paul Birch, *Out of Character Blog*.

<sup>40</sup> Laurie Furnell, actor with Out of Character Theatre Company, interview with author, York (16 June 2016).

<sup>41</sup> Paul Birch, *Out of Character Blog*.

challenging and contradictory than we might think'.<sup>42</sup> The importance of engaging audiences in meaningful dialogue is summarised eloquently by one actor who explained:

When people watch one of our performances and interact with the characters, the meaning behind the story goes on and makes change over time. The dialogue that comes from the play about important and complex issues in society is just as important as the play itself.<sup>43</sup>

This change is in relation to perceptions the audience and the wider public have about those with mental health issues. Misconceptions about mental health issues abound and the stigmatisation of mental ill-health continues (as the MHFA and other websites document); Out of Character proactively try to combat these problems of public perceptions through theatre.<sup>44</sup> Quantifying this change is difficult but Birch and the actors feel that each performance has a ripple effect which spreads the word that mental illness does not preclude artistic achievement.<sup>45</sup>

As described in Chapter 1, Acting Up! youth theatre company rehearse and perform in the same space specifically to minimise any sensory issues of relocating for the performances as 'some of the actors need consistency of space'.<sup>46</sup> Their performances are attended only by families and caregivers but it is an opportunity for them to see these

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<sup>42</sup> Birch, quoted in 'A Fresh Vision for Mental Health', People's Health Trust, <https://www.peopleshealthtrust.org.uk/news/news-stories/fresh-vision-mental-health>, [accessed 9 February 2020].

<sup>43</sup> 'A Fresh Vision for Mental Health'.

<sup>44</sup> Mental Health First Aid social enterprise, <https://mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/about/> [accessed 06 February 2020].

<sup>45</sup> Birch, interview.

<sup>46</sup> Kelvin Goodspeed, interview with author, Friargate Theatre, York (5 June 2016).

young people working together positively, interacting with others, using their imaginations and performing. A large percentage of the group have autism spectrum disorder (ASD), although many have multiple SEN with ASD being only one of them. The 2001 National Research Council publication, *Educating Children with Autism* documents that 'shared symbolic play ...involves capacities for social attention, orientation, and knowledge, which are areas of difficulty for children with autism'.<sup>47</sup> The Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Support (SCERTS) educational model was developed in response to this publication and focuses on enabling children to become 'confident and competent social communicators'.<sup>48</sup> Many of the indicators they identify resonate with my research into the beneficial effects of Shakespeare with learning disabled participants, such as building trusting relationships, emotional expression and regulation and enhanced communication skills.<sup>49</sup> It has been argued that focus should be on:

broader and more dynamic measures, such as degree of success in communicative exchange, related dimensions of emotional expression and regulation, social-communicative motivation, social competence, peer relationships, and the child's competence and active participation in natural activities and environments.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Catherine Lord and James P. Magee (eds.), *Educating Children with Autism* (National Research Council: Consensus Study Report, 2001), <https://www.nap.edu/catalog/10017/educating-children-with-autism>, [accessed 10 March 2020].

<sup>48</sup> SCERTS Educational Model, <http://scerts.com/the-scerts-model/>, [accessed 10 March 2020].

<sup>49</sup> SCERTS Educational Model.

<sup>50</sup> Barry M Prizant, Amy M Wetherby, Emily Rubin and Emily C Laurent, 'The SCERTS Model A Transactional, Family-Centered Approach to Enhancing Communication and Socioemotional Abilities of Children With Autism Spectrum Disorder', *Infants and Young Children*, 16:4 (2003) 296-316, (p. 313).

These act as appropriate measures for the effects of drama with the notable exception that demarcated spaces are not the child's natural environment, despite in this instance Goodspeed's attempts to normalise the space through repeated usage. However, the expectation is that the skills fostered within this demarcated space will enable ongoing enhanced participation outside of the theatrical space. Andy Kempe draws on the SCERTS model by highlighting the benefits of 'joint attention' in relation to the group dynamic and interactive role of the audience and performers in drama.<sup>51</sup> He also notes that 'given that drama is a social art form .... active engagement in dramatic activity can facilitate positive social outcomes such as a sense of belonging to a group'.<sup>52</sup>

During Acting Up!'s 2016 performances of *The Tempest* anecdotal feedback from audience members included comments on how much the participants enjoyed the weekly rehearsals, the effort they put into learning lines and how great it was to see them being creative.<sup>53</sup> Goodspeed described that the actors 'got really excited about the characters and the story and found the language less of an issue than people thought'.<sup>54</sup> Whilst the heterotopic potential of these performances was limited by the restricted number of attendees, to hear the young people speaking Shakespeare's words was clearly something their loved ones had not experienced previously which impacted on the families' perceptions of their abilities and the limitations placed on them by their disabilities and

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<sup>51</sup> Andy Kempe, 'Developing social skills in autistic children through relaxed performances', *Support for Learning*, 29:3 (August 2014), 261-74, (pp. 264) <https://doi-org.ezproxye.bham.ac.uk/10.1111/1467-9604.12062> [accessed 3 October 2020].

<sup>52</sup> Andy Kempe, 'Drama and the education of young people with special needs', *Key Concepts in Theatre/Drama Education*, ed. by S. Schonmann (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2011), 165 – 169, (p165).

<sup>53</sup> Anecdotal feedback shared with the author following performances of Acting Up!, *The Tempest*, Friargate Theatre, York (October 2016).

<sup>54</sup> Goodspeed, interview.

society's expectations. Goodspeed spoke with pride about the evidence from *The Tempest* that

many of them involved are amazing actors, partly because they have none of the self-consciousness that many adults have – they are able to get involved and express themselves without worrying if people will laugh etc.<sup>55</sup>

Flute Theatre also prohibits public attendance of performances. SEN children are both audience and participants for the sessions held in theatre venues, watched by their parents or school staff. Having attended performances in both the UK and Barcelona, it was interesting to observe the differences and similarities between them, all of which took place in purpose-built theatres unfamiliar to the participants. The UK productions at The Orange Tree Theatre are analysed in Chapter 1 as short-term interventions, where participants often knew no-one other than their caregiver. As Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) notes on their website if 'a young person does not know what will be happening....this can lead to uncertainty and make them feel extremely anxious'.<sup>56</sup> The performance at the Teatre Lliure, Barcelona provided more familiarity from the outset as three workshops preceded the performance so upon arrival at the theatre the children knew each other and the actors.

Robert Shaughnessy has written extensively on the work of Flute Theatre with an interest which combines academia with a personal connection through his autistic son,

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<sup>55</sup> Goodspeed, interview.

<sup>56</sup> CAMHS article 'Introducing Routines for Young People with Learning Disabilities' (2017), <https://www.camhsnorthderbyshire.nhs.uk/learning-disabilities-introducing-routines>, [accessed 10 March 2020].

Gabriel. In *This Rough Magic*, Shaughnessy does question ‘how much of this is about Gabriel, and how much about me?’ as well as ‘how much of this is about Shakespeare?’<sup>57</sup> which he concludes is less relevant than the fact that it has a positive impact on his own child and others. This raises a valid question of whether there is some intrinsic benefit from using Shakespeare’s work or whether the benefit of Shakespeare is the ‘cultural authority’ it bestows upon the observers.<sup>58</sup> Whilst it is difficult to evidence that there is some specificity in the use of Shakespeare when the play has been reduced to such tiny snippets of scenes, perhaps the reason it is Shakespeare and not another playwright is that it was his work which inspired Hunter and which encourages caregivers and schools to attend. The rhythm and metre of iambic pentameter echoes the human heartbeat upon which the games are based. As scientific studies such as that done by LaGasse and Hardy demonstrate, there is evidence that rhythm has a beneficial impact on those with ASD and can help with sensorimotor regulation.<sup>59</sup>

The focus in this chapter is the Barcelona performance in which the same children had engaged in workshops prior to the performance (examined in Chapter 1). When they entered the theatre space with its painted floor-cloth and dimmed lighting the children immediately sought out ‘their actor’, taking confidence from the familiar in a space that was not. The appropriated space of rehearsal had been replaced with the demarcated space for the performance which initially seemed to unsettle the children as they seemed unsure what to expect. During the opening games there were some glances back to the audience,

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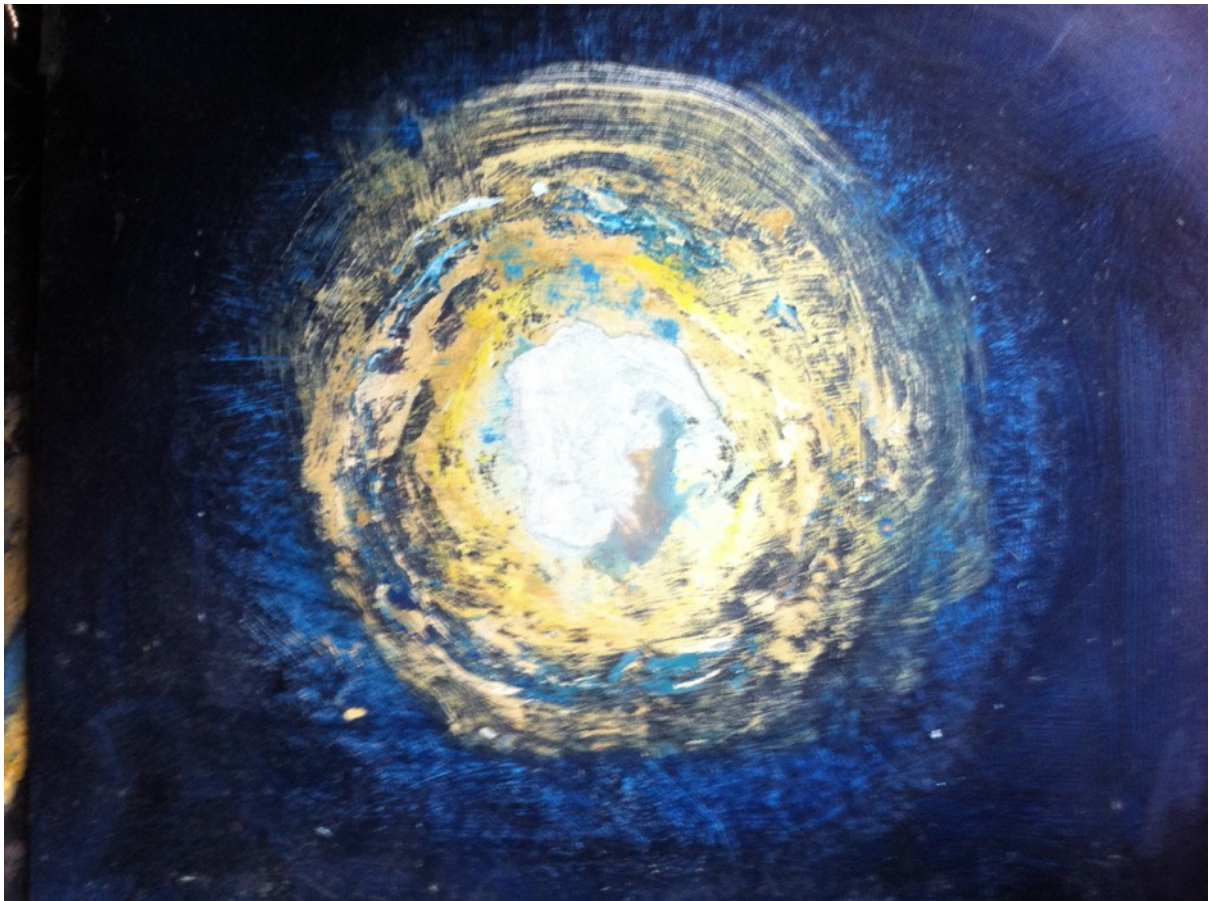
<sup>57</sup> Robert Shaughnessy, *This Rough Magic*, <http://www.flutetheatre.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Flute-Tempest-Robert-Shaughnessy-.pdf> [accessed 23 February 2020], p. 2 & p. 10.

<sup>58</sup> Shaughnessy, *This Rough Magic*, p. 11.

<sup>59</sup> A Blythe-La Gasse and Michelle Welde-Hardy, ‘Considering Rhythm for Sensorimotor Regulation in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder’, *Music Therapy Perspectives*, 31:1, 2013, 67-77.



as if seeking reassurance from their families, but this seemed to fall away as they became drawn into the action within the circle. The demarcated theatre space allowed for the lighting to be subtle and focus attention within the circle, encouraging the ‘joint attention’ which Kempe describes as being a key measure of success within the SCERTS model.<sup>60</sup> Only the circle was lit, encouraging the children to engage with the actors and other children rather than their families. It was subtle yet effective and only made possible by the professional lighting of the theatre.



20. The floor-cloth used by Flute Theatre for the performance at Teatre Lliure (March 2017),  
Photo: Adan Lorca.

<sup>60</sup> Scaife and Bruner, p. 265; Kempe, ‘Developing Social Skills’, p. 263.

One extremely powerful moment came towards the end of the show where the twin brother of one of the children involved came and joined the circle. This boy is more profoundly disabled than his twin and had previously shown no interest in engaging in games with other children. He is non-verbal autistic and his parents were amazed when he slipped from his seat in the darkness and entered the softly lit circle to join actor Quim Avila's group of children. He simply appeared in the circle and Avila responded immediately by including him in the final game 'M'en Viag! Volante!' ('I'm free!') where Prospero spun each child around holding hands as they were released from their servitude as Ariel. This game was not Shakespearean but gave what *The Guardian* described as 'a tingle of real joy'.<sup>61</sup> This 11-year old boy felt so enthralled by the games being played out in this demarcated space that he chose to enter a circle filled with strangers so that he could share in the activities. Understandably this major change in his behaviour provoked tears from his parents who were delighted by his proactive response, reportedly the first in his lifetime.

He remained in the circle as the games were brought to their customary close with the heartbeat circle bidding 'adieu' to reduce the energy levels to calmness, before a quiet round of applause from the participants and then from those in the 'outer circle'.<sup>62</sup> As the house lights came up, the emotions were evident as parents, children and actors shed tears over the intensity of the show. The families seemed amazed at the effect the sessions had

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<sup>61</sup> Lyn Gardner, 'The Tempest review – ground breaking Shakespeare for autistic audiences', *The Guardian* (31 October 2016) <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2016/oct/31/the-tempest-review-groundbreaking-shakespeare-for-autistic-audiences> [accessed 23 February 2020].

<sup>62</sup> Kelly Hunter leads a quiet round of applause after the performance to encourage closure, observed at The Orange Tree Theatre in Richmond (25-26 October 2016) and Teatre Lliure (26 March 2017).

had on their children and the extent to which they integrated with the group and actively engaged in activities which would usually be challenging for them.



21. La Kompaniye Lliure in costume for *The Tempest*, Barcelona (March 2017), Photo: Adan Lorca.

Feedback from The Orange Tree Theatre performances (where I was able to gather post-performance data) confirmed this view, with one parent stating:

it was fabulous how many children blossomed - starting off they were withdrawn, quiet and looked slightly worried/uncomfortable but they really impressed me how they gradually got involved, performed with more & more conviction and beamed. It was fabulous to see the true

personalities of so many of the young people - each character type was accepted, praised & nurtured from the most exuberant to the most shy.<sup>63</sup>

The games derived from *The Tempest* allowed the children to expand their engagement with the external world and to respond positively to new experiences, a phenomenon that often eludes those with complex learning disabilities. Hunter requested prior to the performances in each location that the actors ‘tuned into each other, using the musicality of Shakespeare and the theatre’ which was evident in their creation of a fantasy world the children became absorbed in, focusing not on their limitations but on what they could do.<sup>64</sup> In this sense, the heterotopia was two-fold; affecting both the children (albeit they may not have consciously realised this change in themselves) and their caregivers who saw them behave with fewer constraints than normal life may often allow. The sharing of this change in their behaviour allowed the caregivers to see some ‘glimpse of a somewhere where things are otherwise’ and to perhaps see their abilities in a different light for a time.<sup>65</sup> Whilst the ‘performance’ lasted less than two hours the memory of their children actively engaging with relative strangers to make eye contact, share joint attention and welcome physical contact would have stayed with the parents and guardians much longer. The image of them mastering and owning a domain which belongs usually to professional actors is one which continues to have an impact on me years later and to their families this effect would have been even more profound. One parent noted their child ‘quickly realised that no-one was comparing or judging her’ and another commended the emotional nature of ‘seeing

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<sup>63</sup> Flute Theatre *The Tempest* feedback.

<sup>64</sup> Kelly Hunter, directorial notes to Kompanie Liure (23 March 2017).

<sup>65</sup> Shaughnessy, p. 14.

everyone's story become entwined', evidencing the heterotopic potential from playing these theatre games<sup>66</sup>.

Firebird Theatre company in Bristol was a learning-disabled theatre company who described themselves as 'a family of actors with a job to do' and that role was to bring theatre to as many people as they could.<sup>67</sup> Sadly following the death of their Director, Jane Sallis, in 2018 the company ceased. Sallis embodied Bree Hadley's description of an 'ally', supporting the efforts of disabled theatre-makers whilst she herself was able-bodied.<sup>68</sup> Firebird Theatre used *The Tempest* as a basis to develop a series of artistic events: an adapted performance at Bristol Old Vic (2010), a poetry reading, *The Nine Lessons of Caliban* (2011) and a series of episodic relaxed performances entitled *Prospero, Duke of Milan* (2014). Their starting point for this collection of works was 'taking Shakespeare's story and making it more accessible for all' whilst 'considering Caliban not as a monster but as a shunned victim'.<sup>69</sup> They consciously chose a play which was on the current school syllabus to ensure young people would attend, opening up different perspectives of Shakespeare's narrative through their interpretation. Performing at The Old Vic gave cultural credence to their work and meant that it was likely to be considered serious theatre by the local schools they wished to attract.<sup>70</sup> Social geographer Edward Hall affirms that:

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<sup>66</sup> Feedback from post event questionnaire, Flute Theatre's *The Tempest* (25 October 2016).

<sup>67</sup> Firebird Theatre, *The Tempest programme*, 2010.

<sup>68</sup> Bree Hadley, 'Allyship in disability arts roles, relationships and practices', *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance* 25:2 (2020) 178-194 (p. 178), <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569783.2020.1729716> [accessed 3 October 2020].

<sup>69</sup> Jane Sallis, Firebird Theatre, interview with author, Bristol (3 October 2016).

<sup>70</sup> Sallis, interview.

through theatre performances in high profile venues, and the self-confidence gained through such performances, learning disabled actors strengthen their individual and collective identities, making engagement with the challenging mainstream world more possible and satisfying.<sup>71</sup>

In an appropriated space they would not have this additional element of the confidence of taking possession of a theatre space and they would have also engaged with the 'mainstream world' differently, not benefitting from the cachet The Old Vic added to their productions.

Their focus during the play on Caliban – 'the names he's been called, we've been called similar' - led them to search for suggestions within Shakespeare of his more human traits.<sup>72</sup> They focused on the early friendship between Caliban and Miranda which they developed into a consensual relationship stopped by the father who 'wanted better things for his daughter' and who enslaved Caliban as a result.<sup>73</sup> The cast described how 'people were very moved by Caliban, very sympathetic', in a similar vein to many post-colonial readings of the play. Ania Loomba, in her conclusion to *Shakespeare, Race and Colonialism*, charts the development of colonial and post-colonial academic discourse in relation to the play.<sup>74</sup> Her description of the refusal from the 1980s onwards to view 'Caliban as

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<sup>71</sup> Edward Hall, 'Spaces of Wellbeing for People with Learning Disabilities', *Scottish Geographical Journal* 126:4 (December 2010), 275-284, p. 281.

<sup>72</sup> Actor at Firebird Theatre, during a group semi-structured interview, Bristol (3 October 2016).

<sup>73</sup> *The Tempest* programme.

<sup>74</sup> Ania Loomba, *Shakespeare, Race and Colonialism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).



monstrosity without humanity' resonates strongly with the portrayal of him in Firebird's production.<sup>75</sup>

Their heterotopic inversion of the audiences' expectations about *The Tempest* began from the opening moment as a widening pinprick of light revealed a banished, ostracised, pregnant Sycorax being marooned ashore a desert island and resolving 'I will be strong'.<sup>76</sup> The theatre lighting was essential to centralise Sycorax and emphasise her loss; an appropriated place would not have had the same visual opening effects and would have lost much of the heterotopic impact that the play started from this central theme of maternal displacement. Sycorax's eventual demise was narrated by the isolated, bereft Caliban who 'dug her grave with [his] bare hands' and who was delighted when Prospero and Miranda appeared.<sup>77</sup> When they taught him to speak Miranda wanted him to call Prospero father but Prospero insisted he call him 'master' in an attempt to subjugate him even as a child.<sup>78</sup> The audience saw an intimacy develop between the two youngsters as they progressed from friendship to a desire to 'know each other skin to skin' which Prospero found abhorrent, decrying the boy as 'a monster'.<sup>79</sup>

Drunken Stephano and Trinculo acknowledge the damage of such labels when they tell him:

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<sup>75</sup> Loomba, p. 161.

<sup>76</sup> Jane Sallis, Firebird Theatre, *The Tempest: An Adaptation* (unpublished script, 2010), p. 4.

<sup>77</sup> Sallis, *The Tempest: An Adaptation* p. 7.

<sup>78</sup> Sallis, *The Tempest: An Adaptation* p. 9.

<sup>79</sup> Sallis, *The Tempest: An Adaptation* p. 13.

you behave like a monster because you are treated like one. Remember?

When you get called a name enough you get to think it is right, you

cannot get away from it. Names can hurt and harm you inside.<sup>80</sup>

The cast spoke of the resonance of this on a personal level as many had been subjected to name-calling for their disabilities. This enabled them to identify with the emotional and psychological damage caused by Prospero's hurtful treatment. The production reviews evidence that this portrayal came across clearly as Katy Austin described how they articulated 'Shakespeare's themes of human suffering, love and the wielding of power against those ostracized by a judgmental society'.<sup>81</sup> Sue Wheldon commented 'the epilogue says it all: "One day they might see me as I really am. One day they may respect the difference and see the man"'.<sup>82</sup> This crystalizes the heterotopic quality of this production; they used the themes and narrative of *The Tempest* but devised their own interpretation to focus the gaze of the audience more sympathetically on Caliban, not as a symbol of colonial oppression but a modern youth cast out for his *otherness*, emphasized from the opening moment which revealed the banishment of his mother.

Firebird also created a relaxed performance series; *Prospero, Duke of Milan*, specifically for disabled schoolchildren, an opportunity for these disabled actors to teach disabled children about Shakespeare and also to use the work to teach them that they do not need to be confined by society's imposed limitations on them. Relaxed or sensory

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<sup>80</sup> Sallis, *The Tempest: An Adaptation* p. 27.

<sup>81</sup> Katy Austin, *Suit Yourself Magazine*, quoted on Firebird Theatre website, <http://www.firebird-theatre.com/performances.html#caliban> [accessed 30 October 2016].

<sup>82</sup> Susie Weldon, *The Guide: Theatre*, quoted on Firebird Theatre website, <http://www.firebird-theatre.com/performances.html#caliban> [accessed 30 October 2016].



adapted productions utilise muted lighting and acoustics to avoid distress and with fewer expectations of what Sedgman terms ‘reasonable audience’ behaviour and it is important to understand the context of these generally before analysing Firebird’s contribution to this trope.<sup>83</sup> Relaxed performances are an area of specialism for Andy Kempe who writes about the *Relaxed Performance Project* and some of the potential social benefits of this relatively new phenomenon.<sup>84</sup> These performances are often simply specified performances of an existing production where explicit changes are made to the front of house to reduce stress levels for those attending and where audience silence during the performance is not expected. Kempe argues that ‘one of the main aims of a relaxed performance is to make as few changes to the actual show as possible’ and whilst this is the case for some productions the fluidity of the term means that it also encompasses specifically designed productions such as *Prospero, Duke of Milan*.<sup>85</sup>

The *Relaxed Performance Project* aimed to ‘develop a model of best practice for dissemination’ and to widen accessibility to the theatre through modified performances of eight existing productions at large public theatres across the UK.<sup>86</sup> Attendees were issued visual guides in advance and the lighting and sound effects softened to avoid discomfort. The data gathered across all eight productions demonstrated a ‘positive impact upon audience members’ confidence and self-esteem’ although there was no differentiation

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<sup>83</sup> Sedgman, *The Reasonable Audience*.

<sup>84</sup> Andrew J. Kempe, ‘Widening Participation in Theatre through “Relaxed Performances”’ *New Theatre Quarterly*, 31:1 (February 2015) 59-69 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0266464X15000068> [accessed 19 April 2020].

<sup>85</sup> Kempe, ‘Widening Participation’, p. 60.

<sup>86</sup> Susan Potter, *Relaxed Performance Project Evaluation Report 2012/13* (August 2013) <https://lemosandcrane.co.uk/resources/SOLT%20Relaxed%20Performance%20Evaluation.pdf> p. 4

made between the individual productions in the conclusion of the report.<sup>87</sup> The productions were not shortened but ticket prices were reduced or free and staff received specialist training prior to the events. It seems likely that the plays were selected as they were in the current season at the participating theatres rather than being specifically chosen for their appeal to a learning-disabled audience. The Globe *Romeo and Juliet* was part of their Playing Shakespeare season and one audience member enthused:

One of my children, who is severely Autistic, can quote Shakespeare, *Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet*, and helped draw stick men pictures for a stop go animation for his *Romeo and Juliet* project, he really enjoyed it!<sup>88</sup>

Sue Jennings advocates using *Romeo and Juliet* in Dramatherapy as she sees great therapeutic benefit in considering ‘the destructiveness of what happens when people don’t get on and they disagree’.<sup>89</sup> These themes may well resonate with those with learning disabilities, especially autism which is a ‘lifelong developmental disability that affects how a person communicates with, and relates to, other people’; however, I am not aware that those themes were highlighted or explored as the choice of play for inclusion in the *Project* was entirely circumstantial.<sup>90</sup> Those involved in the *Project* had ASD and a further understanding of the reception of *Romeo and Juliet* would be beneficial to the consideration of the effectiveness of the use of Shakespeare in this context, where the performance is

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<sup>87</sup> Potter, p. 22

<sup>88</sup> *Romeo and Juliet*, relaxed performance at The Globe, audience feedback quoted on The Globe website, <http://blog.shakespearesglobe.com/post/90658621173/relaxed-performance-of-playing-shakespeare-with>

<sup>89</sup> Sue Jennings, interview with the author, Wells (19 October 2016).

<sup>90</sup> National Autistic Society, [www.autism.org.uk/about-autism/autism-and-aspergers-syndrome-an-introduction/what-is-autism.aspx](http://www.autism.org.uk/about-autism/autism-and-aspergers-syndrome-an-introduction/what-is-autism.aspx) [accessed 20 August 2020].

relaxed but there were no specific follow-up activities to help those watching to explore the emotions and themes of the narrative. Audience feedback from the event was positive and it was noted that the ‘visual story was amazingly helpful’ to ensure that people could follow the plot.<sup>91</sup> Through interventions such as these it is possible to appeal to a wider range of audience members than would perhaps be attracted to a mainstream theatre production.

Although theatres such as the National Theatre now subdivide their performances into relaxed performances, which allow ‘for noise and movement in the auditorium’, and sensory adapted performances, which include ‘technical adjustments to light and sound effects, for those with sensory sensitivities’.<sup>92</sup> Firebird were addressing both of these adjustments under the banner of *relaxed performance*. These were a series of four fifteen-minute productions aimed at those who had not previously experienced theatre due to the severity of their disabilities. The performances were designed to introduce children from three local SEN schools to the theatre and the facilities of the theatre were essential for the production to take place.<sup>93</sup> Appropriated space would not have allowed them to control the sound and lighting as required. Each attendee was provided with a visual handbook which explained each step from their initial arrival at the theatre and who would greet them.<sup>94</sup> The cast were introduced to the audience in order of appearance complete with photographs of them in character and a brief synopsis of each episode of the play to enable the children to

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<sup>91</sup> Relaxed Performance Project Case Studies, *Romeo and Juliet*, audience feedback, <http://alt.childrenandarts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/2-10-Case-studies1.pdf> [accessed 20 August 2020].

<sup>92</sup> National Theatre website, <https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/your-visit/access/relaxed-performances>, [accessed 11 March 2020].

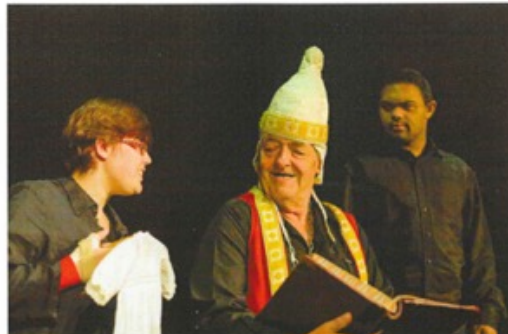
<sup>93</sup> Briarwood School, Kingsweston School and New Fosseway School are all SEN schools for children with a range of learning disabilities including Down’s syndrome and autism.

<sup>94</sup> Jane Sallis, *Prospero, Duke of Milan*, guidance booklet (no formal publisher, 2014) p. 4

engage with the story before attending.<sup>95</sup> For example, the illustration below provided information which enabled the teachers to explore the relationships of Prospero's family before they watched the performance and made it explicit that Prospero loved his daughter



### Episode 2



We meet Prospero's family: his daughter, Miranda, who is 3 years old, and his brother, Antonio. Prospero loves them both. We also find out that Prospero loves reading books.

22. Firebird Theatre, *Prospero, Duke of Milan*, Guidance Booklet (2014), p. 8, Courtesy of Jane Sallis

<sup>95</sup> Sallis, *Prospero, Duke of Milan*, guidance booklet, p. 12

and also the brother who would go on to betray him. Many profoundly disabled people struggle with expressing and recognising emotions so Firebird Theatre felt it was important that they were told of this love, rather than being expected to glean it themselves. The description of Prospero was very humanising (in contrast with their depiction of him in *The Tempest*) to encourage empathy and understanding of his actions.

The company were committed to engaging with the younger generation and making their work accessible to those who are 'wary of visiting the theatre for fear of disrupting the performance and/or other audience members'.<sup>96</sup> This acknowledgement of the fear of visiting a theatre is emblematic of the embedded signifiers of a demarcated theatre space and how these can create an expectation of behaviour which some find overwhelming or unachievable. Sedgman and Reason's guest edited edition of *Participations* considered 'what constitutes acceptable modes of audience behaviour' and the way in which societally accepted norms can be used to stifle and inhibit those who react differently.<sup>97</sup> Relaxed or sensory adapted performances explicitly advertise the relaxation of these social conventions to remove a barrier which may otherwise preclude the attendance of neuro-diverse audiences. The demarcated space adds both an element of validation of the authenticity of the theatrical experience and the ability to control stage lighting and sound, which allows attendees not to be overwhelmed by theatrical practice, but without explicit labelling the idea of attending a performance may be off-putting if people feel they will be judged for their behaviour.

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<sup>96</sup> Potter, p. 11.

<sup>97</sup> Kirsty Sedgman, 'Be reasonable! On institutions, values, voices', in *Participations: Journal of Audience and Reception Studies*, 12.1 (May 2015), 123-32, p. 123

Performances within these demarcated theatrical spaces drew on the inherent cultural signifiers of the locations in creating their heterotopic experiences, using the theatre itself to lend weight to the other elements. The combination of a marginalised audience or cast whom the ‘challenging mainstream world’ would expect to be limited in their ability to enjoy this activity and the inimitable culture of Shakespeare is a powerful one in any setting.<sup>98</sup> With the added layer of meaning from a professional theatre location this becomes even more compelling. These elements provoke society to realise that people from marginalised groups can and will use Shakespeare in a way to communicate positively and proactively. As the 2020 Spectra Report describes, for:

the most marginalised in society there is a feeling that an absence of critical engagement with artistic output both reflects and compounds this – and conversely that an improvement in critical engagement could help to bring wider societal change.<sup>99</sup>

Whilst this refers specifically to learning-disabled theatre, the argument can be extrapolated to encompass other marginalised groups. This challenging of the refusal of critics to engage is partly addressed by the usage of Shakespeare or other canonical works and partly by performing in spaces traditionally belonging to mainstream professional actors and is considered further in Chapter 4.

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<sup>98</sup> Hall, p. 281.

<sup>99</sup> Bella Todd, *Improving Critical Engagement with Theatre made by Artists with Learning Disabilities*, Spectra Commissioned Report (January 2020), <https://wearespectra.co.uk/2020/02/09/launch/>, [accessed 11 March 2020], p7.

## Appropriated Spaces

Whilst the additional benefits of demarcated spaces cannot be overestimated, there are different nuances within spaces temporarily repurposed for performance. In these locations there are none of the expectations linked to a theatre with either positive or negative overtones. Instead there will be embedded signifiers linked to the primary purpose of the space such as a hall or chapel, which need to be mentally dismissed to allow it to be experienced as a theatre, albeit temporarily. This transience of purpose of locality links to the way in which space is altered by the activities which take place within it, explored in Chapter 1, and the interchangeability between space and place dependent on permanence, which Mackey describes.<sup>100</sup> Appropriation of space is usually led by practicalities, within the context of the groups I have researched, rather than a desire to create site-specific interventions. However, this temporary repurposing can deliver heterotopic experiences for the audiences, many of whom may not usually be theatre goers.

The research within appropriated spaces focuses on performances within psychiatric hospitals and the criminal justice estate, where space is at a premium and the locations used are familiar to those incarcerated, often with emotional baggage relating to their primary use. Audiences for the productions researched include a mixture of peers, families, staff and external visitors and for each of these (admittedly non-homogeneous) groups the space and the heterotopia are likely to be experienced differently. The heterotopia within an appropriated space often allows those marginalised to become central to the theatrical

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<sup>100</sup> Mackey, 'Performing location: place and applied theatre', p. 109.

experience, ‘to really change what is possible and inspire a desire to achieve more’.<sup>101</sup> It invites self-reflection to be altered and for the perceptions of others to shift positively as these productions ‘open doors into what appeared to be a world of elitism’ and show that Shakespeare can belong to anyone.<sup>102</sup> Across all groups though there is a likelihood that attendance may not be primarily driven by a love of theatre. The patients/inmates are often seeking any break in the monotony of daily regime, staff are likely rostered to attend or are there in a support function, families want to share whatever part of their loved ones’ lives they can and visitors are either there to support the work and/or for academic research. The appropriated space performances often have significant logistical and spatial constraints in contrast to the demarcated space productions which use the location of a theatre to endorse the cultural capital of their work.

Between 1989 and 1991 a number of Shakespeare plays were performed in Broadmoor, one of the UK’s three high secure psychiatric hospitals, as documented in *Shakespeare Comes to Broadmoor*.<sup>103</sup> This book details a range of perspectives on the project including a chapter dedicated to ‘The Set and Stage Management’, written by Ian Bayne, a nurse in the Creative Department at Broadmoor.<sup>104</sup> This chapter provides an in-depth consideration of the practicalities of staging a production within this heavily controlled environment, including seating, props and lighting as well as staff attendance at the performances. This is one of the few such published analyses of the constraints and additional considerations of operating within an institution and much of this resonated with

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<sup>101</sup> Rob, The Gallowfield Players, *Reflections on Performing Julius Caesar* (unpublished, July 2019).

<sup>102</sup> Michael, The Gallowfield Players, *A Sense of Freedom* (unpublished, 2019).

<sup>103</sup> Murray Cox (ed.), *Shakespeare Comes to Broadmoor*.

<sup>104</sup> Ian Bayne, ‘The Set and Stage Management’ in *Shakespeare Comes to Broadmoor*, pp. 114-125.



my own experiences in prisons where performances are partially informed by theatrical design and partly by security requirements and the continued functioning of the institutional regime. As Baynes writes ‘these preparations may seem mundane to the polished professional’ but within the context of appropriated spaces inside the secure estate they are necessary and inform the spatial ambience of the work.<sup>105</sup>

Cox’s book documents performances by the Royal Shakespeare Company (*Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet*), The Royal National Theatre (*King Lear*) and Wilde Community Theatre Company (*Measure for Measure*) within the hospital for self-nominated audiences of patients accompanied by staff. The four productions were each attended by circa 100 patients whose requests to do so were approved by the hospital administration.<sup>106</sup> Mark Rylance comments on the ‘small room’ of the Central Hall and that it ‘was very shocking to turn to someone no further away than you are and speak to them and see all their faces’.<sup>107</sup> Whilst Rylance judged the appropriated space as confined in comparison to the professional theatres he usually performed in, Bayne viewed the location as large in size and more than adequate for the annual performances of the inhouse Broadhumoorists.<sup>108</sup> Ron Daniels who directed *Hamlet* commented that it ‘was very clear...that the smallness of the space in which we performed was critically important’.<sup>109</sup> He likened it to the run-throughs in rehearsal rooms where the ‘raw emotion’ was not diluted by the spectacle of performance with its theatrical trappings. The directors and actors spoke of being unsure if the

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<sup>105</sup> Bayne, p. 120.

<sup>106</sup> Bayne, p. 122.

<sup>107</sup> Rylance, p. 28 and p.40.

<sup>108</sup> Bayne, p. 115. The Broadhumoorists are the in-patient theatre company founded in 1939 by the then Superintendent Stanley Hopwood to put on public performances with the intention of ‘breaking down barriers between the hospital and wider society’. Mark Stevens, *Broadmoor Revealed: Victorian Crime and the Lunatic Asylum* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2013), p. 189.

<sup>109</sup> Ron Daniels interviewed by Rob Ferris in *Shakespeare Comes to Broadmoor*, p. 86.

productions would engage the audience who may not be theatre-aficionados and a delight that they appeared transfixed throughout. In this specific example the heterotopia appeared therefore in many ways to be more in the context of the theatre companies than the audience. Their anticipated spectator reticence failed to materialise; instead they were met with 'not an audience but an important part of the action' who actively engaged with the characters and themes portrayed.<sup>110</sup>

Whilst the book provides valuable insights into the project, the focus is primarily from the perspective of the theatre makers and staff, with less detailed analysis directly on the effect on the patients. This may be due to a myriad of factors, including perhaps limited abilities to coherently discuss the effect on themselves and in some instances a lack of capacity to externalise the inner emotions generated in an analytical manner. This is similar to the difficulties of gathering meaningful qualitative responses from those with profound learning disabilities. Much of the patient impact is narrated through the staff or theatre makers; this recounting of impact through a secondary lens is not uncommon for marginalised groups such as those incarcerated or with complex learning or mental health needs although it does reaffirm their marginalised position. Within this institutional context, to which Cox draws attention in the opening statement of ethics, there is a pertinent need for confidentiality to protect the patients and those connected with victims of the patients; where a reignition of past narratives could cause emotional and mental harm. Sue Jennings writes the final chapter of the book where she describes the 'powerful therapeutic affect' which brought 'everyone in a very raw way into contact with their

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<sup>110</sup> Patient quotation, *Shakespeare Comes to Broadmoor*, p. 149.

extreme fears and fantasies'.<sup>111</sup> However, she does acknowledge a greater awareness of the 'major changes it has brought about for staff and actors' than for the patients.<sup>112</sup> There is a definite sense that the decision to create the edited volume was made post-project to 'set on record certain crucial events which transpired when two worlds met' and publication was over a decade later.<sup>113</sup>

My efforts to contact Rylance directly (he inherited the late Murray Cox's papers) have been unsuccessful. Therefore, it is not possible to understand the extent to which a heteropia was created for the audience as their pre-performance expectations remain largely unknown. The value judgement that 'for the patients in the audience it was a terribly special event' was voiced by Daniels and whilst there may be truth in this to some degree, his opinion is not substantiated with any evidence.<sup>114</sup> His response, and those of others in the companies, by contrast, speak of their own preconceptions being altered through 'confronting the myth that they were monsters and finding instead people who were just ordinary'.<sup>115</sup> The appreciation for Shakespeare and theatre appears to have initiated a dialogue between these two disparate groups of people which focused on a shared humanity rather than their expected differences. Rob Ferris' insight into the way that these productions enabled the staff to objectively consider patients they have worked with for many years also suggested a reframing of reality. He documented that what may have seemed to Daniels 'an entirely natural and ordinary thing' when a patient hugged the

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<sup>111</sup> Sue Jennings, 'The Nature and Scope of Dramatherapy' in *Shakespeare Comes to Broadmoor*, pp. 229-50, p. 248.

<sup>112</sup> Jennings, p. 248.

<sup>113</sup> Murray Cox, 'Horizons of Possibility and Ethical Boundaries, in *Shakespeare Comes to Broadmoor*, pp. xv-xvi, p. xv.

<sup>114</sup> Daniels interviewed by Rob Ferris in *Shakespeare Comes to Broadmoor*, p. 88.

<sup>115</sup> Daniels, p. 89.

director for revealing autobiographical elements to his interpretation of *Hamlet* was 'extraordinary'.<sup>116</sup> Ferris acknowledged that psychiatrists focus on the differences between the lives of the patients and their own experiences but that the 'process of identification' the theatre companies undertook minimised the 'gulf' between them.<sup>117</sup> Again, the limitations of the published text makes it difficult to ascertain the precise elements which contributed to this change but it seems likely that the performing of these plays was the catalyst for these conversations and subsequent realignments of opinion.

The Donmar Warehouse version of *The Tempest* (set in a women's prison with Harriet Walters as a female Prospero) was performed in the gym at HMP New Hall as well as in external theatre spaces and Reason published on his qualitative research with the incarcerated audience.<sup>118</sup> He describes how 'this audience was particularly implicated; watching a version of themselves on stage, filtered and projected through the lens and language of Shakespearean drama' and the article focuses predominantly on moments of resonance with their own experience.<sup>119</sup> This is a somewhat reductionist view in that prison is experienced differently for each individual but many elements provoked a consensus of emotional engagement and Reason acknowledges Peter Holland's nuanced consideration that 'Shakespeare is not universal – always and everywhere the same – but is everywhere different and that is why we keep going to it'.<sup>120</sup> This richness of Shakespeare's appeal

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<sup>116</sup> Daniels, p. 90.

<sup>117</sup> Daniels, p. 90.

<sup>118</sup> Matthew Reason, 'A prison audience: women prisoners, Shakespeare and spectatorship', *Cultural Trends*, 28.2 (2019) 86-102, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2019.1617929> [accessed 4 October 2020]; Phyllida Lloyd (dir.) *The Tempest* performed at The Kings Cross Theatre (a pop-up theatre) in London and St. Ann's Warehouse Theatre, Brooklyn.

<sup>119</sup> Reason, 'A prison audience', p. 86.

<sup>120</sup> Peter Holland, conference paper given at *Shakespeare in Prisons Conference*, The Old Globe, San Diego (2018) cited by Reason, 'A prison audience', p. 88.

extended beyond the theatrical devices of the production and meant that the women identified with the parental concerns of Prospero as much as the first night incarceration scene and the urine tests Lloyd included to signify prison-life. Reason draws on Anna Harpin's conceptualisation of the verbalisation of trauma when he describes:

Tension between the "impossibility of telling" (which would entail a return to the trauma) and the "impossible silence" (which would entail a neglect or erasure of the trauma). For the women in the prison audience it was into this place that *The Tempest* inserted itself – able to speak of and about and for them without being the thing itself.<sup>121</sup>

It is perhaps this ability for Shakespeare's work to be used in articulating trauma when words may be otherwise elusive which imbues it with much of its power and enduring nature. This production interwove Shakespeare with the realities of prison for incarcerated women (women account for 4% of the prison population in England and Wales) to bring this to a general theatre audience as well as those in HMP New Hall who may have seen themselves differently through the lens of performance.<sup>122</sup> The appropriated space of the prison gym developed the heterotopia in potentially unexpected ways as there are none of the signifiers of theatre but the arrival of professional actors to stage a performance would have been a significant event in the prison regime. However, contrasting with the examples

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<sup>121</sup> Anna Harpin, 'Intolerable Acts', *Performance Research*, 16:1 (2011), 102-11, cited by Reason, 'A prison audience', p. 101.

<sup>122</sup> Georgina Sturge, *UK Prison Population Statistics: Briefing Paper Number CBP – 04334* (London: House of Commons Library, 3 July 2020), <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn04334/> [accessed 6 October 2020].

of performing for marginalised audiences, the final two case studies demonstrate the heterotopic impact when incarcerated actors perform full-length plays within prisons.

Much of my work as a practitioner has been developing theatre companies within the English prison estate. Examination of two performance case studies reveals much of their multi-faceted heterotopic capabilities, using Shakespeare as a communication method and form of cultural validation. The first example is The Gallowfield Players' adaptation of *The Merchant* (which won a Silver Koestler Award for the performance) where Shylock is ostracised, not for his religion, but for having a life sentence.<sup>123</sup> The play opened as Officers discharged him through the prison gates and he soliloquised that:

Those left outside take the biggest hit  
 They suffer the most, pay the real cost.  
 Children's tears as they sit on visits,  
 Each one a sad memory elicits,  
 Scarring my heart, searing my soul,  
 A souvenir of my part in the sorrow I have caused.  
 A painful reminder to be a better man, a better dad.<sup>124</sup>

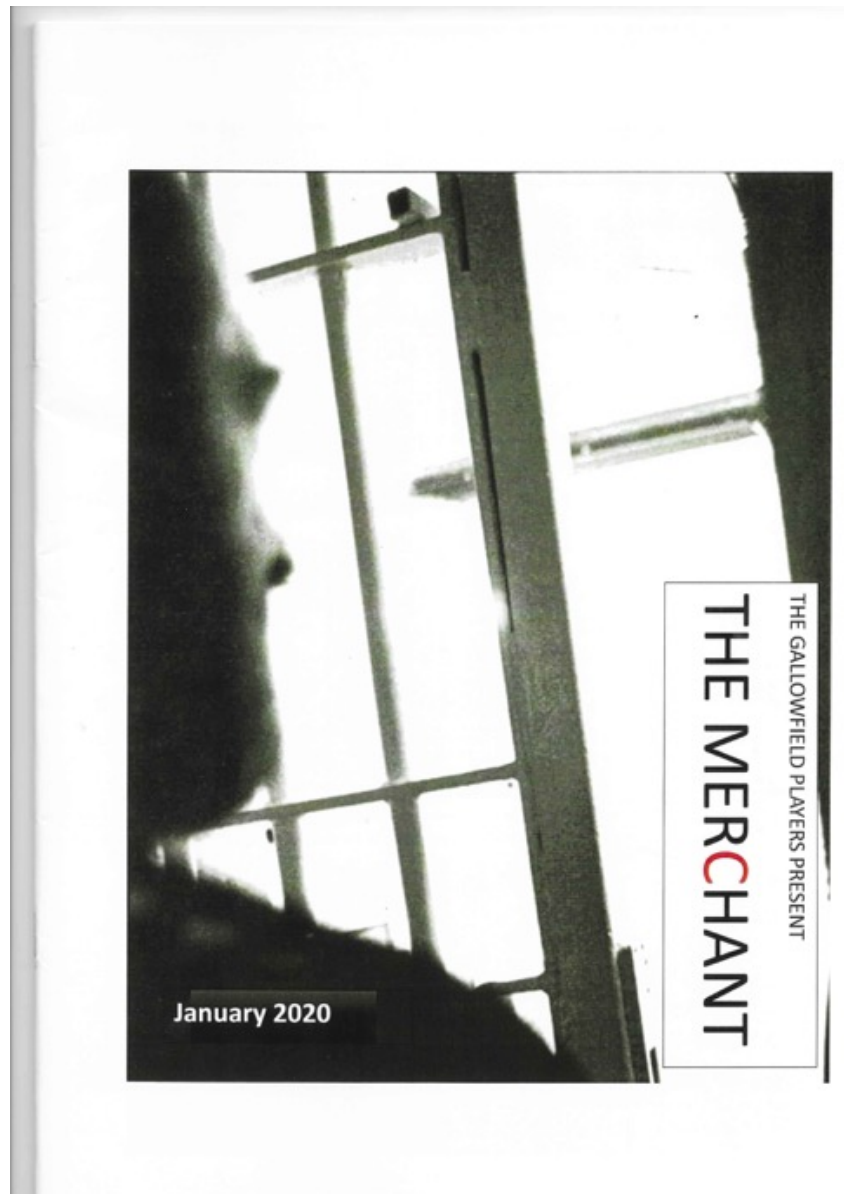
The production repurposed Shakespeare's plot and characters to a modern setting where Jessica's bitterness resulted from her father's physical and emotional absence during her childhood. Portia, a wealthy, philanthropic heiress, asked each suitor to deliver a gift to

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<sup>123</sup> Koestler Awards 2020, <https://www.koestlerarts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2020-Koestler-Awards-Results-30.10.20.pdf> [accessed 30 October 2020], p. 30

<sup>124</sup> The Gallowfield Players, *The Merchant* (unpublished, 2019), Prologue.22-28.

demonstrate their feelings towards her, choosing Bassanio who ‘showed those others to be poor’ with his simple flower.<sup>125</sup> Humour was injected through numerous references to prison life – shrunken clothes, inside loyalties and quips about weight gain as well as the addition of the dead parrot scene from Monty Python, albeit he became a ‘Venetian Blue’ in



23. The Gallowfield Players, *The Merchant Programme* front cover (unpublished, January 2020), Courtesy of The Gallowfield Players.

<sup>125</sup> *The Merchant*, 2:7:85.

keeping with the play.<sup>126</sup> The court scene was re-engineered to enable Portia to highlight the legalities, warning him 'this course of action breaches your parole' and that 'conspiracy to commit such an act' would be sufficient to return Shylock and his accomplice Tubbs to prison under the terms of their licenses.<sup>127</sup> In the final scene Shylock sat alone, contemplating the reality of being 'so hated, so despised' and writing a farewell letter to his daughter as he planned his suicide, accepting that 'no excuses or platitudes will | Ever put right the wrongs I've done.'<sup>128</sup> Portia remonstrated with him for such self-pity and pointed out that she had interceded to prevent the taking of Antonio's pound of flesh because Shylock's return to prison would have devastated Jessica. An emotional reunion with his estranged daughter ended the production with Shylock's affirmation that 'with this chance I'll do all I can to make amends'.<sup>129</sup>

There were two performances, one in the chapel for circa 40 inmates, a few external guests and staff-members and one in the Visits Hall for the actors' loved ones and invited attendees, both of which were commended for the 'pride, passion and dedication' of the actors.<sup>130</sup> I will consider first the response from those in the chapel. Ron Daniels commented in the context of Broadmoor that the incarcerated were not experienced with theatre, which I would view as a somewhat reductionist assessment of the spectrum of cultural exposure those incarcerated possess.<sup>131</sup> However, it is true that many of the inmates were unfamiliar with Shakespeare and had been invited as a result of friendships or to ease their

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<sup>126</sup> Monty Python's Flying Circus, *Dead Parrot*, [http://montypython.50webs.com/scripts/Series\\_1/53.htm](http://montypython.50webs.com/scripts/Series_1/53.htm) [accessed 4 November 2020]; *The Merchant* 2.6.63.

<sup>127</sup> *The Merchant*, 4:1:83, 4:1:95.

<sup>128</sup> *The Merchant*, 5:1:1, 5:1:29-30.

<sup>129</sup> *The Merchant*, 5:1:144.

<sup>130</sup> Feedback questionnaires, The Gallowfield Players' *The Merchant*, The Chapel, HMP Gartree (27 January 2020).

<sup>131</sup> Daniels, *Shakespeare Comes to Broadmoor*, p. 86.



social isolation.<sup>132</sup> Attendee feedback included ‘first Shakespeare play seen’, ‘I know little of Shakespeare’ and ‘at school I found Shakespeare a bit dry and unrelatable’.<sup>133</sup> The prison



24. Liam (Narrator and musician) playing the piano as audience assembles in the chapel, HMP Gartree (June 2019), Photo: Milton Keynes College Education Department.

regime was such that it took a while to assemble the audience from multiple wings and during this period our pianist played, accompanying relaxed chatting. The entrance of Shylock on-stage escorted by two uniformed officers and carrying his belongings in a HMP property bag resulted in immediate silence from the audience as they saw not a Shakespeare character but a peer of theirs. This silence prevailed throughout the performance, punctuated only by laughter at the comedy.

<sup>132</sup> The Gallowfield Players were asked to invite men from their wings who appeared socially isolated as a way of widening participation.

<sup>133</sup> Feedback questionnaires, 27 January 2020.

The inmates found humour in the prison jokes and references to the previous production, *Julius Caesar*, which many of them had seen. Several staff commented on how ‘engaged and enthralled the men were’ and the ‘respect they had for the actors’ which, whilst it may seem normal to many, is often an alien concept in a prison environment which is noisy and chaotic with challenging undertones.<sup>134</sup> Attention was riveted throughout the 90 minutes of the performance (punctuated by a ten-minute interval) and the men evidently followed the narrative of the tale. The inmates completed questionnaires immediately after the production, commenting that ‘just for a couple of hours I was out of the normal constraints of being a prisoner and felt so relieved to be able to just enjoy myself



25. The chapel, HMP Gartree used for performances attended by inmates, during performance of *Julius Caesar* (June 2019), Photo: Milton Keynes College Education Department.

<sup>134</sup> Feedback questionnaires, 27 January 2020.

freely' and 'helped to escape from prison for 2 hours'.<sup>135</sup> There was not a single comment about disliking Shakespeare or finding the language difficult to understand and many commented that they understood the play more than they anticipated.<sup>136</sup>

The chapel was not a neutral space in that religion is incredibly powerful at creating communities in some instances but can also cause significant divisions within society, and has similar effects within the prison estate. Many prisoners turn to faith to help them with their sentences and Crewe et al note that 'in discussing the role of religion.....prisoners often made direct reference to sanity and survival'.<sup>137</sup> Religion tends to instigate strong feelings whether of a positive or negative nature amongst inmates and for every person who seeks solace in the multi-faith chapel there is another who feels abhorrence for organised religion. So, the actors and the audience would have felt these conflicting emotions in relation to the location of the performance and as one jokingly put it, 'I expect the thunderbolt to strike me down while I'm in there'.<sup>138</sup> Wayne, who has previously not discussed his religion within the group or the wider prison environment invited his Mormon chaplains to attend the performance. They spoke with me before the event about the benefits he attributed to being part of The Gallowfield Players and that they felt it was 'marvellous, builds self-esteem and belief in a person'.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Feedback questionnaires, 27 January 2020.

<sup>136</sup> Verbal feedback from inmates following The Gallowfield Players' *The Merchant*, (27 January 2020).

<sup>137</sup> Ben Crewe, Susie Hulley and Serena Wright, *Life Imprisonment from Young Adulthood: Adaptation, Identity and Time* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), p. 174.

<sup>138</sup> Sam, Gallowfield Players, HMP Gartree comment made during rehearsal for *The Merchant* (January 2020).

<sup>139</sup> Carol and Terry Shepherd, Mormon chaplains, HMP Gartree, conversation with the author (27 January 2020).

The scenery for the production was minimal due to a combination of prison restrictions, lack of stage and budgetary constraints, as the project received little funding. So, the audience were not transported into a professional set with raked seating and painted flats as they are for the in-prison productions organised by Pimlico Opera.<sup>140</sup> Instead they saw a relatively bare chapel with normal seating and minimal attempts to differentiate the locations within the play. The changing of a painted cardboard sign above a doorway crafted from cardboard tubes and garden canes denoted whether the scene was taking place in Portia's home, the 'Parrot and Welshmen' pub or Shylock's office. A simple cardboard desk-sign differentiated HMP Gallowfield of Shylock's custodial sentence from Antonio's office. Yet this lack of attempt to create a realistic theatre set had little impact on the way in which the audience engaged with the performance which created 'great memories' and 'took me away from this place'.<sup>141</sup> Many felt that it temporarily transcended the constraints of the prison; this feeling was generated not by any physical alterations to the chapel but by the power of the adaptation of Shakespeare's work which both utilised the cultural capital of his plays and showed the audience that it was for them, imbued with prison references they could identify with. Shylock's famous soliloquy was adapted and spoken directly to the audience:

There is not so much difference between myself and you;

Indeed, do we not eat the very same food?

Breathe the same air?

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<sup>140</sup> Pimlico Opera work in one prison each year putting on a semi-professional production where inmates perform alongside West End actors (project budget circa £200,000). I attended the performance of *Hairspray* at HMPYOI Bronzefield (March 2020), <https://grangeparkopera.co.uk/prison/> [accessed 8 November 2020].

<sup>141</sup> Feedback questionnaires, 27 January 2020.

Feel the same breeze that blows through our hair?  
 If you prick me do I not bleed?  
 If you tickle me do I not laugh?  
 If you poisoned me would I not die?  
 Well then tell me, pray tell me why  
 You think that the revenge you would surely seek  
 If you were wronged should not be the same for me?<sup>142</sup>

This asked a fundamental question: does our underlying humanity differ based on our actions and mistakes? This embodied the heterotopic impact of the performance; adapted famous Shakespearean lines delivered directly to the audience by a man serving a life sentence for a violent crime, this 'audience-addressed soliloquy establish[ed] an overt relationship'.<sup>143</sup> The audience were 'invited to participate in the dramatic action...as the fictional world of the character and the world of the playgoers overlap[ped]' as they were asked to consider if their similarities to him outweighed their differences from him.<sup>144</sup> This was powerful with other inmates who seemed to take from it a sense that their underlying humanity may have been affected by their crime but remained alive in some form, however deeply buried. One inmate wrote

You're on your own as a prisoner in every sense of the word, you are  
 actively discouraged from building relationships because you are simply

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<sup>142</sup> *The Merchant*, 3:1:67-76.

<sup>143</sup> James Hirsh, *Shakespeare and the History of Soliloquies* (London: Associated University Presses, 2003), p. 14.

<sup>144</sup> Hirsh, p. 14.

not trusted [...] but this – acting, being open and honest, not being frightened to express yourself without fear of consequence is vital.<sup>145</sup>

One of the deepest resonances with the inmates appeared to come from the final scene where Shylock wrote to his estranged daughter while contemplating suicide, before an emotional reunion. *The Grapevine* wrote ‘the final scene meant so much to everyone’ and the statistics on prison self-harm and suicide which ended the play provided the stark reality of longer sentencing and poor mental health amongst prisoners with escalating incidents of self-harm.<sup>146</sup>

Liebling and Ludlow’s research on ‘Suicide, distress and the quality of prison life’ provides a solid foundational analysis of the issues of self-harm and suicide within the prison estate as well as identifying that there are ‘few systematic attempts to investigate which aspects of the prison experience might be most relevant to suicide and suicide attempts.’<sup>147</sup> Peter Clarke, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Prisons, affirmed that ‘where hope is absent everything goes in the wrong direction’, in the context of self-harm within the custodial estate.<sup>148</sup> After the performance a number of inmates told the other actors and me that they felt the play highlighted issues of importance and relevance to them and that they ‘identified’ with Shylock.<sup>149</sup> Two of them showed me their scars from cutting which had

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<sup>145</sup> Feedback questionnaires, 27 January 2020.

<sup>146</sup> *The Grapevine*, HMP Gartree in-prison magazine (unpublished, February 2020).

<sup>147</sup> Alison Liebling and Amy Ludlow, Suicide, distress and the quality of prison life in *Handbook on Prisons: Second Edition*’ ed. by Yvonne Jewkes, Jamie Bennett and Ben Crewe (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 224-245, p. 226.

<sup>148</sup> Peter Clarke, Keynote address at *What Good Looks Like Conference: A national partnership approach to supporting those in prison at risk of self-harm and suicide*, online conference (2 October 2020).

<sup>149</sup> Feedback questionnaires, 27 January 2020.

been their way of dealing with pain and emotional trauma. They said that to bring such a generally taboo issue into the open made them feel more able to speak about it and helped to reduce the stigma they felt.<sup>150</sup> One of the psychologists praised the work for ‘demonstrating that it’s ok to talk about issues’ whilst another stated that ‘The Gallowfield Players give hope’.<sup>151</sup> The use of Shakespeare’s play, adapted to reflect their own experiences had allowed them to feel that they were less isolated and that their hidden issues could be more publicly discussed, as Reason articulated ‘able to speak of and about and for them without being the thing itself’.<sup>152</sup> In this way the performance in the chapel created a heterotopia which united them with others across the estate and those beyond the walls, utilising Shakespeare as a means of creating a dialogue of solidarity rarely experienced between those incarcerated and those not.

Following the performance there was an opportunity for cast, inmates, staff and external guests to speak informally which they did, breaking down the perceived barriers which would usually exist. The Lord Mayor of Leicester was effusive in her praise as she spoke to the actors, enthusing that ‘it was absolutely wonderful’ and asking that she be invited for all future productions.<sup>153</sup> Fionnula Gordon, Criminology Lecturer and ex-HM Prisons Inspectorate reflected:

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<sup>150</sup> Verbal feedback from inmates , 27 January 2020, (both were referred for support via their Keyworker).

<sup>151</sup> Feedback questionnaires, 27 January 2020.

<sup>152</sup> Reason, ‘A prison audience’, p. 101.

<sup>153</sup> Verbal feedback from Lord Mayor of Leicester, Annette Byrne, 27 January 2020.

the exchanges between Jessica and Shylock were very emotional, dealing with leaving kids on the outside and showed how difficult it is to repair the harm between a father and his child.<sup>154</sup>

The interweaving of Shakespeare and the criminal justice system resonated not only with those with lived experience of prison but those who were watching the play from more emotionally-distanced positions. A Library Assistant commented on the ‘rawness’ which ‘brought everyone together, a platform for both prisoners and staff’ which was ‘so needed.’<sup>155</sup> This sense of unification between staff and inmates is rare within the prison estate on a group-scale. Two officers played cameo roles to facilitate Shylock’s release from the prison and Lancelot Gobbo enlisted members of the audience to represent his conscience and the fiend, borrowing heavily from the Globe’s 2015 production.<sup>156</sup> The involvement of staff and guests as equals with the actors was a powerful way of breaking down some of the barriers which exist between those incarcerated and the rest of society. Lloyd’s trilogy, which included *The Tempest* examined earlier, cast two Clean Break actresses (with lived experience of incarceration) in relatively minor roles alongside the professional actors.<sup>157</sup> The Gallowfield Players production inverted that balance with the significant roles played by the Company with cameo roles for staff. A Psychotherapist in the audience commented that this ‘enabled a shift both inside and outside for the men’,

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<sup>154</sup> Verbal feedback from Fionnula Gordon (University of Derby), 27 January 2020.

<sup>155</sup> Feedback questionnaire, Library Assistant in HMP Gartree, 27 January 2020.

<sup>156</sup> Jonathan Munby (dir.), *The Merchant of Venice*, The Globe Theatre (2015).

<sup>157</sup> Phyllida Lloyd (dir.), *The Donmar Shakespeare Trilogy*, Donmar Pop-up Theatre (2016); Jennifer Joseph and Sarah-Jane Dent (Clean Break graduates) who performed in the trilogy.



allowing them the opportunity to be the ones revered for a brief period, an experience felt profoundly by the inmates and their families in the second performance.<sup>158</sup>

The second performance was part of a Family Day, an extended and slightly more informal visit. The Ministry of Justice *Strengthening Prisoner's Family Ties Policy Framework* identifies that Family Days 'help to improve positive relationships between prisoners and [...] family members'.<sup>159</sup> Prison Rule 35 entitles convicted prisoners 'to receive a visit twice in every period of four weeks' and family days are in addition to this allowance.<sup>160</sup> The *Framework* cites:

growing evidence that family support and maintaining family ties is not only important for the well-being of prisoners, but may also aid reintegration into the community following release from prison, and reduce reoffending.<sup>161</sup>

However, as Laura Piacentini acknowledges 'prison is a problematic space in the context of the family' with familial relationships often fractured by incarceration.<sup>162</sup> Eight actors invited relatives who arrived to a Visits Hall which had been reconfigured to create a stage area and seating. Around the room, the cast and families shared lunch (standard prison fayre). The six

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<sup>158</sup> Feedback questionnaire, Psychotherapist, 27 January 2020.

<sup>159</sup> Ministry of Justice, *Strengthening Prisoner's Family Ties Policy Framework* (31 January 2019), [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/863606/strengthening-family-ties-pf.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/863606/strengthening-family-ties-pf.pdf) [accessed 28 March 2020], p10.

<sup>160</sup> Statutory Instruments, *The Prison Rules 1999*, No 728, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1999/728/made> [accessed 28 March 2020], Rule 35.2 (b).

<sup>161</sup> Ministry of Justice, *Strengthening Prisoner's Family Ties*, p. 5.

<sup>162</sup> Laura Piacentini, speaking at book launch for Cara Jardine's monograph, *Families, Imprisonment and Legitimacy: The Cost of Custodial Penalties* (London: Routledge, 2019), online (13 November 2020).

without family attendance ate in a group, accompanied by me. Ben commented ‘this feels like normal life, having food with your mates outside’ and the atmosphere felt distinctly different to the usual prison environment.<sup>163</sup> The cast were keen to introduce their fellow actors to their families. Normal visits involve inmates sitting one side of their allotted table and visitors the other, a clear demarcation which must not be breached and there is no opportunity to interact with other inmates and their visitors. Rob’s Aunt wrote to me afterwards, saying that seeing ‘a loved one engaging with and relaxed with other prisoners was a magical experience’ which allayed her fears over how he was coping and who he was interacting with during his long sentence.<sup>164</sup> Crewe *et al* dedicate a section of their book to ‘reforming a social world in prison’ where they map the changing nature of inmate friendships from largely superficial during early years of sentences to ones involving ‘mutual disclosure and trust’ in later years.<sup>165</sup> There is usually a sense that these friendships remain separate from external contacts but this informal luncheon allowed the actors to bring their families and inmate friends together positively.

Michael, who wrote the adaptation of *The Merchant* (which earned him a Koestler Commended Award for the script) ‘as a love letter to [his] children’, played Shylock and this was the first of the Gallowfield Players’ performances he invited visitors to.<sup>166</sup> His children were unable to attend but he invited Eleanor, the lady he classes as his mother. Whilst Michael was otherwise engaged she initiated the following conversation:

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<sup>163</sup> Ben, verbal comment made prior to The Gallowfield Players’ *The Merchant* in the Visits Hall, HMP Gartree (29 January 2020).

<sup>164</sup> Rob’s Aunt, personal correspondence with author (17 February 2020).

<sup>165</sup> Crewe, Hulley and Wright, p. 237.

<sup>166</sup> Michael, ‘Late Nights and Friday Mornings’, *The Merchant Programme* (unpublished, January 2020), pp. 5-7, p. 7; Koestler Awards 2020, , p. 30.

Eleanor: Thankyou

Rowan: What for?

Eleanor: For giving me back my son. I haven't seen him for many years, long before he came in here. And now he's back and that's all thanks to you and the work you do.<sup>167</sup>

She told me that their telephone calls are about The Gallowfield Players and that it has given him focus as he serves his sentence. As Shelley Tracey notes in her 2017 study 'the connections between interventions and rehabilitation are complex and not easily articulated', but to be seen by a mother as returning her son to her was powerful testimony of the changes this in-prison theatre company enabled.<sup>168</sup>

A number of invited guests arrived after lunch for the performance, including Jeremy Wilkinson (Opus Arte) who was unsure what to expect from this, his first prison visit. He commented that his 'first impression was the warmth, everyone chatting and you couldn't tell staff, visitors and inmates apart, the cast made me feel so welcome'.<sup>169</sup> Professionally printed programmes (see Chapter 4) were distributed to the audience to enhance the feeling of this being an authentic theatre production, allow the actors to share some of the behind-the-scenes experience and provide a memento. The audience took their seats, chairs arranged into a semi-circle to create a thrust-effect stage, and the prologue began.

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<sup>167</sup> Verbal feedback from Eleanor made prior to The Gallowfield Players' *The Merchant* in the Visits Hall, HMP Gartree (29 January 2020).

<sup>168</sup> Shelley Tracey, *Building Foundation for Change Through the Arts* (Belfast: Prison Arts Foundation, 2017), p. 15.

<sup>169</sup> Jeremy Wilkinson, Head of Opus Arte, telephone conversation with the author (4 February 2020).

Watching Shylock's poignant soliloquy about the years behind bars and how his love for his family had kept him going was even more emotional performed in front of those very families who sustain the inmates through their sentences. The visits hall ceiling was too low to accommodate the constructed doorway so Malcolm (our Stage Manager as well as playing minor roles) improvised by propping the hand-painted signs in one of the high windows to signify the change of locations. The performance did not benefit from lighting, proper scenery or even a backstage area, but despite that Martin's wife commented 'it was as though I was watching it elsewhere (not in prison)'.<sup>170</sup> Those who had previously seen a Gallowfield Players production 'expected to see greatness' but those unfamiliar with the company 'didn't know what to expect with limited resources' but all agreed they were 'blown away'.<sup>171</sup>

For those in the audience who were not related to the cast the performance delivered a heterotopia through using the combination of Shakespeare, adapted and spoken by inmates serving life sentences. For some who had not spent time with inmates before, this had the effect of showing them as people rather than prisoners, much as Daniels noted when he met the patients in Broadmoor.<sup>172</sup> Kevin Wright from the Royal Shakespeare Company attended and afterwards commented that 'rarely has a piece of theatre resonated in my mind the way this did'.<sup>173</sup> An Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) representative praised the work for 'demonstrating that it is ok to talk about issues' including self-harm and

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<sup>170</sup> Feedback questionnaire, Martin's wife, *The Merchant*.

<sup>171</sup> Feedback questionnaires, *The Merchant*.

<sup>172</sup> Daniels in *Shakespeare Comes to Broadmoor*, p. 89.

<sup>173</sup> Kevin Wright, Royal Shakespeare Company, verbal feedback relayed via Jeremy Wilkinson during a telephone conversation with the author (4 February 2020).

family estrangement.<sup>174</sup> This was done through the lens of ‘dramatic distancing’ which drew on Shakespeare’s iconic characters to highlight much less palatable topics in a way which allowed a diverse audience to engage with them.<sup>175</sup> Whilst much prison creative art encourages inmates to tell their own stories, this can at times be seen by some as solipsistic as it:

encourages a level of self-obsession from people with no assistance for moving forward. [...] this reiterates the internal dialogue and leads the person to believe this to be true. The pathways in the brain are strengthened. [...] This can be damaging rather than helpful.<sup>176</sup>

Therapist Gillian Bridge takes the rather controversial view that re-telling of ‘same-old series of personal stories’ encourages introspection and stifles the possibility of building a positive narrative for the future.<sup>177</sup> I refute this as there are undoubtedly therapeutic benefits in discussing one’s personal experiences; however, care needs to be taken to ensure that the dialogue does not become entirely retrospective but opens up avenues for development. However, there are many people who would have little sympathy for hearing the fears of a prisoner about their treatment upon release, taking the view that they have brought this on themselves by their crimes. Sensationalist newspaper headlines and social media stories help to develop and perpetuate a stigmatisation of those incarcerated, reducing them ‘from a whole and usual person to a discounted one’ and often inciting

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<sup>174</sup> Feedback questionnaire, IMB representative, *The Merchant*.

<sup>175</sup> Jennings, ‘Therapeutic journeys through *King Lear*’, p.17.

<sup>176</sup> Gillian Bridge, interview with the author, Surrey (13 September 2016).

<sup>177</sup> Gillian Bridge, *The Significance Delusion* (Carmarthen: Crown House Publishing Ltd, 2016), p. 52.

public disgust at any positive interventions made available.<sup>178</sup> Warr, a criminologist with lived experience of prison acknowledges ‘the impact of prison stigma is all-pervasive’ and societal opinion of the formerly incarcerated is to reduce them to *other*, somehow different from those casting judgement.<sup>179</sup>

When Michael and Rob suggested adapting *The Merchant of Venice* it was specifically for the way it would allow them to tackle this stigma by placing Shylock in the position of having a life sentence. Rob told the group ‘it’s the thing that keeps me awake at night, knowing how society will hate me when I do get out’, sobering honesty from an intelligent, articulate man who will not be considered for parole for over two decades.<sup>180</sup> Using Shylock to voice those concerns added a cultural validity which lifted the message from being self-pitying and individual-focused to being a sociological reflection on the experiences and concerns of the estimated 11 million people incarcerated globally.<sup>181</sup> Shylock was not created as a one-dimensional figure of pity but drew on Shakespeare’s character to create a complex, irritable man whose human failings were evident, a man perhaps difficult to love but also difficult to dismiss. A number of visitors suggested that the production should be shown more widely across the prison estate ‘to show that being in prison is not the end of life’ and that it should be shared with outside groups such as local colleges, schools and drama groups.<sup>182</sup> The Gallowfield Players are currently exploring the

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<sup>178</sup> Ervin Goffman, *Stigma: On the Measurement of Spoiled Identity* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1963), p. 3.

<sup>179</sup> Jason Warr, ‘The prisoner: inside and out’ in *Handbook on Prisons: Second Edition*, ed. by Yvonne Jewkes, Jamie Bennett and Ben Crewe (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 586-604, p. 600.

<sup>180</sup> Rob, comment during Gallowfield Players’ rehearsal when discussing the next play to produce (12 April 2019).

<sup>181</sup> Roy Walmsley, *World Prison Population List: Twelfth Edition*, (Institute for Criminal Policy Research, 2018), [https://www.prisonstudies.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/wppl\\_12.pdf](https://www.prisonstudies.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/wppl_12.pdf) [accessed 29 March 2020].

<sup>182</sup> Feedback questionnaires, *The Merchant*.

possibility of seeking permission from the Governor and Ministry of Justice for the filming of a documentary about the theatre company to 'leave a lasting legacy that will change lives, help people and show that [they] are more than a label'.<sup>183</sup>

For the families it created a heterotopia by making them forget they were 'visiting a prison, it felt like a theatre' and allowing them a few hours of seeing their loved ones being revered and applauded for their skills.<sup>184</sup> It is worth quoting at length from Rob's rehearsal diary for that day:

I actually had butterflies in my stomach, it was the first time I can remember really feeling that sensation. My Mum, Nan and Aunt came to watch the performance and knowing they were watching seemed to exaggerate how nervous I was feeling. Retrospectively, I think it was the pressure that this was something I could do to make them proud of me. This isn't something we ever really have the opportunity for in here, we can achieve things and tell family/loved ones about it but I can't think of anything else I have been able to share, something special like that, with them. It's the sort of thing that weighs heavily on me. Today was such a powerfully positive experience.<sup>185</sup>

Crewe *et al's* research evidences that 'the impact of separation from deeply embedded familial relations was, for the majority of prisoners, both agonising and enduring', which

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<sup>183</sup> Michael, Rehearsal Diary entry (30 January 2020).

<sup>184</sup> Feedback questionnaires, *The Merchant*.

<sup>185</sup> Rob, Rehearsal Diary entry (29 January 2020).

goes some way to explaining Rob's nervousness prior to performing.<sup>186</sup> His desire to physically share an experience of pride with his family rather than telling them of the event afterwards was significant, it would allow him and his family to experience positive emotions together in a way which had been impossible since his arrest.<sup>187</sup> The standing ovation and visitors openly weeping as the production ended affirmed to the actors that they were being hailed as actors not judged as prisoners. Wayne wrote 'all I want is for my family to be proud and this production made that happen', 'it's the best day I ever had in prison', suggesting that this was one of the defining moments identified by Lefebvre's 'theory of moments'.<sup>188</sup> Their adaptation of Shakespeare's play enabled them to communicate parts of themselves which they may not have been able to find the words for previously, in ways which resonated with inmates, staff, families and external visitors alike, using the cultural capital of Shakespeare to speak with impactful clarity and deep honesty. Michael's summation of the 'elation, joy, pride, happiness at the way everyone pulled together' perfectly articulates the supportive community-spirit of the group.<sup>189</sup>

The inaugural production of Emergency Shakespeare in HMP Stafford in September 2019 very consciously engaged with the concept of space with a modern adaptation of *Macbeth*. The company rehearsed and performed in the Visits Hall, a large space with high ceilings and numerous windows providing plenty of light. The set was designed by Brody, who discovered his artistic talent whilst in prison and has since commenced an undergraduate Art degree. The adaptation set the play in a modern theatre company

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<sup>186</sup> Crewe, Hulley and Wright, p. 214.

<sup>187</sup> Rob, The Gallowfield Players, discussion with the author (7 February 2020).

<sup>188</sup> Wayne, Rehearsal Diary (January 2020); Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life: The One Volume Edition: Volume III*, trans. by Gregory Elliott (London and New York: Verso Publishing, 2002), p. 638.

<sup>189</sup> Michael, Rehearsal Diary (January 2020).



rehearsing the Scottish play. A relative newcomer to the company, Wade, overheard the Stage Manager, Director and Producer (who parodically self-identified as the witches) prophesying greatness in his future which drove him and his partner to devise the plan of pouring a potion into Duncan's drink rendering him temporarily ill, allowing Wade to step up from understudy to leading man.<sup>190</sup> However their scheme triggered a fatal heart attack



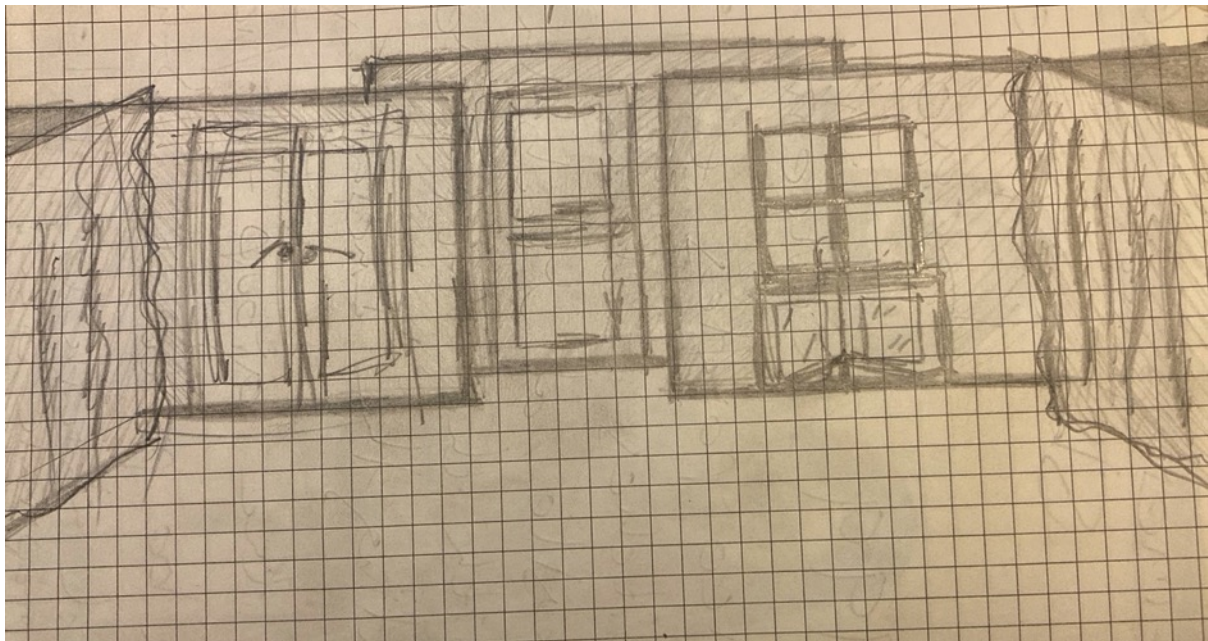
26. Emergency Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, The Visits Hall, HMP Stafford (17 September 2019), Photo: George Vuckovich Photography.

and from there the adapted plot of *Macbeth* ensued with Banquo pushed down the stairs and McDuff's family burnt in a fire before Wade was arrested, having just heard the news of his partner's suicide. The play within a play concept incorporated famous Shakespeare lines with modern text and staff playing cameo roles. One of the most powerful components of the heterotopia they created in this production was the concept of things spiralling out of

<sup>190</sup> Emergency Shakespeare, *Macbeth: An Adaptation* (unpublished, 2019).

control; Wade did not intentionally set out to kill Duncan but his ambition overruled his sense of right and wrong. The actors were keen that he should not appear as a depraved individual from the outset but a man whose flaws initiated his downfall whilst possessing redemptive qualities too. Their attempt at an Aristotelian tragedy figure was created to challenge the often-held assumptions that those convicted of sexual offences are 'recidivistic, untreatable predators', a view fuelled by the media despite evidence to the contrary in terms of reoffending rates.<sup>191</sup>

The Visits Hall had a number of pillars which Brody's design incorporated by using green prison sheets strung between four of them to create a proscenium stage into which



27. Brody's initial sketch of the set design, completed during rehearsals in his Rehearsal Diary (June 2019), Courtesy of Brody.

<sup>191</sup> Laura L. King and Jennifer J. Roberts, 'The Complexity of Public Attitudes Towards Sex Crimes'. *Victims and Offenders*, 12:1 (2015), 71-89, (p.71), [doi: 10.1080/15564886.2015.1005266](https://doi.org/10.1080/15564886.2015.1005266) [accessed 6 October 2020]; Ruth E. Mann, 'Sex offenders in prison' in *Handbook on Prisons: Second Edition*, ed. by Yvonne Jewkes, Jamie Bennett and Ben Crewe (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 246-64, p. 247.

the audience looked from their chairs arranged in gently curved rows. What began as doodling in his rehearsal diary during an early session which frustrated him for being ‘too unproductive, digressive and interrupted’ formed the basis for the staging of the play.<sup>192</sup>

Prison sheets were used as they were in plentiful supply, making the set practical and inexpensive. The creation of a cube, enclosed on three sides by sheets was intended by Brody to ‘give the audience the feeling at once of being enclosed in the action and apart from it’, emulating the way that prison visitors are both temporarily enclosed within the prison and very much external, seeing only a limited glimpse.<sup>193</sup> Free-standing display boards were then repurposed as flats across the rear of the stage, forming central



28. The set for Emergency Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, HMP Stafford (16 September 2019), Photo: Rowan Mackenzie.

<sup>192</sup> Brody, Rehearsal Diary (2 June 2019).

<sup>193</sup> Brody, Emergency Shakespeare, conversation with the author (7 July 2019).

entrances and allowing for the changing of the location through a series of different room-scapes. The Art Department painted these according to Brody's design, providing a rehearsal room, a public house and a living room. These were pinned onto the boards and flipped by members of the cast between scenes. We utilised the concept of the audience witnessing rehearsals to make the scene changes part of the play rather than a separate activity, echoing Boal's assertion that for the oppressed 'their theatre will be the rehearsal not the finished spectacle'.<sup>194</sup>

Props including a cardboard bar with working beer pumps, a props box and numerous smaller items were created within the prison. The morning before the performances was a full run-through and the men remained out of their cells over lunchtime (which requires prison approval and is outside normal regime) to create the set, allowing a dress rehearsal in the afternoon. The painted sheets arrived that day and it became apparent that somewhere a miscommunication had occurred, resulting in them being painted on the material with the wrong orientation. Given the combination of this being Brody's set design, which he had put a lot of effort into, his propensity to be quick-tempered and a history of bad feeling between himself and the Art Teacher, I anticipated an angry outburst from him. However, his emotional resilience and coping mechanisms, developed partly through being a member of the company (Chapter 1) meant he simply shrugged, gave a wry smile and commented 'oh well, it'll be alright, we'll work it out'.<sup>195</sup> This self-control would have been beyond comprehension when he joined four months earlier but with a little creativity of approach the set was indeed 'alright'.

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<sup>194</sup> Boal, p.120.

<sup>195</sup> Brody, Emergency Shakespeare, conversation with the author (16 September 2019).

The space was altered significantly and the actors commented that ‘the stage made a huge difference, it felt like we were in a totally different room’ and ‘the set made it feel like I wasn’t in jail’.<sup>196</sup> Feedback questionnaires were handed out as the audience arrived but a number of the residents declined to take one which surprised me as the population was usually very compliant with prison requests. Ray explained that these men were functionally illiterate (‘62% of people entering prison were assessed as having a reading age of 11 or lower’) but were embarrassed to admit this.<sup>197</sup> Many of the audience initially made comments about not liking Shakespeare, which could have been them maintaining the façade they felt prison required or a more genuine dread of a ‘long tedious telling of the play’.<sup>198</sup> Unfortunately it was not possible for me to explore this issue with the audience to gauge the true meaning behind their comments due to time restrictions and as I had not developed a relationship of trust with them it is unlikely that they would have opened up in such a discussion.

Martha Morey and Ben Crewe examine the complexities and often contradictory natures of masculine facades as a survival mechanism in ‘Work, Intimacy and Prison Masculinities’ where they challenge ‘the presentation of male prisoners as

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<sup>196</sup> Emergency Shakespeare cast debrief, HMP Stafford (22 September 2019).

<sup>197</sup> Ray, conversation with the author, HMP Stafford (17 September 2019); Department for Education, *FE Data Library—OLASS English and maths assessments: participation 2017/18* (London: SFA, 2018), <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-education-and-training> cited in Prison Reform Trust, *Prison: The Facts - The Bromley Briefings* (Summer 2019), p. 15, <http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Bromley%20Briefings/Prison%20the%20facts%20Summer%202019.pdf> [accessed 5 October 2020].

<sup>198</sup> Feedback questionnaires, Emergency Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, The Visits Hall, HMP Stafford (17 September 2019).

“hypermasculine” but acknowledge that prison ‘generates defensive responses’.<sup>199</sup> From the atmosphere in the room it seemed to me likely that there were both reservations about coming to see a Shakespeare play and an element of thinking it reputationally detrimental to display excitement about such an activity in the presence of their peers. Regardless of their expectations the atmosphere throughout was engaged and they evidently enjoyed the performance. The buzz at the end as they came to speak to the cast was palpable and many of them congratulated us on the overall quality of the work.<sup>200</sup> This evidently continued on the wings as when we held a second residents’ performance the following week the chapel was filled to capacity with individual attendees and teachers bringing their classes to see it. One resident commented in his feedback that the play ‘has encouraged me to read some of [Shakespeare’s] work, which is not something I would normally read’.<sup>201</sup> Engaging someone to the degree that they decided to read his work affirms that the performance changed perspectives and made Shakespeare accessible to men who perhaps felt it was not for them.

In the latest HMIP Inspection Report for HMP Stafford it was noted that

Relationships between prisoners and staff were good, 85% of prisoners said that staff treated them with respect and 84% said that there was a member of staff they could turn to if they had a problem.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Martha Morey and Ben Crewe, ‘Work, Intimacy and Prison Masculinities’ in *New Perspectives on Prison Masculinities*, pp. 17-41, p. 38.

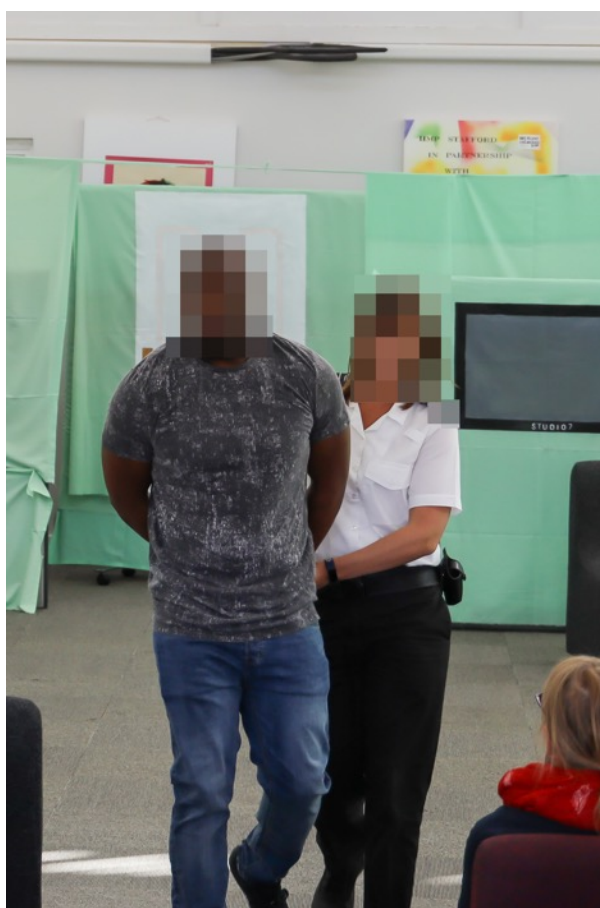
<sup>200</sup> Verbal feedback from residents following Emergency Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, The Visits Hall, HMP Stafford (17 September 2019).

<sup>201</sup> Feedback questionnaires, *Macbeth* (17 September 2019).

<sup>202</sup> Peter Clarke, *Report of an Unannounced Inspection of HMP Stafford by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, 8-19 February 2016* (London: Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Prisons, April 2016), p. 27, s. 2.6,



However, there were still areas for improvement documented, such as staff addressing prisoners by their first name and a requirement for supplementary anti-conditioning training for staff. The performance of cameo roles within the play by a Custody Manager and the Governor was welcomed by the residents, one of whom commented that 'staff involvement was surprising and positive'.<sup>203</sup> Whilst the heterotopic potential I had envisaged for the performance was more in relation to changing perspectives the residents held of Shakespeare, this feedback demonstrated the incremental shift in staff-prisoner

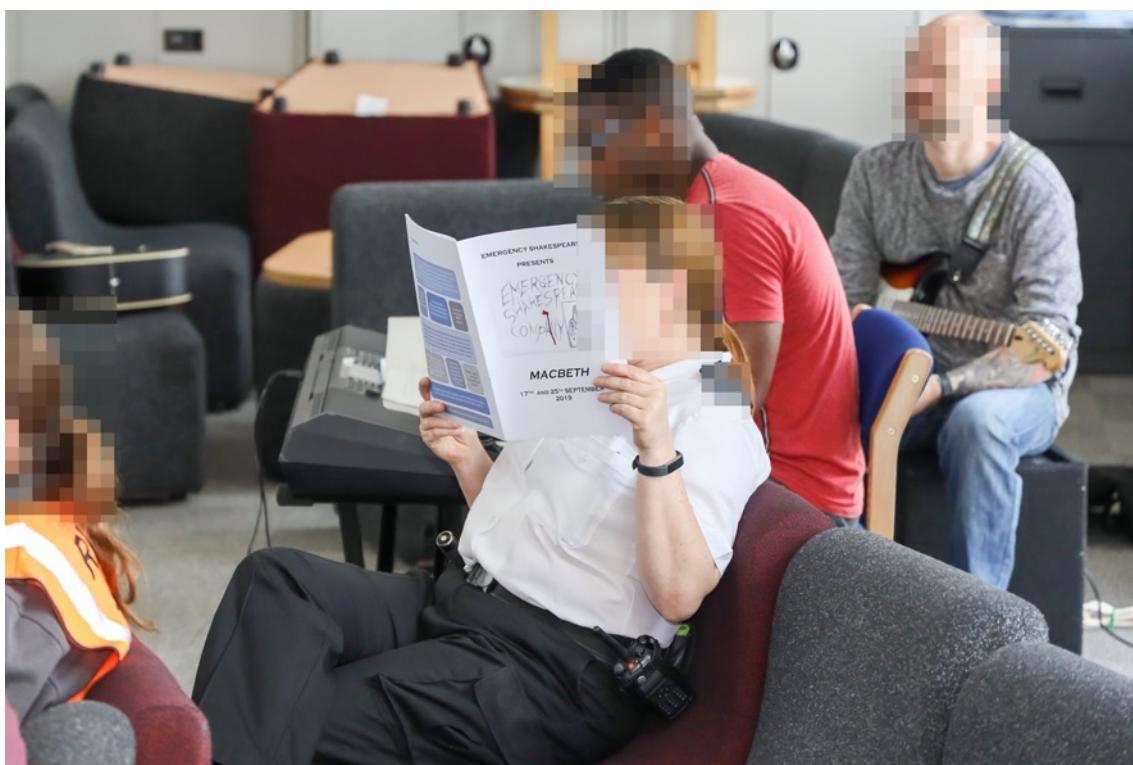


29. Wade (played by Mark) being arrested by HMPPS Custody Manager, Emergency Shakespeare, *Macbeth* (17 September 2019), Photo: George Vuckovitch Photography.

<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprison/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2016/06/Stafford-Web-2016.pdf>, [accessed 1 April 2020].

<sup>203</sup> Feedback questionnaires (17 September 2020).

relations which can be created by such initiatives. As a result of the positivity surrounding this staff involvement, a Senior Officer (SO) became involved in the scratch performance we created of *Shakespeare is Disturbed!* as part of the Talent Unlocked Festival in November 2019. The SO then went on to play the role of Slender in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* which was due for performance in April 2020 but cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Alison Frater, Chair of the National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance, attended the second performance of *Macbeth* and described it as ‘an excellent model for other prisons’ while another guest commented on ‘how great to see staff involved’.<sup>204</sup> The positive benefits of involving staff at HMP Gartree was described earlier and this has become an important part of my model for in-prison theatre companies, helping to break down barriers in communication between the two groups, through shared exploration of Shakespeare.



30. Staff, audience and musicians at Emergency Shakespeare, *Macbeth* (17 September 2019), Photo: George Vuckovitch Photography

<sup>204</sup> Feedback questionnaires (17 September 2020).



Whilst these positive steps may seem small to those not familiar with the prison estate they are considerable when viewed in context. A Dramatherapist working in HMP Stafford volunteered with the group for the *Macbeth* production, performing the role of Director in the triumvirate. Despite having worked with the men for a period of time she noticeably only ever addressed them as Mr. Xxxx, refusing to use their given name. When we discussed this, outside of rehearsals, she told me that she felt it important to keep boundaries of respect and differentiation which being on first name terms would transgress, a decision I disagreed with but which I respected. She continued to adhere to this personal boundary until the dress rehearsal where she began to call them by their given names. Afterwards she told me that her perception had altered and she saw that although the residents and I were all on first name terms the respect between us remained high and whilst working indeed was founded on an equality within the company. The SO who



31. Applause following the performance of *Macbeth* (17 September 2019), Photo: George Vuckovitch Photography.

performed with the company gave them explicit permission to call him by his given name during rehearsals, although he was strictly known by the more formal Mr address outside of those three hours each week. This is indicative of the way in which the dynamics of the group, performed with the company gave them explicit permission to call him by his given name during rehearsals, although he was strictly known by the more formal Mr address outside of those three hours each week. This is indicative of the way in which the dynamics of the group, whilst working towards a common goal of performance, broke down barriers and allowed everyone to feel they had an equal input and their views were given validity and consideration.

The other key element of heterotopia within these performances was the feeling of pride that the actors had of their endeavours, similar to that described earlier within the Gallowfield Players. Richard Tewkesbury describes sex offenders as ‘the most despised and publicly discussed social deviants’ in the opening to his article on the stigmatisation of those convicted of sexual offences, a view prevalent across the Western world.<sup>205</sup> When I retweeted HMP Stafford’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic of repurposing their sewing workshop to make scrubs for the NHS, one negative reply was ‘given that HMP Stafford only houses sex offenders I really don’t think fabulous is appropriate in any context that involves those animals’.<sup>206</sup> John Braithwaite theorised the shaming of those who have committed an offence as being either reintegrative (temporary censure with an aim to reintegrate the offender back into the community) or disintegrative (which causes societal division and creates outcasts).<sup>207</sup> For many the stigma of being a sex offender results in disintegrative

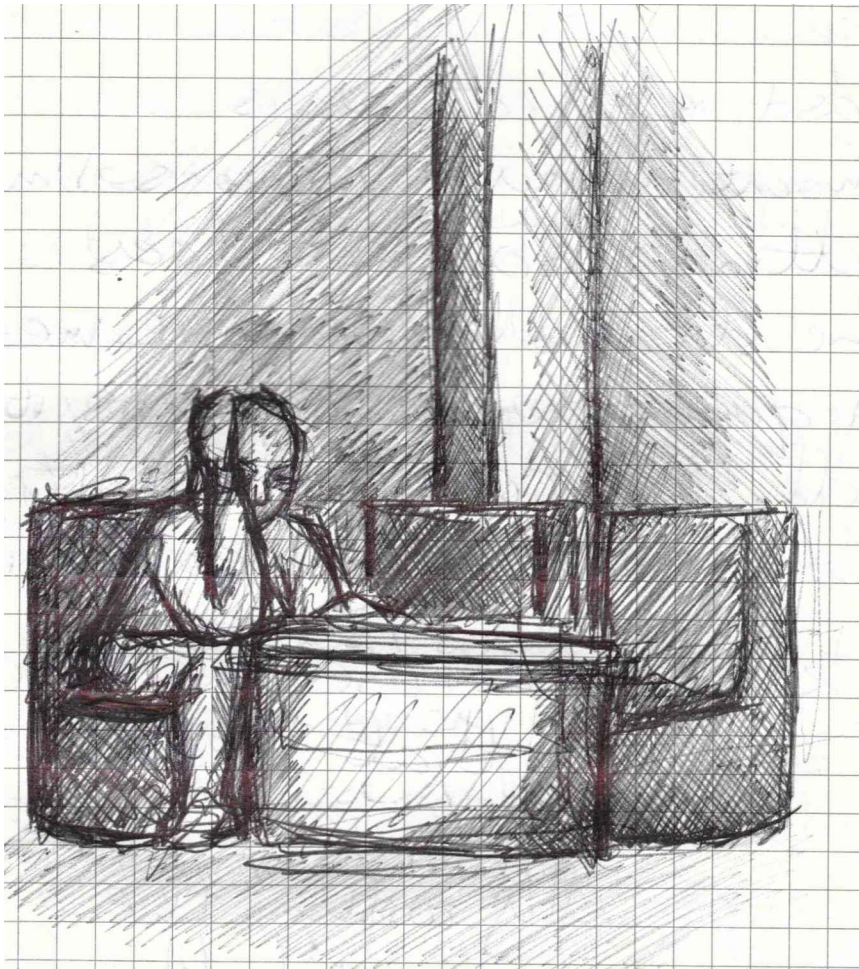
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<sup>205</sup> Richard Tewkesbury, ‘Stigmatisation of Sex Offenders’, *Deviant Behaviour*, 33 (2012), 606-23 (pp. 607).

<sup>206</sup> Tweet by Simon Dale (@simondale) (2 April 2020).

<sup>207</sup> John Braithwaite, *Crime, Shame and Reintegration* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

shaming both within the penal system (if held within a Vulnerable Prisoner Unit rather than a sex offender prison) and upon release, impacting significantly on mental health and



32. Brody's sketch of an inmate in the Visits Hall, made during an early rehearsal for *Macbeth* in his Rehearsal Diary (May 2019), Courtesy of Brody.

confidence. Criminologist Ruth Mann acknowledged that 'sex offenders face considerable public hostility' as 'the harmful, indeed shocking, nature of sex offending dominates public discourse about the people who have committed this type of crime' and this prejudicial

opinion often erodes any level of personal confidence and self-worth these individuals may have had.<sup>208</sup>

The men within the company were very mindful of how they would be judged by society for their offences and Mark in particular spoke with me at length about his fears of hatred by society and the impact on his own self esteem.<sup>209</sup> He is a young man who has very close and supportive familial ties and three of his relatives attended the performance. His mother gave feedback that it ‘helps them feel free and normal again’ while his sister wrote ‘amazing way to showcase talent, talent they didn’t know they had, bravo, 100 out of



33. Mark and Brody, Emergency Shakespeare, *Macbeth* (17 September 2019), Photo: George Vuckovitch Photography.

<sup>208</sup> Ruth E. Mann, ‘Sex offenders in prison’ in *Handbook on Prisons: Second Edition*, ed. by Yvonne Jewkes, Jamie Bennett and Ben Crewe (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 246-64, p. 260-61.

<sup>209</sup> Mark, discussion with the author whilst preparing to assist hosting HMP Stafford’s Rehabilitative Culture Summit (4 December 2019).



10!!!!'<sup>210</sup> In the debrief Mark spoke of the way his family 'were so proud and you don't expect someone to be proud of you when you're in prison'.<sup>211</sup> Brody's parents commented that they were 'immeasurably proud and moved' by watching him perform in a way which meant they 'saw Shakespeare in a totally different light – Stratford will never be the same!'<sup>212</sup> As psychotherapist James Gilligan describes 'the basic psychological motive, or cause, of violent behaviour is the wish to ward off or eliminate the feeling of shame and humiliation—a feeling that is painful, and can even be intolerable and overwhelming' and the goal of those who feel shame is to 'replace [shame] with its opposite, the feeling of



34. Emergency Shakespeare being warmly applauded for their acting skills, *Macbeth* (17 September 2019), Photo: George Vuckovitch Photography.

<sup>210</sup> Feedback questionnaires (17 September 2020).

<sup>211</sup> Mark, Emergency Shakespeare cast debrief (22 September 2019).

<sup>212</sup> Feedback questionnaires (17 September 2020).

pride'.<sup>213</sup> Often this manifests itself through interpersonal violence but this can instead be channelled positively, such as through theatrical performance.

This production offered an opportunity to share their 'extraordinary talent; the play was clever, funny, dramatic; it told a great many stories'.<sup>214</sup> The pride on the faces of family and friends was evident and the actors hearing them marvelling at the 'hugely impressive, professional performance' had such a positive impact.<sup>215</sup> Brody wrote in his diary that it was 'a massive confidence boost and made me so happy that we have created something that people have enjoyed'.<sup>216</sup> Others explained how they were 'absolutely buzzing after the first production and can't wait for many more' and 'great reaction, it's been a journey and we are going to do it all again – love it!'<sup>217</sup> This validation through the pride of external visitors was a powerful 'boost to self-esteem and confidence' as they took the cultural capital of Shakespeare and shaped it into their own creation, demonstrating to their loved ones that they are more than their offences and that they have much to offer of which they can be proud.<sup>218</sup> The two residents released shortly after this production joined local drama groups as a way of negotiating their reintegration to society and seeking positive activities where they felt their self-esteem could be rebuilt and which provided the 'vital community spirit' shared within Emergency Shakespeare.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> James Gilligan, *Preventing Violence: Prospects for Tomorrow* (New York: Thames and Hudson Inc, 2001), p. 29.

<sup>214</sup> Feedback questionnaires (17 September 2020).

<sup>215</sup> Feedback questionnaires (17 September 2020).

<sup>216</sup> Brody, Rehearsal Diary (17 September 2019).

<sup>217</sup> Batu, Rehearsal Diary (17 September 2019); Callum, Rehearsal Diary (17 September 2019).

<sup>218</sup> Letter of thanks written to the author by Paul prior to his release from HMP Stafford (September 2019).

<sup>219</sup> Feedback questionnaires (17 September 2020).

## Conclusion

As these multifarious case studies demonstrate, the enacting of Shakespeare with marginalised groups, as performers or audience, elicits heterotopic opportunities as the juxtaposition of the constructed play-world and the abstracted concept of the cultural capital of Shakespeare shows the world to have unexpected possibilities. The demarcated spaces of theatres add gravitas to performances and draw upon the cultural signifiers codified within the architecture of the space. This can be beneficial to the experience as it adds an additional layer of validity; performing words from the most iconic playwright in the canon within a professional theatre evidences that marginalised people are able to assert their rights to access culture. They cannot only *access* the cultural capital of Shakespeare but appropriate it as their own and use it to share their experiences in ways which society can, and often will, choose to engage with. Performances within demarcated spaces allow the opportunity for professional lighting and sound needed for the sensory-aware approach of relaxed performances for those who may find traditional theatre productions overwhelming for their senses. They attract a wider audience of mainstream society, including school parties and the general public, allowing the heterotopia to permeate society to some extent. What may have begun as an interest in seeing a marginalised performance out of curiosity can develop into a more profound experience where they ‘leave the theatre in a different “headspace”’.<sup>220</sup>

In contrast, the appropriated spaces used by those without access to a theatre may often draw an audience for reasons other than a desire to see a performance: boredom,

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<sup>220</sup> Lutterbie, p. 101.

familial loyalty and rostered work all being major drivers. The engagement may, at the outset, be less consciously with a piece of theatre-making but the opportunity to allow the unexpected to flourish is significant. The reframing of perceptions, both of self and of others, was a key heterotopic effect of the performances examined in this category. The professional actors who went into Broadmoor realised that the men they were performing for were not the monsters they had previously believed them to be. Inmates in the audience for prison theatre company performances saw their peers using Shakespeare as a bridge between those incarcerated and wider society whilst families and the performers often felt shared pride for the first time in years.



35. Blue Apple Theatre, *The Tempest+*, Winchester Royal Theatre (June 2019), Photo: Mike Hall Photography.



Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital permeates the use of Shakespeare with marginalised groups across all types of spaces but nowhere does it resonate more strongly than within performative locations. This is the pinnacle of the outward possession of cultural capital; when those dispossessed by society, and often disenfranchised as a result, are able to actively engage with Shakespeare as a way of demonstrating their ability and their right to access culture often denied to them. John Guillory argues that 'everyone has a right of access to cultural works, to the means of both their production and their consumption' but too often the reality is that this is denied through social and cultural exclusion.<sup>221</sup> Involvement in Shakespearean performances, whether as audience or performer, enables many from marginalised groups to take ownership of the spaces in which they are performed, legitimatising their endeavours through his work. Everyone does have a right to access cultural works and for many the performing of Shakespeare is a way of laying claim to that right which is societally acceptable and in doing so causes a paradigm shift through creating a heterotopia which shows the world to be different to how it appeared previously. These changes may be subtle rather than seismic but they resonate outwards and each performance, perhaps, gives a little more credence to the rights of all to access cultural works.

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<sup>221</sup> John Guillory, *Cultural Capital* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 54.

## Chapter 3 – Reflective Spaces

This chapter considers individualised interactions with Shakespeare's narratives and text, building on the heterotopic properties identified in Chapter 2. I develop this concept to consider how it can be utilised as an introspective reflection tool and to imbue individuals with a sense of personal agency. Foucault describes mirrors as heterotopic: their physical existence 'exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy'.<sup>1</sup> This chapter considers the interaction of three types of space: the physical (the internment camp or prison cell), the conceptual (the reading of Shakespeare and exercising of imagination) and the social (using Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' to articulate how Shakespeare can help people transcend their physical restrictions by a sense of belonging to a longer tradition).<sup>2</sup> The physical spaces in which the individuals in this chapter are situated often inflict emotional and social trauma and this, combined with Shakespeare acting as a mirror creates an internal heterotopia. In this context *reflective* describes how someone uses Shakespeare on an individual basis and how that engagement may lead them to consider themselves and their own experiences in connection to the work they are reading, allowing them to examine their own circumstances and develop resilience. Resilience is a key part of trauma-informed pedagogy, as outlined in Chapter 1, and in all of the examples analysed in this chapter those connecting with Shakespeare experienced trauma so it is natural that mental strength is a key element as they endure the situation. They often used the reflective

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<sup>1</sup> Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias', *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuite*, trans. by Jay Miskowiec (October 1984), <https://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/foucault1.pdf> [accessed 6 September 2020].

<sup>2</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. by Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

properties of Shakespeare to develop this emotional and intellectual resilience in extremely challenging circumstances. Historian Anne Dutlinger wrote of the Second World War:

Individual identity could be reclaimed – albeit momentarily – through art.

Art, music and performance transformed fear into freedom. The act of making art suspended the collective nightmare [...] it helped to sustain hope, a sense of self, and the will to live.<sup>3</sup>

Shakespeare, particularly, offers those experiencing isolation a methodology for reflecting their current circumstances but also engaging with something which has a cultural history strong enough to offer comfort that life will continue beyond their current experiences. Cultural history is an elusive term to define, with Alessandro Arcangeli acknowledging in his monograph on the subject that ‘there is no agreement [...] upon the definition’ but my interpretation is that it connects the concepts of place within society with the longevity of historical context.<sup>4</sup>

During periods of solitude Shakespeare’s work can function as both a mirror in which personal experiences are reflected and also a focal point into which the attention of the individual is diverted in considered contemplation. This mirrored image is consequential in its impact as the person deals with their marginalisation. It engages the brain in consideration of narratives and circumstances outside of the immediate situation, allowing people to develop resilience through reframing their situation as temporarily to be endured.

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<sup>3</sup> Anne Dutlinger, *Art, Music and Education as a Strategy for Survival: 1941-1945* (New York: Herodias: 2001), p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Alessandro Arcangeli, *Cultural History: A Concise Introduction* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2011), p. 3.

This chapter draws on the theoretical paradigms of Lefebvre and Deleuze which comprise reflection, repetition and difference. Lefebvre asserts that:

reflection pierces the surface and penetrates the depth of the relationship between repetition and difference....When the mirror is 'real' as is constantly the case in the realm of objects, the space in the mirror is imaginary....In a living body, on the other hand, where the mirror of reflection is imaginary, the *effect* is real.<sup>5</sup>

Lefebvre draws here on Deleuze's work on difference and repetition, in which the French philosopher articulates his argument that difference should not be seen in relation to an *other* object but to itself.<sup>6</sup>

Deleuze articulates his conceptualisation that 'difference is this state in which determination takes the form of unilateral distinction. We must therefore say that difference is made, or makes itself, as in the expression "make the difference"'.<sup>7</sup> He argues that far from being a judgement of how one thing does not resemble another, difference is a productive and essential part of individuation and that it is through difference that beings, species and objects create their identity. As Joe Hughes explains:

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<sup>5</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Malden, Oxford and Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), p. 182.

<sup>6</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Difference et Repetition*, trans. by Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

<sup>7</sup> Deleuze, p. 28.

Deleuze tries to develop a notion of difference which is not difference between things, or in relation to other things, which is discovered not through dialectics, but through a 'crucial' lived experience of difference.<sup>8</sup>

Repetition, Deleuze argues, can never be an identical replication; each time something is repeated the circumstances are subtly changed which forces a difference. He asserts that 'repetition is not generality....resemblance and repetition are different'.<sup>9</sup> This specificity of terminology is important. He argues that repetition is 'difference without a concept' and that the existence of difference means true repetition is impossible.<sup>10</sup> Each time an event happens the circumstances have subtly altered and it is therefore a different event not a repetition of the previous one. Drawing on Lefebvre and Deleuze's concepts, I argue that reflections on Shakespeare can be used to pierce the surface of *otherness* and to allow penetration of the relationship between self and society. I develop Lefebvre's argument that a real mirror produces an illusory reflection whilst the imaginary mirror of reflection that we, as humans, use to consider the world we see produces a perceptible effect. Often the use of Shakespeare by someone who is marginalised allows them to effect tangible changes to their own perceptions and to those of society. Reflecting on one's currently restricted space but read through the lens of Shakespeare allows people to reassess their conceptual space and their sense of self. David Schalkwyk described this in relation to the passages selected by inmates on Robben Island:

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<sup>8</sup> Joe Hughes, *Deleuze's 'Difference and Repetition': A Reader's Guide* (London: Continuum, 2009), p. 40.

<sup>9</sup> Deleuze, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Deleuze, p. 13.

these people, at a particular point, saw in Shakespeare's words some kind of mirror of themselves. So, you're sitting in your prison cell, you read the play and it seems to speak to you. Thirty years later, under a completely different set of circumstances, you're no longer the same person, and so, you don't see yourself in the mirror of the words that you've actually chosen. A fascinating reflection on the nature of human identity.<sup>11</sup>

This chapter considers how reflective uses of Shakespeare can provide solace, self-contemplation and a source of external strength during challenging times. His work also allows people to develop a sense of personal agency through their engagement with this cultural capital during a time when they are oppressed by circumstances. A number of those whose experiences are examined in this chapter appeared to draw core strength from the connection with this canonical literature which their marginalization did not preclude. Whilst their physical freedom was restricted, there is a sense that Shakespeare allowed them mental freedom and formed a way for them to link with an ongoing narrative. This helped to locate them socially along a temporal continuum which would continue beyond their circumstances. This was a way of combatting the temporal vertigo which can often arise in such situations, a sense of time distorting and disorientating reality. I will consider both those for whom societal dislocation is a temporary yet instantaneous event, such as prisoners of war and those for whom marginalisation and ostracisation from mainstream

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<sup>11</sup> David Shalkwyk, *Shakespeare Unlimited Podcast: Episode 1* (Folger Shakespeare Library, 2014) <https://www.folger.edu/shakespeare-unlimited/robben-island-shakespeare> [accessed 18 October 2020].

society is an ongoing issue, such as those incarcerated or with mental health issues (albeit many people with mental health issues may not self-identify as marginalised).

Shakespeare's influence on philosophers, academics, authors and thinkers is widely known and disseminated but there is little literature considering the way in which Shakespeare is used as a mechanism for private reflection with those from marginalised echelons of society.<sup>12</sup> Through reflecting on Shakespeare's characters and narratives individuals are able to connect with humanity at times when circumstances and practicalities may render interpersonal connections difficult or impossible. Building on Lefebvre's link to Deleuze's theory on difference and repetition I believe that reflection also allows contemplation of difference and similarity. Deleuze's argument that difference is an intrinsic part of individuation is particularly significant for those marginalised by society. The opportunity to use Shakespeare in a reflective capacity allows individuals to consider similarities and differences between themselves and characters but also wider humanity, enabling them to draw emotional sustenance from the narratives. This can form the basis of developing resilience which allows their difference to become a part of their individuation whilst also allowing them to contextualise themselves amongst the long tradition of those who have engaged with Shakespeare.

In addition to Lefebvre's theory on reflection and Deleuze's assertion that difference is a crucial element of individuation, literary scholar Edward W. Said's 'Reflections on Exile' is also pertinent to this chapter. He describes exile as 'the unhealable rift forced between a

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<sup>12</sup> Colin McGinn, *Shakespeare's Philosophers, Discovering the meanings behind the plays* (New York: Harper Collins, 2006); Stanley Stewart, *Shakespeare and Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2009).

human being and a native place' and explores the association between nationalism (with its overriding notions of belonging) and exile, its diametric opposite (a displacement which cannot be easily reconciled).<sup>13</sup> He links this to Bourdieu's notion of '*habitus*, the coherent amalgam of practices linking habit with inhabitation' in the sense that habitus is the embodiment of achieved nationalism, the antithesis of exile, a deep sense of belonging.<sup>14</sup> I build on this to argue that the emotional dislocation embodied by exile, in many ways shares significant similarities with those marginalised within society. Said's description that 'in a very acute sense exile is a solitude experienced outside the group' reflects the experiences of those who are rejected by mainstream society whether through mental ill-health, learning disabilities, other reasons for ostracisation or the physical separation from their familial group as a result of incarceration.<sup>15</sup> Said asserts that:

The literature about exile objectifies an anguish and a predicament most people rarely experience first-hand; but to think of the exile informing this literature as beneficially humanistic is to banalize its mutilations, the losses it inflicts on those who suffer them, the muteness with which it responds to any attempt to understand it as "good for us".<sup>16</sup>

As my research demonstrates Shakespeare can be an alternative language of communication for those unable to find words to describe their isolation and dislocation from society.

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<sup>13</sup> Edward W. Said, *Reflections on Exile: And Other Literary and Cultural Essays* (London: Granta Publications, 2000), p. 173.

<sup>14</sup> Said, p. 176.

<sup>15</sup> Said, p. 177.

<sup>16</sup> Said, p. 174.



Reflective engagements with Shakespeare are, by their nature, difficult to capture and are reliant upon the individual's sharing of the impacts, complete with the intrinsic vagaries and nuances that entails. The research for this chapter is a combination of written works from individuals both during and after their period of isolation; combining feedback, personal letters and unpublished rehearsal diaries of projects I have facilitated, supplemented with external sources as appropriate. Shakespeare's cultural capital allows people to experience habitus and a sense of belonging to wider society even when other factors make them feel isolated and ostracised. I have divided the contemplative activities within this chapter into two sub-sections as each is subtly different; those where the reflection is individualistic in nature and those where it is intrinsically linked to a larger group dynamic. In the former the individual may be using Shakespeare as a way of occupying their mind, passing time, making sense of the world or exercising their creative impulses, largely on an individual basis, although these explorations may be shared with others when possible. Often these will be people incarcerated for various reasons, including those within the criminal justice system and prisoners of war. I will also analyse how those who engage with Shakespeare in a group setting then reflect on that in their own time, combining the characters, narrative and language of Shakespeare with their perceptions of the wider programme they are involved in. The demarcation between these two ways of using Shakespeare reflectively is important, as in the first the engagement is largely individualistic whilst the latter reflects not just on Shakespeare but on the wider group dynamic.

Considering firstly the existing literature on the topic, perhaps the most widely publicised example of Shakespeare in isolation is the Robben Island Bible – a copy of Shakespeare disguised to prevent its confiscation. David Schalkwyk, Ashwin Desai and Matthew Hahn have all written extensively on it, although with differing conclusions as to the centrality of its role in the lives of political prisoners there.<sup>17</sup> A number of released anti-apartheid campaigners have also published autobiographies of their experiences in the labour-camp of Robben Island. More recently, Laura Bates' book, *Shakespeare Saved My Life* about her work with men in solitary confinement in the Wabash Valley Correctional Facility, focused primarily on the positive engagement and emotional development of Larry Newton, who is serving life without parole.<sup>18</sup> She also contributed to Jonathan Shailor's book, *Performing New Lives*, which documents in Newton's own words the impact of their work with his proclamation that 'literally Shakespeare saved my life'.<sup>19</sup> Curt Tofteland's work has been much publicised through the 2006 documentary *Shakespeare Behind Bars*. In interview he described 'three noble truths: humans need a tribe, humans need a story and humans need to reflect'.<sup>20</sup> Whilst his work is focused on 'circles of trust' and creating performances within a group environment, he does encourage those he engages with to write reflective journals.<sup>21</sup> Tofteland's 'circles of trust' are consciously developed through

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<sup>17</sup> David Schalkwyk, *Hamlet's Dreams: The Robben Island Shakespeare* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2012); Ashwin Desai, *Reading Revolution: Shakespeare on Robben Island* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2014); Matthew Hahn, *The Robben Island Shakespeare* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).

<sup>18</sup> Bates, *Shakespeare Saved My Life*.

<sup>19</sup> Laura Bates, 'To Know My Deed: Finding Salvation Through Shakespeare', in *Performing New Lives: Prison Theatre*, ed. by Jonathan Shailor (London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishing, 2011), pp. 33-48 (p. 41).

<sup>20</sup> Hank Rogerson (director), *Shakespeare Behind Bars*, Philomath Films, 2005; Curt Tofteland interviewed by James Elliott and Gerritt Vandermeer for *The State of Shakespeare* (24 May 2017), <http://stateofshakespeare.com/?s=tofteland&searchsubmit=> [accessed 4 May 2020].

<sup>21</sup> Curt Tofteland, *Ted X* talk (University of Berkeley, 2013), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CfDBh6LO4qc>, [accessed 4 May 2020].

working together, and he asserts that these have recently been expanded to include some prison staff who he feels are being educated about the work.<sup>22</sup>

Alongside literature on the topic of Shakespeare as a reflective activity for those in prison, academics also explore its usage within the internment camps of the World Wars. The much broader dialogue on theatre in conflict zones requires brief contextualisation. Theatre in places and times of conflict has attracted increased interest over recent years, stemming from Augusto Boal's work in 1970s civil-war ridden Argentina where he developed his Theatre of the Oppressed principles to engender conflict resolution.<sup>23</sup> Boal writes that:

*Empathy* is the emotional relationship which is established between the character and the spectator and which provokes, fundamentally, a delegation of power on the part of the spectator, who becomes an object in relation to the character: whatever happens to the latter, happens vicariously to the spectator.<sup>24</sup>

Boal worked on the basis that dialogue was dynamic and that monologue had the power to foster oppression, meaning the theatre element was critical and the text alone was insufficient. I challenge this as empathetic power can exist between an individual and the text when there is no performative or theatrical element involved. Chapter 2 considered the

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<sup>22</sup> Curt Tofteland, *Ted X* talk (2013),

<sup>23</sup> Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, trans. by Charles A and Maria-Odilia Leal McBride and Emily Fryer (London: Pluto Press, 2008).

<sup>24</sup> Boal, p. 84.

way in which performances can invoke empathy and provide cultural validation of marginalised people but in this chapter I am considering the extent to which this happens when the engagement is individualistic and limited to the text itself. Michael Shortt commented that ‘it is people in prison who really have time to sit with the text and focus on it’, when recalling his engagement with Shakespeare during his custodial sentence. I think this *sitting with* and reflecting on the text on a personal basis is extremely powerful, in a different but no lesser way than engaging in rehearsals or watching a performance.<sup>25</sup>

James Thompson and Michael Balfour have both facilitated and written on prison and conflict theatre. Thompson, founder of ‘In Place of War’ which researches and funds arts programmes in conflict zones, has published widely including *Digging Up Stories*, *Performance Affects*, *Humanitarian Performance* and *Performing Care* as well as earlier work on prison theatre.<sup>26</sup> He draws on and continues to evolve Boal’s work, asserting that he is ‘a practitioner who writes not a theoretician who practices’.<sup>27</sup> He articulates the complexity of the ethical considerations of external practitioners working ‘with vulnerable communities’ and that the ‘digging up of stories’ is exploitative and oppressive more frequently than liberating and affirmative.<sup>28</sup> His nuanced and pragmatic approach to the ethics of working with marginalised communities has been influential on my own work as a practitioner, ensuring that I try to avoid imposing my own cultural references on those I

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<sup>25</sup> Michael Shortt, Alumni of Shakespeare Prison Project, Racine Correctional Institution, Wisconsin, Zoom interview with the author (24 May 2020).

<sup>26</sup> James Thompson (ed.), *Prison Theatre*; James Thompson, *Digging Up Stories: Applied Theatre, Performance and War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005); James Thompson, *Performance Affects: Applied Theatre and the End of Effect* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); James Thompson, *Humanitarian Performance: From Disaster Tragedies to the Spectacles of War* (London: Seagull Books, 2014); Amanda Stuart-Fishers and James Thompson (ed.), *Performing Care: New Perspectives on Socially Engaged Performance*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020).

<sup>27</sup> Thompson, *Digging Up Stories*, p. 8.

<sup>28</sup> Thompson, *Digging Up Stories*, p. 39.

work with and that development of the group happens organically and is not facilitator-led. Thompson examines the concepts of 'discipline and play' and the extent to which discipline (frequently seen as a form of subjugation as a result of Foucault's work) is frequently offered as a positive in the context of the 'discipline of learning the arts' in places 'where there has been intense disruption'.<sup>29</sup> My research bears this out as there appears to be some intrinsic link between working with Shakespeare and a stimulation of both intellectual and emotional responses which the individual deems beneficial to their own mental state. Michael Balfour has also published on conflict performances including his edited collection *Theatre and War: 1933-1945* as well as *Theatre in Prison: Theatre and Practice*, one of the most comprehensive studies of the genre.<sup>30</sup> More recent additions to the dialogue on theatre in war zones includes Nandita Dinesh's *Theatre and War: Notes from the Field*, which interweaves her personal conflict experiences with her role as a practitioner-researcher, and Lindsey Mantoan's *War as Performance*, which provides an interdisciplinary analysis of the way contemporary warfare has altered the narratives of performance.<sup>31</sup>

The specific analyses of Shakespeare in times of war are less prolific although Michael Dobson's *Shakespeare and Amateur Performance* includes a chapter on exile. This contextualizes performance in Second World War internment camps against a lineage of Shakespeare performed in exile across Europe throughout the last two centuries, although focused on performance not personal reflection.<sup>32</sup> Ton Hoenselaars' work, including his

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<sup>29</sup> Thompson, *Digging Up Stories*, p. 173.

<sup>30</sup> Michael Balfour (ed.), *Theatre and War 1933-1945: Performance in Extremis* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001); Michael Balfour (ed.), *Theatre In Prison*.

<sup>31</sup> Lindsey Mantoan, *War as Performance: Conflicts in Iraq and Political Theatricality* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

<sup>32</sup> Michael Dobson, *Shakespeare and Amateur Performance: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 134-151.

2019 article 'Shakespearean Explorations in Captivity', focuses on the 'deafening silence' of twentieth century conflict survivors and the fragmentary documentation relating to the use of Shakespeare during those times.<sup>33</sup> He acknowledges that Shakespeare was not the only writer whose work was drawn upon and that literature itself was only one of the support mechanisms used (music being a prevalent one as it frequently is during times of personal and social crisis). His archival research demonstrates that Shakespeare featured relatively widely across the first and second world wars within refugee, internment and prisoner of war camps throughout Europe, and it is reasonable to assume that this engagement spread even more widely with many instances not recorded. Acknowledging Jane Kingsley-Smith's 'impressive and systematic' examination of exile within Shakespeare's works, he does however take issue with her refusal to engage with Said's question of whether literary descriptions of exile 'obscure what is truly horrendous'.<sup>34</sup> Hoenselaars primarily focuses on performances but acknowledges the 'more personal, private engagement' of George Beringer, W.E. Swale and Countess Karolina Lanckorońska which has more relevance to this chapter.<sup>35</sup> Citing the evidence of Beringer's engagement with Shakespeare – a series of unannotated quotations in a note book – Hoenselaars concludes 'he is Shakespeare's ventriloquist....we hear Beringer's own voice'.<sup>36</sup> Whilst there may be truth in that analysis – and the argument supports my own findings about the reflective usage of Shakespeare – it

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<sup>33</sup> Ton Hoenselaars, 'Shakespearean Explorations in Captivity', *New Faces Essay Collection*, HALSHS Archive, (May 2019), <https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-02145014/document> [accessed 18 April 2020], p. 5.

<sup>34</sup> Ton Hoenselaars, 'The Company of Shakespeare in Exile: Towards a Reading of Internment Camp Culture', *Atlantis: Journal of the Spanish Association of Anglo-American Studies*, 33.2 (December 2011), 89-103, (pp. 90), [https://www.academia.edu/4385502/THE\\_COMPANY\\_OF\\_SHAKESPEARE\\_IN\\_EXILE\\_TOWARDS\\_A\\_READING\\_OF\\_INTERNMENT\\_CAMP\\_CULTURE](https://www.academia.edu/4385502/THE_COMPANY_OF_SHAKESPEARE_IN_EXILE_TOWARDS_A_READING_OF_INTERNMENT_CAMP_CULTURE)The Memorial production of Julius Caesar that premiered on 15 April 1941 directed [accessed 18 April 2020]; Edward E. Said, cited in Jane Kingsley-Smith, *Shakespeare's Drama of Exile* (Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p174.

<sup>35</sup> Hoenselaars, 'Shakespearean Explorations', p. 15.

<sup>36</sup> Hoenselaars, 'Shakespearean Explorations', p. 16.

can be neither proven or disproven given the lack of evidence. My work therefore focuses on those examples where more documentation supports a deeper reading of the impact.

### Individual reflections

Whilst scant records exist for Beringer and Swale, Lanckorońska wrote detailed diaries of her time in exile as a prisoner of war during the Second World War and the challenges and dispensations her social standing as Polish nobility afforded her. She gained her PhD in 1936 in the History of Art and acknowledges in her diary that she had read Shakespeare before internment but the impact it had during her imprisonment was profound, 'it [was] as though [she] had never before heard of Shakespeare.'<sup>37</sup> Deleuze's theory that repetition is impossible as each time we experience something we ourselves are different, is evidenced succinctly in this self-analysis. In the prologue, written in 1998, the Countess described the diaries to be 'a report and only a report of what I witnessed' and she was commended for her 'dispassionate objectivity, intelligence and restraint'.<sup>38</sup> In direct contravention of Said's claim that 'willfulness, exaggeration, overstatement [...] are characteristic styles of being an exile', dispassionate objectivity is a hallmark of her diaries.<sup>39</sup> She intended publication only after her death, although she finally consented to it during her final year of life. She documents the atrocities committed against her fellow prisoners, and her stoic commitment

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<sup>37</sup> Countess Karolina Lanckorońska, *Those Who Trespass Against Us, One Woman's War Against the Nazis*, trans. by Noel Clark (London: Pimlico, 2005), p. 168.

<sup>38</sup> Anonymous, 'Those Who Trespass Against Us: One Woman's War Against the Nazis Review', *Contemporary Review*, 288:1681 (Summer 2006), p. 272, [https://search-proquest-com.ezproxye.bham.ac.uk/docview/204956761?accountid=8630&rfr\\_id=info%3Axri%2Fsid%3Aprimo](https://search-proquest-com.ezproxye.bham.ac.uk/docview/204956761?accountid=8630&rfr_id=info%3Axri%2Fsid%3Aprimo), [accessed 18 April 2020].

<sup>39</sup> Said, p. 182.

to expose the murders of Lwow professors, with calmness and lucidity.<sup>40</sup> However, that objectivity seems to be put aside when she enthuses that her 'sensitivity to an artistic masterpiece has decidedly increased' and she quotes lines of Shakespeare which she relates to her circumstances and frame of mind, as outlined later.<sup>41</sup> The rationale for some of the chosen lines is undocumented, so to some extent it is necessary to interpret the decisions as Hoenselaars did with Beringer's, however we do have the context of the journal entries to provide a more robustly evidenced interpretation.

In Lacki Street Prison, Lanckorońska was imprisoned in 'total, absolute isolation' for many months with the exception of her weekly trips to the showers where she struck up an exchange of knowledge with Tymon (the water-controller); she gave him scholarly knowledge and in return he passed on the political news he gleaned from others.<sup>42</sup> During the isolation a combination of her religious faith and her intellectual interests appeared to have sustained her and she used the time to read Shakespeare and other canonical works and to begin her planned monograph on Michelangelo. Returning to Lefebvre's quotation from the start of the chapter that 'reflection pierces the surface and penetrates the depth of the relationship between repetition and difference', Lanckorońska used Shakespeare in this way during her internment.<sup>43</sup> Her memoirs quote directly from the only exercise book of her notes which survived until her liberation and she often began her entry with a literary quotation upon which she reflected. The first being Richard II's speech 'I have been studying

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<sup>40</sup> Eliyahu Yones, *Smoke in the Sand: The Jews of Lvov in the War Years 1939-1944* (Jerusalem: Geffen Publishing House, 2004), p. 96 documents the massacre of 25 lecturers at Lwow in the early stages of World War II.

<sup>41</sup> Lanckorońska, p. 168.

<sup>42</sup> Lanckorońska, p. 165.

<sup>43</sup> Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 182.



how I may compare | This prison where I live unto the world' and 'no thought is contented'.<sup>44</sup> These were the first lines written yet she dismissed their relevance as she 'cannot say that they apply to [her] own thoughts. Many thoughts of [hers were] contented'.<sup>45</sup> The choice of prison metaphor was an obvious one given her solitary confinement but she used Shakespeare's words to consciously frame her own positivity that 'a period of forced meditation and concentration has begun'.<sup>46</sup> Instead of beginning her diary with her thoughts she specifically selected this passage, against which to consider her feelings, suggesting that she was comparing the two in order to highlight and substantiate the difference. Her usage of Shakespeare appears to have enabled her to reflect on both her cultural experiences prior to internment and also her currently restricted existence, the physical imprisonment lightened by the social capital she gleaned from reading Shakespeare.

She had received a complete works of Shakespeare a week prior and found the experience of reading it to be significant, liberally peppering her diary with quotations. Although she wrote that she had read several other works during this period (she was allowed to order books in acknowledgement of her nobility), it is to Shakespeare she returned frequently, quoting from *Richard II*, *Julius Caesar* and *King Lear*. The morning after she had heard the brutalisation of the Jewish women by Schutzstaffel (SS) officers, an aural cacophony of 'shrieks and wails from the women and children....laughter and wild bellowing from the SS', she quoted Edgar's line 'What, in ill-thoughts again'.<sup>47</sup> This line, written in large

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<sup>44</sup> Lanckorońska, p. 161-162, quoting William Shakespeare, *Richard II*, 5.5.1-2, 5.5.11.

<sup>45</sup> Lanckorońska, p. 162.

<sup>46</sup> Lanckorońska, p. 162.

<sup>47</sup> Lanckorońska, p. 167.

letters and doubly underlined for emphasis was followed by Martial's *Epigrams*

10.47 '*supremum nec metuas diem nec optes*' (neither fear death nor desire it the highest)

and the explanation that she feared not death but she loved life more intensely than previously. No explicit rationale was given for this opinion but I conclude, from analysis of her memoirs, that the fragility of life she witnessed reinforced her desire to survive the atrocities she was enduring and to continue to live her life, once freed in the future. She ended this very short diary entry with Caesar's speech:

Of all the wonders that I have yet heard  
It seems to me most strange that men should fear  
Seeing that death, a necessary end  
Will come when it will come.<sup>48</sup>

In contrast with Shalkwyk's theory that one may see oneself in the mirror of Shakespeare during isolation but thirty years later the circumstances would have altered and the mirror changed, Lanckorońska faithfully recollected these images in her memoirs published almost 60 years later.<sup>49</sup>

Although Lanckorońska is no longer alive to ask about her memoirs, it seems reasonable to assume that she chose those two quotations and her snippet of commentary about the preciousness of life in direct response to the abuse she had heard the previous night. She avoided sentimentalism about the atrocities and made no further mention of the

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<sup>48</sup> Lanckorońska, p. 168, quoting William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, 2.2.34-37.

<sup>49</sup> David Shalkwyk, *Shakespeare Unlimited Podcast*.

abuse suffered that night by the 'Jew-girls' but she seemed to use Shakespeare's words to express what she struggled to articulate herself about the bleakness of her thoughts but the extent to which this had made life more tangibly precious.<sup>50</sup> As Van Der Kolk explains, 'even years later traumatised people often have enormous difficulty telling other people what has happened to them [...], [their] feelings are almost impossible to articulate'.<sup>51</sup> Shakespeare often provides a way for people to find the words to express themselves when they are otherwise struggling, a voice they can speak when their own is too traumatised.

Lanckorońska did not lack communication in the sense of her intellect and educational level and her marginalization was the direct result of her internment. Hoenselaars writes 'Lanckorońska started a culture not only of reading and re-inventing Shakespeare, but also of quoting Shakespeare, to reflect the situation she was in'.<sup>52</sup> Whilst it may not be strictly accurate that she *started* a culture, which can be traced back to the Romantics who frequently quoted Shakespeare as a way of defending their 'human sympathy', it is true that she continued the tradition throughout her internment.<sup>53</sup>

Hoenselaars argues that 'Shakespeare....read and quoted by the individual, could signal doubt or represent a source of moral and ethical strength gradually discovered under duress. In this way, we read the Countess speaking the unspeakable'.<sup>54</sup> I agree that she appeared to draw strength and resilience from using Shakespeare's language to verbalise her situation. Hoenselaars describes this as 'countering the barbarism of the day with daily quotations from a deified author', which is something of an exaggeration of the frequency

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<sup>50</sup> Lanckorońska, p. 167.

<sup>51</sup> Van Der Kolk, p. 43.

<sup>52</sup> Hoenselaars, 'The Company of Shakespeare' p. 92.

<sup>53</sup> Joseph M. Ortiz (ed.), *Shakespeare and the Culture of Romanticism* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), p. 112.

<sup>54</sup> Ton Hoenselaars, 'The Company of Shakespeare', p. 92.

of the quotations and imbues Shakespeare with a centrality to Lanckorońska's mental survival which is insufficiently evidenced.<sup>55</sup> There is no doubt that she drew on Shakespeare regularly but not in exclusivity and she did not quote his works daily. However, even the act of diary-keeping was dangerous and during her time at Ravensbrück she recounted the near-death of a girl whose notebook containing notes from the in-camp forbidden lectures was discovered by a wardress.<sup>56</sup> The consequences if Lanckorońska's diary was discovered would have been dire yet she concealed the notebook until her release years later. During her time at Ravensbrück a 'great delight' arrived at the camp – an English language *Complete Works of Shakespeare*, brought from Auschwitz – which she quickly claimed as her own, secreting it in her mattress and loaning it out as required, although it is unclear how many interned women could read English. Her assertion that even on days when she lacked time or energy to read the volume 'for us the mere awareness that *King Lear* or *Richard II* was with us was proof that the world still existed' demonstrates the inherent value she placed in these works.<sup>57</sup> Nowhere in her diaries does she explain her choice of textual quotes but both *King Lear* and *Richard II* have exile and estrangement as central themes whilst *Julius Caesar* focuses on political turmoil and all three deal 'with issues of freedom, the fall of dictatorships and the horrors of war'.<sup>58</sup>

She described 'one great source of strength, which constantly gained intensity – that was the ever growing need to escape into the realm of intellectual riches', citing the ability

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<sup>55</sup> Frans de Bruyn, Gail Marshall, Tom Hoenselaars, 'Pedagogy and Propaganda: The Uses of Quotation 1750-1945', in *Shakespeare and Quotation*, ed. by Julie Maxwell and Kate Rumbold (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 156-77 (p. 174).

<sup>56</sup> Lanckorońska, p. 270.

<sup>57</sup> Lanckorońska, p. 269.

<sup>58</sup> Maxine Seller, *We Built Up Our Lives: Education and Community among Jewish Refugees Interned by Britain in World War* (Westport: Greenwood Publications, 2001), p. 136.

she and her fellow prisoners felt to draw sustenance from Shakespeare and other works to support their mental resilience.<sup>59</sup> In many ways it appears that Lanckorońska used the sharing of Shakespeare and other topics on which she delivered lectures as a coping mechanism to allow her to develop a conceived, social space and an element of personal agency in a world where she possessed so little control. Van Der Kolk argues that ‘resilience is the product of agency: knowing that what you do can make a difference’ and I believe that for this intelligent, ethical woman witnessing horrific atrocities, the ability to share ‘intellectual riches’ provided a coping mechanism.<sup>60</sup> She used them to reflect and refract the experiences she endured to demonstrate that there was life which would continue after the atrocities ended. She acknowledged that her reception of Shakespeare was not a repetition of her previous reading of it, as she herself comments ‘it [was] as though [she] had never before heard of Shakespeare’.<sup>61</sup> She does not explain this changed reading of Shakespeare but it would be logical that her exposure to extreme violence and deprivation enabled her to identify more deeply with those characters she quoted, who themselves experienced severe political turmoil and exile from their own habitus.

This changed interpretation of reading Shakespeare is also mentioned by actors in The Gallowfield players who comment ‘when it comes to Shakespeare I can truly say I am like a wide-eyed child despite having looked at his works at school and college’ and ‘I never fully understood the words of Macbeth until now’.<sup>62</sup> As reading reflects personal experiences it is logical that when we live through extreme circumstances our perceptions

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<sup>59</sup> Lanckorońska, p. 269.

<sup>60</sup> Van Der Kolk, p. 355.

<sup>61</sup> Lanckorońska, p. 168.

<sup>62</sup> Michael, The Gallowfield Players, HMP Gartree, *Shakespeare and Perception of Space* (unpublished, September 2019); Miguel, The Gallowfield Players, post-performance debrief *Macbeth* (19 October 2018).

alter. The emotional dislocation of Lanckorońska's exile was intense and underscored by the abuse she witnessed of her peer-group, yet she used Shakespeare and other texts in an almost-religious sense to sustain her and to give her words when she was unable to find them. She describes the appearance of a copy of the text as a 'miracle' and muses that 'the whole world is probably created so as to enable genius to interact with creation', using language evocative of images of The Old Testament Book of Genesis' story of creation.<sup>63</sup> These words formed a record in her diary, leaving a legacy to ensure their suffering did not remain unacknowledged.

The second example I wish to examine is the use of Shakespeare by political prisoners on Robben Island, South Africa. The claims regarding the centrality of the 'Robben Island Bible' (a Shakespeare complete works) to the mental survival of the political prisoners are widespread but partially contested. As David Schalkwyk explores in *Hamlet's Dreams*, the truth was somewhat more complex and the widespread nature of Shakespearean appreciation less prevalent than some assert.<sup>64</sup> Sonny Venkatrathnam owned a copy of *The Complete Works of Shakespeare* during his time in the prison and shortly before he left Robben Island he asked a number of other prisoners to each sign beside a passage they felt was relevant to them.<sup>65</sup> Schalkwyk's introduction challenges the claims of Anders Hallengren, Anthony Sampson and Tom Lodge about the extent to which Shakespeare was the 'common culture and text' within the prison given that evidence of circulation extended

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<sup>63</sup> Lanckorońska, p. 269 and p. 168; The Old Testament Book of Genesis, 1.

<sup>64</sup> Schalkwyk, *Hamlet's Dreams*.

<sup>65</sup> There are differing accounts of whether the text contained 32 or 34 signatures: Schalkwyk, *Hamlet's Dreams* states 'no more than 34' on p. 13 whilst RSC Website information regarding *Julius Caesar*, set in Africa, dir. by Greg Doran (2012), <https://www.rsc.org.uk/julius-caesar/past-productions/gregory-doran-production-2012> [accessed 2 May 2020] states 32.

only to 32-34 segregated prisoners.<sup>66</sup> In Chapter 4 I will examine why there appears to be a desire to predicate the narrative that Shakespeare was the common cultural currency within



36. The exterior of one of the cell blocks at Robben Island prison, which has now been restored as a tourist attraction with guided tours provided by those who were former inmates (2019), Photo: Rowan Mackenzie.

the prison when evidence suggests engagement with his work was in reality more individual and less commonplace. The reasons for the wide communication and continued reiteration of this narrative seems bound up in the cultural capital of Shakespeare but challenging the narrative's accuracy does not fundamentally undermine the importance of Shakespeare for those who engaged.

<sup>66</sup> Anders Hallengren, *Nobel Laureates in Search of Identity & Integrity: Voices of Different Culture* (Singapore: World Scientific, 2004); Anthony Sampson, *Mandela: The Authorized Biography* (New York: Vintage, 2000), quoted in Schalkwyk, *Hamlet's Dreams*, p. 13; Tom Lodge, *Mandela: A Critical Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

The widespread adoption of Shakespeare as a symbolic cultural icon who was universally known across the prison lacks evidence and Ashwin Desai admits in his obituary for Venkatrathnam that a number of ex-prisoners refused to engage with him when he was writing *Reading Revolution* as they ‘resented Sonny’.<sup>67</sup> *Reading Revolution* was endorsed by Verne Harris of the Nelson Mandela Foundation as ‘troubling dominant narratives about Robben Island in this magisterial work’.<sup>68</sup> It utilised the lens that Shakespeare was an important bastion of political commentary used throughout their incarceration and upon release, citing the way in which some of his works ‘are very war-like and moving, very inspirational’.<sup>69</sup> The signatures in Venkatrathnam’s text, described as ‘chosen hauntingly’ and ‘point[ing] to a deeper understanding’, are the focus of the book.<sup>70</sup> Neville Alexander is quoted as saying:

‘When to the sessions of sweet silent thought, I summon up remembrance of things past’ – when you look at a sonnet like that, it is exactly what you are doing in prison all the time. You are constantly reflecting on your life, on what’s happened and of course you couldn’t say it more beautifully in a sense, you couldn’t describe that act of remembering more beautifully than Shakespeare.<sup>71</sup>

His self-conscious awareness of using Shakespeare as a tool to reflect on the life he had experienced prior to imprisonment and how Shakespeare gave language to remembrance of

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<sup>67</sup> Ashwin Desai, ‘Sonny Venkatrathnam, Anti-Apartheid Crusader with a Shakespearean ‘Gita’’, *The Wire*, 18 March 2019, <https://thewire.in/world/sonny-venkatrathnam-anti-apartheid-crusader-with-a-shakespearean-gita>, [accessed 3 May 2020].

<sup>68</sup> Verne Harris, The Nelson Mandela Foundation, quoted on back-cover of Desai, *Reading Revolution*.

<sup>69</sup> Desai, *Reading Revolution*, p. 103.

<sup>70</sup> Desai, *Reading Revolution*, p. 21-22.

<sup>71</sup> Desai, *Reading Revolution*, p. 103.



the past in an eloquent way, aligns with my contention that Shakespeare can provide a way of surviving hardship from the sense of permanence provided by the cultural capital. The physical space of confinement was tempered by using Shakespeare to reflect on the situation but also the social space to which he connected them.



37. The interior of one of the segregation cells in Robben Island prison, where many of the anti-apartheid inmates spent numerous years – these cells have now been restored as part of the tourist attraction, (2019), Photo: Rowan Mackenzie.

Desai argues that ‘Shakespeare was not simply about bringing some solace in a brutal environment, Shakespeare could be read in ways that spoke to the political context of the times’.<sup>72</sup> Ahmed Kathrada wrote in the first of his published letters to his girlfriend, Sylvia Neame, that he had ‘spent a pleasant few hours with Shakespeare’.<sup>73</sup> It seems evident that individuals such as Venkatrathnam and Kathrada used Shakespeare as a way

<sup>72</sup> Desai, *Reading Revolution*, p. 14.

<sup>73</sup> Robert D Vassen (ed.), *Letters from Robben Island: A Selection of Ahmed Kathrada’s Prison Correspondence, 1964-198*, (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1990), p. 10.

of escaping from the monotonous hardships of prison and of reflecting their political opinions. Schalkwyk argues that some ‘found in Shakespeare a source of vitality, reflection, creativity and personal identity’ which resonates with my thesis for this chapter that Shakespeare offers a source of resilience and a way to reflect on the world when communication may otherwise be too great a challenge.<sup>74</sup> That it brought solace to Venkatrathnam seems evident and he himself signed the title page of the book, demonstrating his ownership of the entire volume. In interview with Matthew Hahn, Venkatrathnam chose Lady Macbeth’s speech ‘all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand’ to reflect that:

Apartheid is done to the people of South Africa and just like Lady Macbeth this system cannot be purified [...] It means that the damage that is done by the system of apartheid cannot be repaid.<sup>75</sup>

This particular choice was intended to enable people to understand a set of oppressive political constraints which would otherwise be unfathomable to many who had not endured the regime.

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<sup>74</sup> Schalkwyk, *Hamlet’s Dreams*, p. 16.

<sup>75</sup> *The Robben Island Bible*, prod. by Candice Vetter, CHVTV, 13 November 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBiLP1yNGNs>, [accessed 3 May 2020].

Much has been made of Venkatrathnam's openly acknowledged interest in Shakespeare, including his text twice being displayed in England.<sup>76</sup> The Royal Shakespeare Company advertised one of these exhibitions, stating that:

The 'Bible' was passed between inmates during the 1970s, all of whom treasured the book and each signed their favourite passages with initials and a date. The book was signed a total of 32 times by prisoners, who highlighted passages and quotes that they found meaningful and profound. They now offer us an insight into how the words of Shakespeare resonated with these men who were imprisoned for campaigning for an equal South Africa.<sup>77</sup>

Hahn's play *The Robben Island Shakespeare* also endorses this view through its specific focus on the role of Shakespeare during their time on the island and built from interviews with survivors, but influenced by Hahn's desire to create a work based on this theme.<sup>78</sup>

In a news article about the 2016 commemorative events on Robben Island Kseniya Filinova-Bruton, Educape Managing Director, described that 'as far as we know prisoners were discussing Shakespeare, discussing the plays and sonnets, reciting it'.<sup>79</sup> Whilst his plays, characters and narratives do feature in accounts of the apartheid years, the evidence

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<sup>76</sup> Erin Bates, 'Robben Island prisoner's epic autograph book' (News 24, 25 April 2016), <https://www.news24.com/Video/SouthAfrica/News/robben-island-prisoners-epic-autograph-book-20160425>, [accessed 3 May 2020].

<sup>77</sup> RSC Website *Julius Caesar*, dir. by Greg Doran.

<sup>78</sup> Hahn, *The Robben Island Shakespeare*.

<sup>79</sup> Athi Mtongana, *Shakespeare Bible Taken to Robben Island* (eNCA.com, April 2014), [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q\\_nVI9BBHiU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q_nVI9BBHiU) [accessed 3 May 2020].

suggests that these were not widespread communal activities but isolated individuals who drew on his words as a way of reflecting on the 'rightness, wrongness, beauty and ugliness of our actions' whilst they were imprisoned in a terrible exile within their own country.<sup>80</sup> The memoirs of a number of those formerly incarcerated have been published, including Nelson Mandela, Robert Sobukwe and Ahmed Kathrada but Shakespeare was not hailed as central to life on the island.<sup>81</sup> Much of Desai's book, which draws heavily on the Shakespearean connection for the title and publicity, actually describes the wider educational initiatives amongst the prisoners, which earned the prison the description 'Our University'.<sup>82</sup> Marcus Soloman described the struggle for the right to education which resulted in them taking the prison to court to secure a victory. Soloman's time was split between furthering his own knowledge and dissemination of learning amongst others. He acknowledged 'Shakespeare was important at the time because his writings covered such a wide range of experiences and emotions' through which readers could reflect their own experiences, but it is important to note that he speaks of a much broader selection of writers including Tolstoy, Zola and Shirer; Shakespeare was one source of intellectual stimulation but certainly not the sole source.<sup>83</sup>

That makes the impact no less profound for those who did engage with the works, but perhaps there needs to be an acknowledgement that the 'Robben Island Bible' with its inmate signatures is less significant as a cultural icon within the history of apartheid than it

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<sup>80</sup> James Williams, 'Difference and Repetition', *The Cambridge Companion to Deleuze*, ed. by Daniel W. Smith and Henry Somers-Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 33-54 (p.36).

<sup>81</sup> Benjamin Pogrand, *Robert Sobukwe: How Can Man Die Better* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 1990); Robert D Vassen (ed.), *Letters from Robben Island*; Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom* (London: Abacus Books, 1995); Ahmed Kathrada, *Memoirs* (Cape Town: Zebra, 2008).

<sup>82</sup> Desai, *Reading Revolution*, p. 56, illustration depicting a poster published by the Anzanian (South African) Liberation Support Committee in London in 1983, reproduced by courtesy of the Ken Sprague Fund.

<sup>83</sup> Marcus Soloman interview quoted in Ashwin Desai, *Reading Revolution*, p. 58.

may appear. The signatures were added at the request of Venkatrathnam prior to his leaving the island, not some deeply thought out response to the impact of Shakespeare but a memento for him to take with him as he left the prison. A number of the signatories later claimed they remembered no importance in the passages they signed, and Kathrada spoke in a news article of the inaccuracy of the claims of its centrality to life on the island during the struggles.<sup>84</sup> So, whilst the media and some academics have encouraged the perception that Shakespeare was a communal activity in the prison, it is likely it was much more individualistic, more a personal contemplation on their situation. As Collette Gordon documents 'the story of the Robben Island Bible writes itself [...] it suited the mood and intellectual agenda of the Mbeki years', suggesting that memories are flawed and often constructed retrospectively.<sup>85</sup> Those who used Shakespeare as a way of dealing with their incarceration on Robben Island appeared to find in it strong role models of warriors with whom they could identify as they fought against apartheid. Again, the perpetuity of Shakespeare's work seems to have been used as a way of reflecting positively on the resilience of man's soul and their ability to survive the hardships of the prison.

The third example of Shakespeare being used individually to allow a mirror of reflection, and to consider the way it may allow alternatives to the reality in which marginalised people are existing, was a response to the global pandemic COVID-19. The Public Health England response to the outbreak led to the issuance of a HMPPS Instruction on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020 which stated that all visits, education and the majority of activities were

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<sup>84</sup> Schalkwyk, *Hamlet's Dreams*, p. 19-20.

<sup>85</sup> Collette Gordon, "'Mind the Gap': Globalism, Postcolonialism and Making Up Africa in the Cultural Olympiad', in *Shakespeare on the Global Stage: Performance and Festivity in the Olympic Year*, ed. by Erin Sullivan and Paul Prescott (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2015), pp. 191-226 (p. 210).

to be suspended to minimise the risk of infection within a prison estate which was at 97% capacity at the start of the pandemic.<sup>86</sup> This was part of a series of measures to curtail the spread and which also included the introduction of regime changes to enable 2 meter social-distancing (as far as possible), Protective Isolation Units (PIUs) for those who were symptomatic, Shielding Units (SUs) for those identified as vulnerable and Reverse Cohorting Units (RCUs) to quarantine new receptions or inter-prison transfer cases (albeit transfers were suspended where possible). The Government announced that this was to be combined with the release of 4,000 prisoners nearing the end of their sentences and assessed to be low risk against stringent risk assessment criteria (automatically excluded were those sentenced for violent or sexual offences), in order to create additional space to facilitate the requisite distancing measures.<sup>87</sup> In a well-publicized failure to achieve this, only 33 individuals were released in the first six weeks of the lockdown period, with the plans suspended due to six prisoners being wrongly released (all of whom returned compliantly to custody).<sup>88</sup> This saw the Howard League and Penal Reform Trust implement the Pre-action Protocol for Judicial Review although this was not carried to fruition as a result of their satisfaction with the Government response.<sup>89</sup> The end-of-custody temporary release scheme (ECTR) was then reinstated temporarily but permanently suspended in August

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<sup>86</sup> Eamonn O'Moore, *Briefing paper: Interim assessment of impact of various population management strategies in prisons in response to COVID-19 pandemic in England*, Ministry of Justice (24 April 2020), [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/882622/COVID-19-population-management-strategy-prisons.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/882622/COVID-19-population-management-strategy-prisons.pdf), [accessed 5 May 2020].

<sup>87</sup> Ministry of Justice, *End of Custody Temporary Release Document: effective from 07 April 2020*, (24 April 2020), [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/881061/end-custody-temporary-release.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/881061/end-custody-temporary-release.pdf), [accessed 5 May 2020].

<sup>88</sup> COVID-19 and Prisons Appeal <http://appeal.org.uk/covid19andprisons>, [accessed 5 May 2020].

<sup>89</sup> *Judicial Review: Howard League and Prison Reform Trust issue government with letter before action over its response to coronavirus in prisons*, Media statement, 17 April 2020, <https://howardleague.org/news/judicial-review-howard-league-and-prison-reform-trust-issue-government-with-letter-before-action-over-its-response-to-coronavirus-in-prisons/>, [accessed 7 May 2020].

having released only 275 people.<sup>90</sup> The population of 80,827 incarcerated individuals in England and Wales (as of 1<sup>st</sup> May 2020) were spending upwards of 23 hours per day in their cells, allowed out only for food, showers, limited exercise and access to phones in a concerted effort to limit the transference of COVID-19.<sup>91</sup>

This against a backdrop of already rapidly increasing incidents of self-harm (61,461 incidents September 2018 to September 2019, an increase of 16% on the previous 12 months) and the knowledge that family connections and purposeful activity are key tenets of mental wellbeing for many whilst incarcerated.<sup>92</sup> Prisons faced staffing issues as frontline workers were forced to self-isolate if they or household members displayed symptoms or advised to shield if they were vulnerable. Third sector organisations working within the prison estate suffered uncertainty around Dynamic Purchasing System payments for suspended services and contract decisions delayed.<sup>93</sup> The arts industry as a whole was significantly impacted by the pandemic and the decision to close theatres, music venues and

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<sup>90</sup> Ministry of Justice, 'Pause of prisoner early release scheme (19 August 2020), <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pause-to-prisoner-early-release-scheme> [accessed 31 October 2020]; Jamie Grierson, 'Early release scheme for prisoners in England and Wales to end', *The Guardian* (19 August 2020), <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/aug/19/prisons-inspector-england-wales-warns-of-mental-health-problems-from-severe-coronavirus-restrictions> [accessed 31 October 2020].

<sup>91</sup> Prison Population Figures, (1 May 2020) <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/prison-population-figures-2020>, [accessed 5 May 2020]; Ministry of Justice, *COVID-19 Operational Guidance – Exceptional Regime and Service Delivery*, Version 3.0 (3 April 2020), <https://howardleague.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/1.-Exceptional-regime-and-service-delivery-27.03.20-Redacted.pdf>, [accessed 7 May 2020].

<sup>92</sup> Ministry of Justice, *Safety Custody Statistics - England and Wales: Deaths in Prison Custody to December 2019 Assaults and Self-harm to September 2019*, Ministry of Justice (30 January 2020), [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/861732/safety-in-custody-q3-2019.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/861732/safety-in-custody-q3-2019.pdf), [accessed 5 May 2020].

<sup>93</sup> Information accessed via HMPPS Dynamic Purchasing System (Bravo portal), accessed via log in details as Shakespeare UnBard, [https://ministryofjusticecommercial.bravosolution.co.uk/esop/ogc-host/private/ministryofjusticecommercial/second\\_s.jst?ncp=1588686079239.78641-1](https://ministryofjusticecommercial.bravosolution.co.uk/esop/ogc-host/private/ministryofjusticecommercial/second_s.jst?ncp=1588686079239.78641-1), [accessed 5 May 2020].

galleries, and other public gatherings meant for many their sources of income have shrunk significantly or ceased completely; artists and facilitators face an uncertain period.<sup>94</sup>

The temporary suspension of my physical work in prisons prompted me to consider how I might continue the work remotely with those in the theatre companies. I will reflect more on this in the second part of this chapter, as these correspondence activities involved those who reflected not solely on Shakespeare but in conjunction with their emotional connection to the group. However, these activities led me to create Activity Packs for the wider prison population and it is these I wish to consider in the context of Shakespeare as an individualistic activity. These were designed for people who may have had no prior experience of Shakespeare and used the narratives of the plays as a base from which to encourage creative responses. Creating materials for such large volumes of people I did not know was very different to the tailored work with the theatre companies where the activities are nuanced to account for personal strengths and preferences. The assumption had to be that many would not be familiar with Shakespeare and would simply be seeking something to occupy their mind for a period of time. As the following evidence demonstrates these packs allowed participants to reframe their prolonged isolation through creative reflection, enabling them to make positive social developments and enhance their resilience. The materials were shared across all UK prisons through a combination of distribution channels including email requests, uploading to the central Quantum system and inclusion within the Prisoner Learning Alliance In-Cell Activity Hub.<sup>95</sup> Through word of

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<sup>94</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development: *Culture Shock: COVID-19 and the cultural and creative sectors* (7 September 2020), <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/culture-shock-COVID-19-and-the-cultural-and-creative-sectors-08da9e0e/>, [accessed 10 October 2020].

<sup>95</sup> Email requests received from circa 30 individual prisons across the public and private sector (including Serco, Sodexo and Group 4); Weekly packs uploaded to Quantum across the prison estate; Prisoner Learning



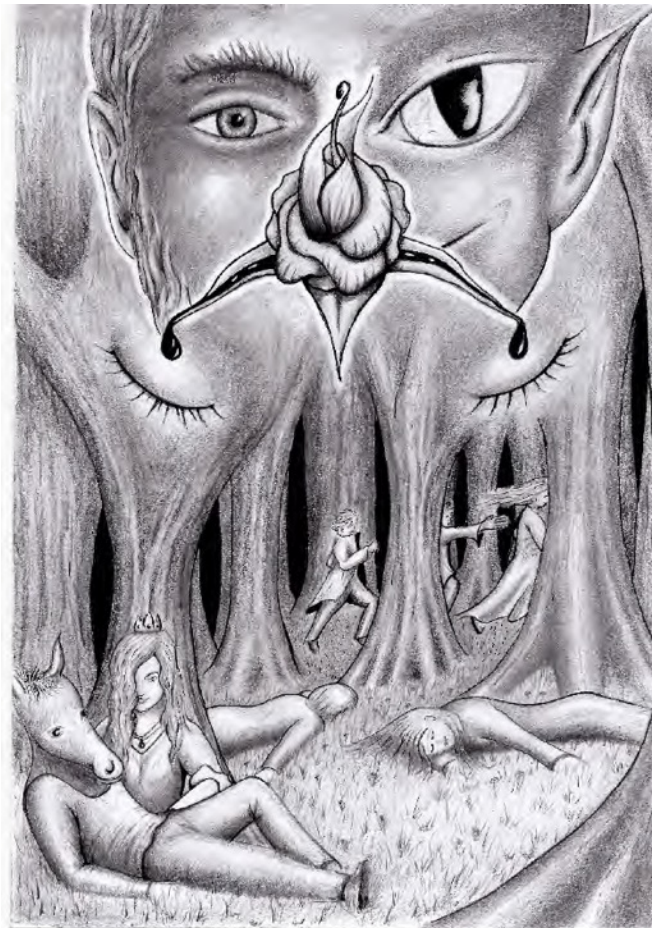
mouth recommendation these were also made available to other organisations supporting groups of society including but not limited to, social services, children separated from their birth families, youth custody services, Violence Reduction Units and community library services. I was also asked by Central Safer Custody Services to work collaboratively with them to contribute to their weekly newsletter for the entire estate, producing a one-page



38. Richard's illustration of Prospero and Ariel for inclusion in *The Tempest* Activity Packs during COVID-19 (May 2020), Courtesy of Richard.

activity aligned with their chosen weekly topic which included subjects such as knowledge, healthy relationships and inner peace.<sup>96</sup>

The Activity Packs (examples of which are included in Appendix 5) were created at three levels to account for differing literacy and proficiency with English as a written language. 62% of people entering prison are assessed as having a reading age of 11 or below, based on the last comprehensive study, whilst foreign national prisoners account for 11% of the



39. Brody's illustration of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for inclusion in the Activity Packs during COVID-19 (April 2020), which won him a Koestler Commended Award, 2020. Courtesy of Brody.

<sup>96</sup> Email correspondence from Paula Wilkinson, Forensic Psychology, Central Safer Custody Services, Her Majesty's Prison and Probate Services (7 April 2020).

population, although there are no publicly available statistics on the number for whom English is not their primary language.<sup>97</sup> The packs were not calibrated to any formal educational development tool but broadly speaking attempted to address the needs of inmates across the spectrum, using my own knowledge from years of working in prisons.

- Level 1 used simple single or double-syllable words only, short sentences and stories summarised in typically 6-8 sentences, inviting a combination of creative, artistic responses such as video game characters and cartoon strips with the opportunity for some simple written answers (such as text message responses).
- Level 2 was aimed broadly at those whose literacy levels would allow them to read a newspaper or similar; the stories were slightly more detailed and the activities invited creative and written responses, including creating newspaper articles, short dialogue exchanges and insult generators.
- Level 3 was aimed at those with higher levels of literacy and encouraged participants to begin engaging with Shakespeare's language through writing their own modern translations, writing poetry and a range of other written activities.

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<sup>97</sup> Department for Business Innovation and Skills, *The 2011 Skills for Life Survey: A Survey of Literacy, Numeracy and ICT Levels in England* (London: BIS, 2012), <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2011-skills-for-life-survey> [accessed 7 May 2020]; The Bell Foundation, *Improving language, Improving Lives: Supporting ESOL in the Secure Estate*, September 2019, <https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/app/uploads/2019/09/Improving-Language-Report-2019-FV.pdf>, [accessed 7 May 2020]. (ESOL defines English for Speakers of Other Languages).

The first of the Safer Custody newsletters included an introduction from me and guidance on the differing types of packs so that inmates could self-select the appropriate level, which feedback suggests has been effective.<sup>98</sup>

As a result of staffing constraints there was limited feedback returned directly from participants. This was anticipated as gathering feedback would require physical collection from each cell, delivery to a central coordinator and then forwarding to me. I received a limited amount of inmate feedback and have supplemented this with anecdotal feedback from prison staff, which whilst less helpful from a research perspective was entirely understandable in such challenging times. The staff feedback was positive with responses such as ‘I got goosebumps reading them, could work to express internal dialogue, very, very clever’ and ‘thank you so much for your support and creativity on behalf of our men’.<sup>99</sup> The Prisoners’ Education Trust requested permission to use my materials based on *The Tempest* as their contribution to *Inside Time*, which has an estimated circulation of 60,000 inmates, as they felt it was ‘the perfect fit’ for the needs of prisoners during this period.<sup>100</sup>

The activities were designed to encourage participants to engage in a wide range of activities, linking Shakespeare’s characters and narratives to external interests they may already have, such as electronic gaming, technology and puzzles. Shakespeare’s language

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<sup>98</sup> Feedback emailed from Serco prisons, (25 May 2020); feedback emailed from HMPPS Learning and Skills Lead Long Term and High Security Prisons Directorate (3 June 2020); feedback emailed from Sodexo prisons (16 September 2020).

<sup>99</sup> Email correspondence from Elizabeth Beech, Drama Psychotherapist, Delta Enabling Environment, HMP and HMYOI Swinfen Hall (06 May 2020); Email correspondence from Helen Hack, Learning and Skills Lead, Long Term High Security Prisons Directorate (31 March 2020).

<sup>100</sup> Email correspondence from Calum Walker, Media and Communications Manager, Prisoners’ Education Trust (17 April 2020); Rowan Mackenzie, ‘Shakespeare UnBard: A creative writing activity’, *Inside Time* (1 May 2020), <https://insidetime.org/shakespeare-unbard-a-creative-writing-activity/> [accessed 14 November 2020].



40. Richard's cartoon of Titania to illustrate the *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Activity Packs during COVID-19 (April 2020), Courtesy of Richard.

was used sparingly, being mindful of Guy Cook's pedagogy that 'when presented within the spirit of the play, we can tolerate and indeed enjoy ambiguous and unusual language' which is borne out in rehearsal room techniques but less true with stand-alone activities.<sup>101</sup> It was also important to strike a balance between encouraging them to use Shakespeare reflectively and not instigating any emotional triggers which they would be unequipped to deal with during the restricted regime. During group activities it has been possible to address deeper-seated emotional issues within the supportive framework of the company but whilst people were isolated it was important to avoid any inadvertent triggers, a topic I discussed with Deborah Murphy in relation to how to deal with the theme of suicide in

<sup>101</sup> Guy Cook, quoted by Joe Winston, *Transforming the Teaching of Shakespeare with the Royal Shakespeare Company* (London and New York: Arden Shakespeare, 2015), p. 78.

*Romeo and Juliet*.<sup>102</sup> The *Romeo and Juliet* packs focused not on death but on the elements of love, families and friendship alliances. Many activities across multiple plays encouraged participants to think about the feelings and perceptions of multiple characters to develop their empathy and ability to understand the views of others, for example; how did Rosalind and her father feel when they were reunited and how did Desdemona and Othello respectively experience their journey to Cyprus as separated newly-weds? There were also activities which asked for reflection on times when they have been asked to do something they were uncomfortable with and the emotional turmoil this engendered; for example, using Cassio's being pressured by Iago to drink more than he wanted prior to the altercation with Roderigo.

Activities within the packs such as writing newspaper articles enabled them to explore the extent to which the media determines the perspective through which events are refracted, a topic many of them have personal experience of from their own arrest and sentencing.<sup>103</sup> This subject was initially raised during a Gallowfield Players rehearsal where they explained the way they felt inaccurate portrayal around the time of their arrest and sentencing had adversely impacted their loved ones. This was not quantified or explored for legitimacy but was a noting of their perception and was incorporated into *Sycorax's Storm* (a prequel to *The Tempest*) where the prologue proclaims:

The stories we know are only chapters within much larger tales, wheels  
within wheels, part of something more or indeed something less. What

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<sup>102</sup> Email correspondence from Deborah Murphy, Lead Occupational Therapist, HMP Pentonville (31 March 2020).

<sup>103</sup> Discussion with The Gallowfield Players, rehearsal (February 2020).

we think we know is often shrouded by a cloak of disinformation and half-truths, recorded by those with an agenda. The subtext to a larger story or a completely different narrative. A sequel to what we believe to be written in stone or the prequel to an established tale.<sup>104</sup>



41. Richard's illustration of Othello and Iago for inclusion in the *Othello* Activity Packs during COVID-19 (June 2020), Courtesy of Richard.

<sup>104</sup> Michael, *The Gallowfield Players, Sycorax's Storm* (unpublished script, 2020) Prologue, 1-6.



Within the packs, the focus on characters provided ‘dramatic distancing’, preventing the reflection being insistently personal; they could choose to complete the activity at a fictional level or to consider the similarities to their own lives, depending on their willingness to engage with self-reflection.<sup>105</sup> This has been evidenced strongly in rehearsals where Michael describes ‘the opportunity to express ourselves in ways that are safe’.<sup>106</sup> As an Alumnus from the Shakespeare Prison Project explains of the work they do to learn about their roles, ‘you begin by examining the emotional needs of the characters using the script and then start to extrapolate that back to your own life’ and this same approach is used with the actors in my theatre companies and which the Activity Packs were designed to replicate, albeit to a more superficial degree.<sup>107</sup> Feedback from inmates about the packs suggests this was achieved as they explained ‘it allowed me to be somewhere else’ and ‘I focused on other things and relaxed’.<sup>108</sup> As Van der Kolk writes:

Projecting your inner world into the three-dimensional space of a structure enables you to see what’s happening in the theatre of your mind and gives you a much clearer perspective on your reactions to people and events in the past.<sup>109</sup>

These activities utilised not the three-dimensional space of the physical world but the

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<sup>105</sup> Jennings, ‘Therapeutic journeys through *King Lear*’, p.17.

<sup>106</sup> Michael, The Gallowfield Players, *Reflections on the rehearsal process* (unpublished, September 2019).

<sup>107</sup> Haisan Williams, Alumni of Shakespeare Prison Project, Racine Correctional Institution, Wisconsin, Zoom interview (5 May 2020).

<sup>108</sup> Feedback from inmates who used the Activity Packs during COVID-19 emergency regime in Serco prisons, collated by the prison staff and emailed to me (25 May 2020).

<sup>109</sup> Van Der Kolk, p. 299.





42. Brody's illustration for inclusion in the *Julius Caesar* Activity Packs (May 2020), Courtesy of Brody.



43. Richard's illustration for inclusion in the *Julius Caesar* Activity Packs (May 2020), Courtesy of Richard

infinite dimensions of the play-world where the characters can help to provide perspective and to allow exploration of alternative thought-processes and opinions without having to commit themselves to making them personal.

Whilst feedback was limited it came from a variety of prisons with differing demographics of prisoner and therefore provided a useful insight into the effectiveness of the Packs. Extrapolation of this feedback, combined with the deeper analysis of how others have engaged with prolonged theatre activities, suggests that there is significant benefit in the Activity Packs, allowing participants to connect with the world outside of their cell in a meaningful way. The measure of success in this work was providing a creative outlet which enabled the participant to cope more productively with the regime, which was evidenced

through feedback such as ‘I enjoy creative writing and this really helped’.<sup>110</sup> However, for some it went beyond a pleasant diversion from the monotony of their cell with reports of men in shared cells working collaboratively with their cell mates, giving them the opportunity to find some common ground and develop shared interests.<sup>111</sup> Another reported ‘I spoke to my son about it, which was nice’; family connections are a powerful support function for those incarcerated.<sup>112</sup> During the extraordinary regime all visits were suspended and phone calls were more limited so this enabling of positive connections with a child was significant. To this end a number of prisons have said they intend to continue to supply the Packs I created in the Visits Hall and to signpost families to them for this specific purpose.<sup>113</sup> The theatre company actors have ‘frequent conversations’ with their families, sharing detail about the work while Michael described with jocularly ‘oh how the mighty do fall – an anti-establishment punk to a Shakespeare nerd’, recounting the teasing from his children for requesting Shakespeare books for his birthday.<sup>114</sup> The Activity Packs appeared to offer an opportunity for strengthening familial connections during a time of intense isolation and uncertainty.

Another inmate commented that it was a positive reminder of school which links to the National Research Council interest in the way in which Shakespeare can be used to engage those who may otherwise be unwilling to engage with formal educational programmes.<sup>115</sup> This type of activity encourages personal agency in the most challenging of

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<sup>110</sup> Feedback, Serco prisons.

<sup>111</sup> Feedback, Serco prisons.

<sup>112</sup> Feedback, Serco prisons.

<sup>113</sup> Emails from various prisons stating this intention once Visits are resumed (May - July 2020).

<sup>114</sup> Feedback from Wayne’s family, *The Merchant*, (29 January 2020); Michael, The Gallowfield Players, correspondence with the author during COVID-19 lockdown (5 May 2020).

<sup>115</sup> Feedback, Serco prisons.



44. Richard's illustration of Antony and Cleopatra for inclusion in the Activity Packs (June 2020), Courtesy of Richard.

prison regimes and to know that someone has responded to that by reflecting on their previous experiences and thinking about the value education could bring to their lives is significant. Another commented that it was 'something [they'd] like to carry on', clearly articulating a desire to continue with their exploration of Shakespeare and the activities beyond the enforced lockdown.<sup>116</sup> I am currently exploring how to make these a permanent suite of materials within prisons, available for those needing some additional creative

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<sup>116</sup> Feedback, Serco prisons.

stimulation. This would be the proposed basis for a future research project if approval and funding can be secured. A more detailed analysis of the impact of these types of self-accessed materials would be required, with fully articulated project parameters and markers of success defined at the outset, as well as the gathering of more detailed feedback through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, to clarify what was effective and why. Given that the above activities were created in direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the restricted regime, there was not time for adequate planning in advance of the work commencing and no ability for structured data gathering throughout.

The potential benefits of engagement materials which encourage people to reflect on their place in cultural history and to exercise their creativity are evidenced through the scant feedback gathered and the prisons' continued engagement throughout the period. Research was the secondary goal of this project; my primary goal was sustaining those behind their cell doors for upwards of 23 hours per day during the pandemic. As Alison Liebling and Amy Ludlow articulate in their work on 'Suicide, distress and the quality of prison life', inmates' ability to avoid suicide or self-harm depends on their 'coping skills and resources'.<sup>117</sup> Between 23 March and 28 May 2020 there were 16 recorded suicides in prisons in England and Wales, a dramatic rise linked to the 'anxiety and psychological distress' of prison during the pandemic.<sup>118</sup> This was a significant concern for all those working within the system and it was to aim to limit this that significant resources were mobilised to provide activities. Whilst reported instances of self-harm within the estate

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<sup>117</sup> Alison Liebling and Amy Ludlow, 'Suicide, distress and the quality of prison life', in *Handbook on Prisons: Second Edition*, p. 229.

<sup>118</sup> G. Gulatti, C.P. Dunne and B. D. Kelly, 'Prisons and the COVID-19 Pandemic', *Public Health Emergency Collection*, (27 May 2020), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7294073/>, [accessed 21 June 2020].

have fallen during the pandemic, potentially due to lower levels of violence and drugs combined with ‘a more proactive approach among all staff to identify and support prisoners at risk of mental distress’, this is typical of the “honeymoon period” often seen in the general population following national disasters.<sup>119</sup> Sustainability of these lower levels of reported incidents is not anticipated by academics or practitioners and Peter Clarke declared ‘serious concerns about what the scrutiny visits are revealing’.<sup>120</sup> During this period of enforced isolation the Shakespeare packs, for some at least, provided a positive distraction from the monotony of the regime, allowing people to engage with characters and narratives with which they could reframe their own confinement to some extent.

The final example in this section of the chapter contrasts with the shorter-term response to the prison regime issues triggered by COVID-19. It examines the beneficial effect on mental resilience where the reflections are developed over a protracted period of isolation. US practitioner and academic Laura Bates for many years worked with Larry Newton, a man held in solitary confinement in Wabash Valley Correctional Facility. Bates’ work spans both the individualised reflections of engaging with Shakespeare as a solitary activity but also the additional responses of group endeavours. The detailed analysis Bates compiled of her work demonstrates the impact it had on Newton in both her own and his words. Bates has worked within prisons for many years and cites influences from Geese Theatre and Tofteland but says that her work:

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<sup>119</sup> Thomas Hewson, Russell Green, Andrew Shepherd, Jake Hard, Jennifer Shaw, ‘The effects of COVID-19 on self-harm in UK prisons’, *BJPsych Bulletin* (July 2020), <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/bjpsych-bulletin/article/effects-of-covid19-on-selfharm-in-uk-prisons/2E6B81CF52D64878FE0517F29726812F>, [accessed 11 October 2020].

<sup>120</sup> Peter Clarke, Keynote address at *What Good Looks Like Conference*.

Attempted to go one step further: rather than attempting to turn inexperienced and often semi-illiterate inmates into Shakespearean actors, I encouraged my students to rewrite Shakespeare's text into their own words, to engage in both linguistic and cultural translation.<sup>121</sup>

*Ten Years with the Bard* documents the work she and Larry did, which resulted in his creation of *The Prisoner's Guide to the Complete Works of Shakespeare*.<sup>122</sup> She describes her own trajectory and the years of working with prisoners who, despite being in solitary confinement, wrote their own creative responses to the tragedies, as well as her 'individual session[s] with Newton [who] was not allowed to join the group given his history'.<sup>123</sup> After stabbing fellow inmates and an officer he was detained in solitary confinement for over a decade. There was limited interaction with other inmates in the solitary confinement cells via shouting messages through cell doors, as described when Newton and another inmate, Green, debated the potential for 'predetermination' encompassed by Richard II's phrase 'Fortune's slaves'.<sup>124</sup> She writes candidly about the challenging behaviour displayed at times by inmates but declared the programme was a success, although she did not define specific criteria against which she measured this. She did, however, extend her tenure there as a volunteer, far beyond her initially planned twelve months, writing that the programme 'was on an unstoppable roll: our successes had impressed the prison administration'.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Laura Bates, 'The Uses of Shakespeare in Criminal Rehabilitation: Testing the Limits of "Universality"', in *Shakespeare Matters: History, Teaching, Performance* ed. by Lloyd Davies (London: Associated University Presses, 2003), pp. 151-63, (p. 152).

<sup>122</sup> Bates, *Shakespeare Saved My Life*, p. 277.

<sup>123</sup> Bates, *Shakespeare Saved My Life*, p. 26.

<sup>124</sup> Bates, *Shakespeare Saved My Life*, p. 28, quoting William Shakespeare, *Richard II*, 5.5.24.

<sup>125</sup> Bates, *Shakespeare Saved My Life*, p. 105.

She specifically chose *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and others she felt the men would connect with, asking them to read aloud and ensure they understood each word before they began to debate the themes and then write their own adaptations ensuring reflection was an intrinsic part of the work. Perhaps this is the example in which the most explicit exploration of the way in which Shakespeare ‘pierces the surface and penetrates the depth of the relationship between repetition and difference’ between personal experiences and those of Shakespeare’s tragedians takes place.<sup>126</sup> She asked them to consider how their own experiences were repetitions of Hamlet’s description of being ‘bounded in a nutshell’, directing them to liken their own experience to Hamlet’s. Their analysis of his visions of the ghost drew strongly on their experiences of long periods of solitary confinement, where they actively engaged in the creation of fantasies so realistic that they could ‘feel the sensations, smell the food, feel the dampness of the rain’.<sup>127</sup> Their experience of reflecting on Shakespeare was largely individualistic, certainly at the outset, as interaction with other inmates was prohibited. Despite mental engagement with others during the weekly class they remained segregated by doors and conducted their conversations on their knees, peering through the slots used to affix handcuffs. Newton and others expended significant efforts working on Shakespeare and writing versions of multiple plays, including full adaptations written in their cells and a communal work entitled *To Revenge or Not to Revenge* in which Newton challenged them that ‘Hamlet should choose *not* to kill.’<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 182.

<sup>127</sup> Bates, *Shakespeare Saved My Life*, p. 119 quoting William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 2.2.254.

<sup>128</sup> Bates, *Shakespeare Saved My Life*, p. 132.

Her chapter in *Performing New Lives* includes transcripts of conversations with Larry reflecting how *Macbeth* resonated with his own behaviours.<sup>129</sup> Bates claims they ‘present a powerful portrayal of one prisoner’s analysis of Shakespeare’s criminal tragedies and his own process of criminal development which could have ended as tragically’, a claim evidenced by the lucidity and honesty of Newton’s self-reflection.<sup>130</sup> He directly attributes his own change of mindset to ‘trying to figure out what motivated Macbeth’ which meant he:

had to ask [himself] what motivated [him] and came face to face with the realisation that [he] was fake, motivated by external appearances and garnering approbation from others instead of considering his own core values.<sup>131</sup>

He described this revelation, directly prompted by his reflections on *Macbeth*, as liberating, allowing him to analyse his psyche and begin to consciously control his motivations. His usage of Shakespeare as a mirror to his own life is symbiotic and as well as taking lessons from the choices *Macbeth* makes he also discusses his own crimes as a validation of the character’s mental state following Duncan’s murder. Newton affirms that after the stabbing he committed in Michigan City jail he was in a ‘disorientated state’ and was unaware he continued to clutch the weapon when he left the crime-scene, remarkably similar to *Macbeth*’s removal of the daggers.<sup>132</sup> The realism of Shakespeare’s character in this situation is one which has been affirmed by others who have committed similar crimes and

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<sup>129</sup> Bates, ‘To Know My Deed’, pp. 33-48.

<sup>130</sup> Bates, ‘To Know My Deed’, p. 41.

<sup>131</sup> Bates, ‘To Know My Deed’, p. 41.

<sup>132</sup> Bates, ‘To Know My Deed’, pp. 33-48, (p. 45); William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 2.2.14-56.



it was referenced by Murray Cox at the conference from which the Broadmoor Shakespeare project was created. Mark Rylance recounts in interview that Cox told him ‘in discussion a patient said, “when I killed someone it wasn’t like that, or it was exactly like that.”[...]The patient’s comment was from his own experience’.<sup>133</sup> Similarly an unprompted group discussion of this scene with The Gallowfield Players revealed that many of them understood Macbeth’s behaviour after the murder as violent crime has the effect of making a person lose cognisance of their external existence for a period of time.<sup>134</sup> Each of these case studies of isolated reflection on Shakespeare have demonstrated the way this practice allowed people to mentally escape their physical location through a combination of conceptual and social space they accessed through his work.

### Reflections on group dynamics

The second part of this chapter focuses on how individuals reflect on the work of Shakespeare but with the additional lens of their involvement in a group activity, examined through ethnographic study of in-prison theatre companies. Their reflections are refracted through the emotional connections embedded within the group dynamic. This section is sub-divided into two, the first exploring rehearsal-diaries written during normal times and the second on how the work was adapted in response to the implementation of the emergency regime instigated by COVID-19. The consideration of the two sets of circumstances with the same group of individuals reveals the depth of the emotional connections developed during the work and how those connections bolster resilience.

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<sup>133</sup> Rylance, interviewed by Rob Ferris, ‘Hamlet and Romeo’, in *Shakespeare Come to Broadmoor*, p. 27.

<sup>134</sup> The Gallowfield Players, discussion during rehearsal for *Macbeth* (14 September 2018).



45. Sketch completed by Brody during Emergency Shakespeare rehearsals for *Macbeth*, HMP Stafford (2 June 2019), Courtesy of Brody.

Prison is a challenging and complex environment for inmates to navigate at any time and the loss they feel is much more than the deprivation of liberty which forms their sentence; many report feelings of loss of humanity, self-worth and their relevance within society.<sup>135</sup> Yvonne Jewkes describes that the 'loss of autonomy in prison is usually total.... as the prisoner is reduced to the weak, helpless, dependent status of a child'.<sup>136</sup> As described in Chapter 1, for the inmates engaged in the theatre companies I work with 'these trends are reversed' within the group as they 'are treated as equals, as people' and this remains fundamental in the process of collaborative change we created together.<sup>137</sup> This group

<sup>135</sup> The Gallowfield Players, rehearsal discussion about using *The Merchant of Venice* to explore the stigma of having a life sentence (10 May 2019).

<sup>136</sup> Yvonne Jewkes, *Captive Audience: Media, masculinity and power in prisons* (Collumpton: Willan Publishing, 2002), p. 17.

<sup>137</sup> Michael, *Experiencing Freedom*, p. 1.

dynamic and sense of autonomy is understandably heavily featured in their diaries which document reflections on the work done both collectively and alone in their cells.

The Gallowfield Players began to keep rehearsal diaries as work commenced on *Julius Caesar*, to capture their thoughts during the process and allow me to develop a deeper research understanding of the experience from their perspective. This has become standard practice with the groups I run, although as expected some engage enthusiastically whilst others are reticent to do so. The quantity and depth of reflection on the work contained within the diaries varies significantly, from some who write multiple notebooks for each production to others who are willing to write a few-page summary at the end. Whilst more detailed notes enable better research I am always cognisant that whilst I am in the prison my primary focus is facilitating the group and it is only afterwards that I reflect on the research elements. So, whilst I would prefer detailed notes from them all I would never prioritise the research agenda at the risk of making anyone feel uncomfortable for documenting little or nothing in their diaries. However, to augment the research base I, at times, asked them to write about specifics relating to the process and this generated additional insights which are interwoven within this section.

The key thesis elements of Shakespeare allowing them to reflect on themselves as individuals yet within a wider continuum of humanity, to develop resilience and find their voices, were all borne out in the diaries. The examples were numerous and so it has been necessary to select a few pertinent ones to illustrate this. One such example within The Gallowfield Players is this extract from a young actor, Wayne, who reflected on a line by line walkthrough of *Julius Caesar*, early in rehearsals, to encourage depth of characterisation.

We talked about the seriousness of the play because it is a tragic story. I can relate it to my crime in a way, the feelings of indescribable regret and remorse is very real for me. But it also helped me because it told me I am human and I'd never wish death upon anybody.<sup>138</sup>

I did not read the diary until after the performances some five months later but Wayne asked to speak to me privately in early February 2019 and talked in some detail about his crime and the impact of it on himself and his family. Whilst it would be inappropriate to document the details of that conversation it is evident that the work done on *Julius Caesar* was the catalyst to him initiating this self-reflection. He told me that the work we had done together had enabled him to objectively examine the details of his index offence and the chain of events which triggered it. When he joined the group, he appeared an immature individual, focused on his own needs rather than those of others but he used the characterisation work to reflect on his own circumstances and those of his loved ones. He wrote in his diary 'today was probably the most helpful session yet, not only for the play, but for my life'.<sup>139</sup> Shortly after this he began to speak about the possibility of entering the therapy regime within Gartree Therapeutic Community (GTC), which another actor had successfully completed. This intervention is 'a 25-bed, high-intensity offending behaviour programme for prisoners with long-standing emotional and relationship difficulties that had led to their violent offending'.<sup>140</sup> The community was assessed in 2017 as 'very effective in giving eligible prisoners opportunities to address their risk factors' and Wayne felt that he

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<sup>138</sup> Wayne, The Gallowfield Players, Rehearsal diary for *Julius Caesar* (unpublished, 25 January 2019).

<sup>139</sup> Wayne, The Gallowfield Players, Rehearsal diary for *Julius Caesar* (unpublished, 25 January 2019).

<sup>140</sup> Clarke, *Inspection of HMP Gartree*, p. 50.

was emotionally and mentally able to commit to this, a fact he attributed to his inclusion in The Gallowfield Players.<sup>141</sup> He moved into the community following the performance of *The Merchant*, on the agreement that he could play a cameo role in productions, whilst daily therapy excluded him from rehearsals, and he could return to the group upon completion of the programme.<sup>142</sup>

Throughout his diaries he reflected on the resilience he developed within the group, noting in June 2019 ‘I’m proud to say my identity has changed from being a Gallowfield Player’.<sup>143</sup> However this trajectory to a more mature and resilient individual was not linear and he also catalogued the difficulties experienced during the process. I wrote in Chapter 1 about his outburst that people were not taking the rehearsals seriously enough and his conversation with Michael and myself which subsequently led to a mature, considered apology. He reflected on this in his diary, both his building feeling of ‘wanting to quit, feeling small, little, incompetent’ in the preceding weeks and then the incident and subsequent feeling of relief.<sup>144</sup> He wrote of his concerns about how he was perceived in prison generally and that to mitigate this he ‘tried to take on a persona that felt unnatural’ which resulted in escalating frustration.<sup>145</sup> He noted longstanding feelings of being unable to be himself in prison, thoughts echoed widely by others including Ben who described that ‘prison often feels like a bad soap opera, a lot of lying and overacting’.<sup>146</sup> Wayne’s diary-entry of the conversation with Michael and myself was focused on the way ‘we all support each other’,

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<sup>141</sup> Clarke, *Inspection of HMP Gartree*, p.18.

<sup>142</sup> Discussion with Wayne, The Gallowfield Players (7 February 2020).

<sup>143</sup> Wayne, Rehearsal diary for *Julius Caesar* (19 June 2019).

<sup>144</sup> Wayne, Rehearsal diary for *The Merchant* (20 September 2019).

<sup>145</sup> Wayne, Rehearsal diary for *The Merchant* (27 September 2019).

<sup>146</sup> Ben, The Gallowfield Players, *No Drama: A Reflection on The Gallowfield Players* (unpublished, July 2019).

rather than the specific use of theatre, but it was over Shakespeare's work that those bonds were created and strengthened over a significant period.<sup>147</sup> Later in the diary he wrote an apology for a joke he worried had offended me (no offence was intended or taken) and acknowledged 'I find it really hard to forgive myself as I do with a lot of things I've done in life, that's one of the reasons I'm leaving for therapy and why I love this group; I'm accepted despite my flaws'.<sup>148</sup> He explained that by 'thinking as the characters I saw different sides of the same situation and then I realised it showed me the different sides of my own life too'.<sup>149</sup> This usage of Shakespeare to consider and understand elements of his own personality which may have been too troubling for him to confront directly charts Wayne's maturation as an individual and the way in which it enabled him to develop communication skills which were previously elusive to him.

Rob wrote on several occasions about the additional rehearsal work done both alone in his cell or in small groups with other actors on the wing. He wrote of a Saturday where they had spent their association time 'in mine doing a rehearsal and as we were doing the reading we discussed the emotions and motivations behind what the characters were saying. I think Ben found this really beneficial'.<sup>150</sup> In prison, unprompted discussions about emotions and vulnerabilities are rare, however, Shakespeare provided the catalyst for this and for the development of friendships between men who had barely known each other prior to joining the company. This development of an emotionally intelligent vocabulary which they gained the confidence to use with each other and myself was one of the tangible

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<sup>147</sup> Wayne, Rehearsal diary for *The Merchant* (27 September 2019).

<sup>148</sup> Wayne, Rehearsal diary for *The Merchant* (13 December 2019).

<sup>149</sup> Wayne, Rehearsal diary for *The Merchant* (20 December 2019).

<sup>150</sup> Rob, Rehearsal diary for *The Merchant* (27 July 2019).



46. Richard's drawing of the cast of *The Merchant* wearing masks, drawn during the COVID-19 lockdown and inspired by a cast photograph taken at the Family Day performance (illustration - May 2020), Courtesy of Richard.

ways in which they reflected their own lives within Shakespeare but also reflected Shakespeare back into the carceral environment. Outside of rehearsals Rob arranged to review early drafts of the script Michael wrote for *The Merchant* and his diary documents his thoughts on this, including an awareness of the need to avoid Shylock 'playing into public perceptions of criminals'.<sup>151</sup> He was one of the men who initiated the choice of play and wanted to address 'how society will judge me when I finish my sentence, it scares me' which was the reason that Shylock was developed as an ostracised man convicted of serious crime.<sup>152</sup> Rob's self-awareness of the importance of making Shylock a believable yet not unsympathetic character continued throughout rehearsals and was considered in detail

<sup>151</sup> Rob, Rehearsal diary for *The Merchant* (22 July 2019).

<sup>152</sup> Rob, comment made during rehearsal (3 May 2019).

regarding the ending of the play where some called for him to commit suicide whilst others challenged this as playing to stereotypes that suggest the cycle of criminality can be broken only by death.<sup>153</sup>

Rob reflected on this regularly in his diary and it was clear that getting his viewpoint across to the audience in a manner which was authentic but allowed them to show this man in a non-stereotyped way was very important to him and dominated his thoughts.<sup>154</sup> Early in the rehearsal schedule Rob was nominated by the group to take this role and his diary documented the way he tried to compare his own life experiences to those of Shylock. He found difficulty in reconciling the two as he felt 'Shylock should be older and very much more rough around the edges'.<sup>155</sup> He directly contrasted himself with the



47. Richard's illustration of Shylock, Portia and Antonio for inclusion in *The Merchant of Venice* Activity Packs (July 2020), Courtesy of Richard.

<sup>153</sup> The Gallowfield Players, various discussions regarding the ending of *The Merchant* (June – July 2019).

<sup>154</sup> Rob, Rehearsal diary for *The Merchant* (entries dated 18, 19, 20, 22, 26 and 27 July 2019) all comment on this balance of characterisation and portrayal of Shylock.

<sup>155</sup> Rob, Rehearsal diary for *The Merchant* (19 July 2019).



character and felt that he was ill-equipped to play the role as he was not a father himself and so, whilst he was a vociferous advocate of the play, he was pleased when Michael agreed to take the lead role. Rob was keen to take a larger role than in his first production but his primary objective was for the play to have heterotopic impact; to that end he was 'happy to relinquish the role' to Michael as he felt 'him to be a better Shylock'.<sup>156</sup> He felt that Bassanio's role was 'a better fit' for himself and throughout the rehearsal process he commented numerous times verbally and in his diary about the role reflecting him more closely.<sup>157</sup> He likened rehearsal feedback about the lyricism of his verse speaking to family memories where he was told that his attempts at French speaking sounded like singing. This level of interconnection between his current and his pre-prison life demonstrated the way Shakespeare had penetrated the issues of repetition and difference for Rob.<sup>158</sup>

During the rehearsal process for *The Merchant* there was also the additional complication that Michael undertook a prolonged hunger strike, as detailed in Chapter 1, which he wrote at length in his diary documenting the impact of the strike on his mental and physical wellbeing, as did others within the group. The level of compassion and support demonstrated during this period was testament to the way the group had bonded. Rob wrote 'I am concerned for Michael, I put my hand on his shoulder and could feel how weak he was', and during this period they would escort him around the prison, carrying his bag and ensuring that he didn't collapse.<sup>159</sup> Michael's own diaries from that period describe 'feeling rough but drama always brightens things up'.<sup>160</sup> Much of his focus and reflection in

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<sup>156</sup> Rob, Rehearsal diary for *The Merchant* (22 July 2019).

<sup>157</sup> Rob, Rehearsal diary for *The Merchant* (2 August 2019).

<sup>158</sup> Rob, Rehearsal diary for *The Merchant* (16 August 2019).

<sup>159</sup> Rob, Rehearsal diary for *The Merchant* (23 August 2019).

<sup>160</sup> Michael, Rehearsal diary for *The Merchant* (20 August 2019).

the diaries was on the practicalities of learning a significant line-load such as Shylock as whilst in prison he suffered some degree of brain damage from a severe case of meningitis. He also reflected how the group had inspired him to find his inner creativity once more, he wrote 'Rowan has given me confidence, given me hope, given me a voice once more and without her I think I'd still be struggling to cope with the brain damage'.<sup>161</sup> After the peaceful conclusion of his hunger strike he reflected that The Gallowfield Players:

Is a gift that keeps on giving –  
 I see it save my friends,  
 I see it bring families together,  
 I see it draw people out of their shells,  
 I see it being inclusive, beautiful, caring, communal,  
 I see it getting people out of bed,  
 I see it do so many things,  
 And it reminds me daily that I need to be a better person, that I can be  
 a better person.<sup>162</sup>

Shortly before performing *The Merchant*, Michael had a sentencing appeal rejected and he acknowledged the emotional impact of denial of early release but he wrote 'all I've been focusing on is the play – such is the hold it has over us that nothing else seems to be of importance right now'.<sup>163</sup> Over time it became more difficult to separate out the resilience they drew from Shakespeare's characters and the resilience from the emotionally

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<sup>161</sup> Michael, Rehearsal diary for *The Merchant* (31 August 2019).

<sup>162</sup> Michael, Rehearsal diary for *The Merchant* (8 November 2019).

<sup>163</sup> Michael, Rehearsal diary for *The Merchant* (24 January 2020).

supportive environment we had created, and which is often lacking in prison. As Ben reflected, 'in our humble drama group we've found a sense of living life again, not just doing *life*', and just as spaces are permeated and altered by the activities which take place within them so Shakespeare became intrinsically linked with the community of The Gallowfield Players for these inmates.<sup>164</sup> Initially their diaries focused on questions such as 'what is my character's motivation?' and a desire to understand them more deeply than 'just repeating lines they don't understand'.<sup>165</sup> Keith reflected that when he joined the group

reading and understanding Shakespeare was a skill I was yet to acquire but by being part of this creation the deeper meanings slowly began to take shape and I began to grasp 'what all the fuss is about'.<sup>166</sup>

However as time went on they focused more on the overall experience, the combination of Shakespeare, the emotional support function of the group and their desire to share the work with a wider audience to create a positive legacy. The interweaving of these elements means that it is difficult, if not impossible, to separate what benefit they took from using Shakespeare to develop their resilience and reflect on their own lives compared to the effect of being part of an autonomous group. Regardless of the delineation of where the benefits accrued the impact was significant enough that Ben wrote:

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<sup>164</sup> Ben, *No Drama*.

<sup>165</sup> Will, Rehearsal diary for *Julius Caesar* (25 January 2019).

<sup>166</sup> Keith, Rehearsal diary for *Julius Caesar* (20 June 2019).

I can honestly say that during our second performance to our loved ones I forgot I was in prison, forgot I was a prisoner, so much so that when it was over and I stepped back into the main prison it felt like my first day back in prison –the noise, the atmosphere, the distant coldness, it left me with an empty feeling.<sup>167</sup>

To have emotionally and mentally freed someone from the confinement of prison for even a few hours was immensely powerful.

Shakespeare was the medium which enabled me to ask these inmates to develop trust with me and with each other; it was an important element of the richly complex community created within HMP Gartree. For many of the actors the work included ‘moments of intense cognitive or emotional epiphany’ which criminologists acknowledge are a crucial part of coping with prison.<sup>168</sup> Michael articulated ‘there is such a magic in these plays, every time we talk about it, hold onto these moments we get the excitement, the buzz, it’s addictive, it’s powerful’ and their passion for discovering more about Shakespeare grew exponentially as they continued to develop the group and to become more resilient individuals.<sup>169</sup> He described *The Merchant* as ‘a love letter to [his] children [...] a chance to say that [he] understands their hardships’ and that he had drawn heavily on his own life, in conjunction with the original text to bring forth this adaptation.<sup>170</sup> The reflections and interweaving of Shakespeare and his personal journey were so powerful that the audience

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<sup>167</sup> Ben, *No Drama*.

<sup>168</sup> Crewe, Hulley & Wright, p. 145.

<sup>169</sup> Michael, Rehearsal diary for *The Merchant* (27 December 2019).

<sup>170</sup> Michael, ‘Late Nights and Friday Mornings, p. 8.

wept. Through Shakespeare the actors were able to find their voice and develop resilience which helped them to cope during the time they were alone in their cells and when the loneliness of prison life was particularly difficult to endure.

This development of emotional resilience from the in-prison theatre companies was also evidenced in HMP Stafford where a number of the men documented in their diaries the positive impact of the work we did together. Brody's complex mental health situation was explored in Chapter 1 and during rehearsals for *Macbeth* he began to comprehend that he



48. Brody's illustration of *The Tempest* for inclusion in the Activity Packs (April 2020), Courtesy of Brody.

could ‘use the spectrum of emotions that I have struggled with for years’ in a positive creative outlet.<sup>171</sup> He wrote of watching a DVD of a production to ‘help put the text into context and show the emotions’ which he then utilised to create his own Banquo.<sup>172</sup> As Deleuze’s theory argues, there can be no repetition as each time an event takes place the circumstances differ making it subtly changed. Navigating the desire for appropriation from many in the company, who saw the filmed version as *the way they should play a role*, was a delicate balance to be navigated as I encouraged men such as Batu, who struggled to find their own interpretation of the character, to make the role their own and not simply a reconstruction of the recording. Batu self-identified that he struggled to ‘portray enough emotion’ during rehearsals as Macduff, but by reflecting on feedback from myself and others he was able to overcome this challenge prior to performance.<sup>173</sup> His self-reflection that his autism affected his way of processing emotions seemed to unlock his ability to communicate them more freely than previously. Following the productions of *Macbeth* he chose to share with the cast that ‘expressing emotions’ was the skill he had developed, and this admission in a group setting demonstrated significant progression for someone who was previously extremely guarded with his conduct.<sup>174</sup>

The final subsection of this chapter considers the effect on the work within the two theatre companies during the extraordinary regime detailed earlier. During my final rehearsal within each prison prior to lockdown we discussed the likely implications of the

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<sup>171</sup> Brody, Rehearsal diary for *Macbeth* (17 September 2019).

<sup>172</sup> Brody, Rehearsal diary for *Macbeth* (22 April 2019).

<sup>173</sup> Batu, Rehearsal diary for *Macbeth* (21 July 2019).

<sup>174</sup> Batu, verbal feedback in post-performance debrief session *Macbeth* (27 September 2019).

pandemic and I made the commitment that I would endeavor to maintain contact in some form whilst unable to be physically present. Initially I was unsure what form this would take and the logistical practicalities but both prisons were supportive of maintaining contact and agreed to be the conduit for correspondence, which I was immensely grateful for. The first correspondence was distributed before the next rehearsal was due to take place. I wrote them a weekly letter and included approximately 3 hours of activities, suggesting that where possible we all completed the activities at the usual rehearsal time as that would mean that everyone was focusing on Shakespeare at the same time. I envisaged this to offer them a semblance of normality, as far as possible, given that they were behind their cell doors. At the time of writing I have been unable to return to the prisons (except for two sessions in HMP Stafford) but continue to write weekly.

The letters aimed to provide a sense of continuity of rehearsal sessions and combined brief updates on my thesis, enquiries about their physical and mental health and that of their loved ones (many of whom I have met at performances) and topical comments such as we would exchange at the start of rehearsals or during the coffee break. In HMP Gartree we were at the stage of a readthrough of *Sycorax's Storm*, a prequel to *The Tempest* because 'the stories we know are only chapters within much larger tales'.<sup>175</sup> Michael had drafted the script and we were in the final stages of editing so this continued (albeit somewhat slower than intended as his handwritten work was posted to me for typing and amendments). The activities sent to the group included analysis of the characters in the

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<sup>175</sup> Michael, *Sycorax's Storm*, Prologue.2.

adaptation (which featured a female Prospera, the addition of her partner Lucilius, and a male Sycorax), the relationships and how these develop during the play. A plot outline for



49. Richards' cartoon of *Sycorax's Storm* (July 2020), Courtesy of Richard.

*The Tempest* and character descriptions for *Sycorax's Storm* were used to help ensure a foundation for understanding the play. A degree of hot-seating of characters produced varied results with some producing copious, emotionally detailed notes about the trajectories of each character whilst others 'struggled as I really don't understand *The*



*Tempest*'.<sup>176</sup> Whilst this could be easily addressed with a conversation in rehearsals it posed more of an issue whilst working remotely and led to me adapting the work to encompass more creative activities such as translating modern songs into Shakespearean language or creating cartoon panels depicting plays we had worked on. I gained agreement from artists Charlie Mackesy and Mya Gosling to include some of their work in the packs to engage visually with those who preferred pictorial to written materials.<sup>177</sup> It was important the actors continued to feel connected with the work and several of them wrote to explain the importance of it in their mental wellbeing. 'This is an incredibly tough time but having a reminder each week that we are part of something incredible carries on giving us hope', wrote Leigh.<sup>178</sup> Will commented that the packs were 'distracting and entertaining' whilst he coped with the fact he may not see his overseas family for a considerable time.<sup>179</sup>

This sense of continuity of the work with Shakespeare and as a collective group helped them to cope with the prolonged isolation. I was concerned about the mental health impacts on them and many admitted that they found it hard, with some of them having days when it was difficult to summon the energy and enthusiasm to get out of bed. However, they wrote of proactively trying to follow some form of routine, which included The Gallowfield Players' activities. Many of them elected to use the time to work on educational initiatives such as Open University courses, read books they had previously not had time to start or develop their artistic skills. Richard wrote to thank me for including the

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<sup>176</sup> Leigh, correspondence with the author (May 2020).

<sup>177</sup> Charlie Mackesy, *The Boy, the mole, the fox and the horse* (London: Ebury Publishing, 2019), <https://www.charliemackesy.com/> [accessed 16 June 2020]; Mya Lixian Gosling is an artist and author of Good Tickle Brain and Sketchy Beta, <https://goodticklebrain.com/>, [accessed 16 June 2020].

<sup>178</sup> Leigh, correspondence (May 2020).

<sup>179</sup> Will, correspondence (June 2020).



50. Richard's pastiche of Shakespeare characters in *Sir John Falstaff in Looking for Love* (July 2020), Courtesy of Richard.

Good Tickle Brain comic-strips stating ‘it’s inspired me to have a go at cartoons myself’.<sup>180</sup> His artwork had already been featured in posters and programmes for The Gallowfield Players and during lockdown I liaised with him, via the prison, to begin producing illustrations of Shakespeare’s plays which were included in the Activity Packs for general circulation within the carceral estate. He had already developed an intense interest in Shakespeare during the time we had worked together and proudly told me of the *Complete Works of Shakespeare* his parents bought him for his birthday in 2019.<sup>181</sup> As well as the illustrations for the Activity Packs, in mid-June a package of costume designs for *Sycorax’s Storm* arrived which he and Michael had worked on collaboratively. He wrote ‘Michael and I have spent much of the last week working out the details of costumes and looks for the characters to get the visuals right’.<sup>182</sup> Their continued focus on the next production even during lockdown and the mental stress of the pandemic demonstrated how central it had become to their sense of identity and Michael asked me to share my thoughts on the designs, adding ‘I just wish I could see your face with some of them’.<sup>183</sup>

Despite rehearsals having been suspended for many months their commitment to the work remained high, with requests for additional reading materials, texts for plays Michael wanted to adapt for future productions and origami instructions to assist Malcolm with props and set design plans. The emotional strength the actors drew from the connection to The Gallowfield Players and to the work they embarked on as a collective was

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<sup>180</sup> Richard, correspondence (June 2020).

<sup>181</sup> Richard, conversation during rehearsal (2019).

<sup>182</sup> Richard, correspondence (10 June 2020).

<sup>183</sup> Michael, correspondence (8 June 2020).



51. Richard and Michael's sketches for costumes for *Sycorax's Storm* (July 2020), Courtesy of The Gallowfield Players.

evident and even actors who had shown less interest in the text previously engaged more during this time. Christian is an older gentleman who had previously shown little interest beyond participating in the weekly rehearsals, but he expressed an interest in 'rewriting Caesar' which we performed in 2019.<sup>184</sup> At the time of writing I am unable to confirm if this intention was carried out but for him to even consider it shows a significant progression in his own engagement with purposeful activity. One letter from Michael included an affirmation that 'I'm tired of letting fear prevent me from doing things I once enjoyed, so I am trying to fix all the broken bits in my head'.<sup>185</sup>

Additionally, Michael was also keen to help with the planning for the additional group, which was approved via the Dynamic Purchasing System tendering process during the pandemic. This was for the prison to commission me for the work with The Gallowfield Players and an additional session (3 hours) each week where myself and 3-4 of the actors would work with a group of 10-12 inmates who had not previously engaged with the company. The proposal was that the group worked together for three months putting together a number of short scenes which would be showcased at an internal prison sharing event. During the course of the year this would enable up to 48 additional inmates to engage with Shakespeare and staff were keen that this would 'get people involved who might be challenging in other activities or be isolated'.<sup>186</sup> Michael was delighted to hear that this had been formally ratified and he wrote of 'wanting to sit and talk about how we best make this group effective'.<sup>187</sup> He was keen to create a legacy and to use his own life

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<sup>184</sup> Michael, correspondence (10 June 2020).

<sup>185</sup> Michael, correspondence (26 May 2020.)

<sup>186</sup> Verbal conversation with Head of Reducing Reoffending, HMP Gartree, discussing ideas for developing The Gallowfield Players (31 January 2020).

<sup>187</sup> Michael, correspondence (3 June 2020).

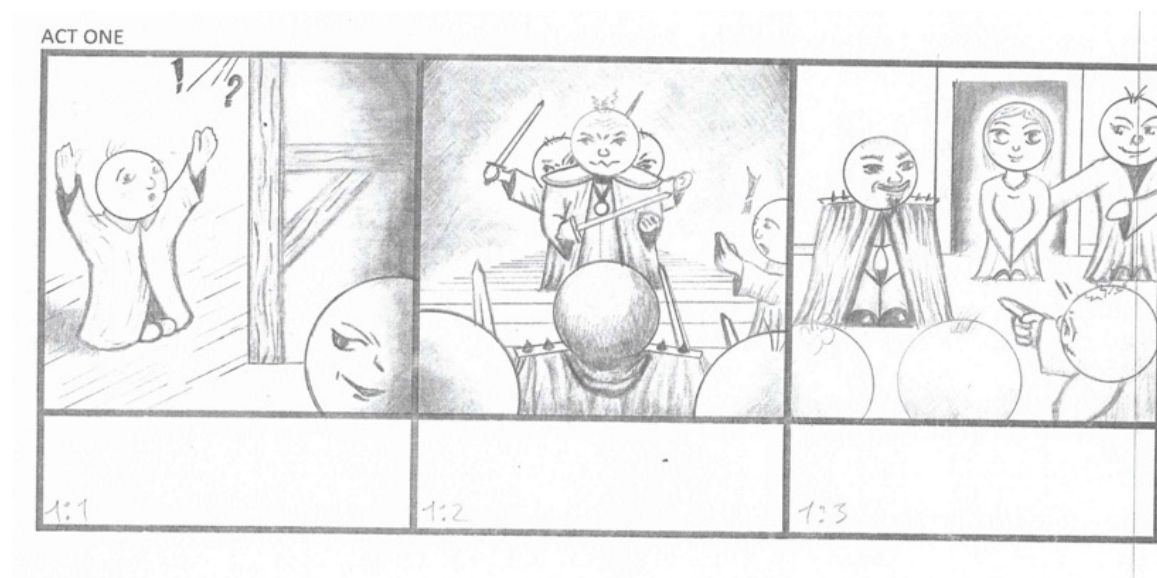
experiences and the experiences within The Gallowfield Players to help others to build their resilience.

Another pertinent example of this desire to improve the lives of others was demonstrated by Brody in HMP Stafford who worked prolifically during the pandemic to create artistic depictions of the plays to illustrate the Activity Packs. He began drawing whilst in prison and during the course of our work together had grown in confidence sufficiently to begin an undergraduate degree in Fine Art (for which we secured funding



52. Brody's illustration of *King Lear* which he and I agreed was too macabre for inclusion in the Activity Packs (June 2020), Courtesy of Brody.

from the Prisoners' Education Trust). He articulated to a member of staff who was sending the materials to me that 'it makes me feel good about myself that my drawings bring other people pleasure'.<sup>188</sup> This desire to bring pleasure to others was demonstrated through his ready agreement to support the initiative, dedication to meeting deadlines for the artwork and his seeking of feedback from me, via staff. These responses from the actors during the pandemic evidenced emotional development and that they were able to demonstrate resilience during this challenging time. They continued to feel connected to the social space we had created through Shakespeare's work and the dynamics of the group which acted as sustenance whilst rehearsals were indefinitely halted. Alice Mills and Kathleen Kendall concur that 'prisons are hostile environments where people experience fear, intimidation, psychological and physical damage' so it is unsurprising that many mask their emotions and vulnerabilities and shut off from the world.<sup>189</sup> For many of the actors this had previously



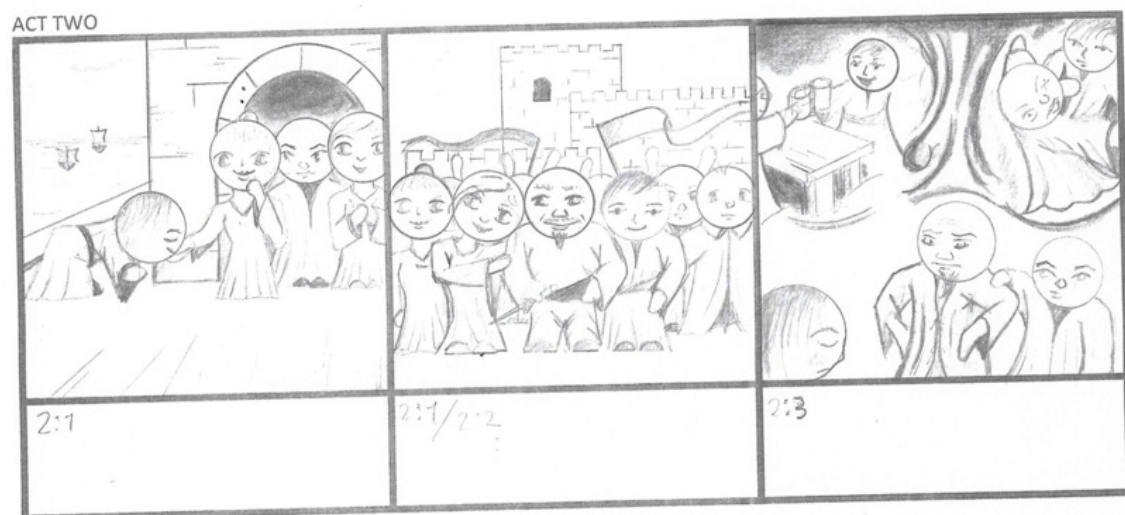
53. Brody's cartoon-strip of *Othello*, Act 1, drawn for inclusion in the programme for Emergency Shakespeare's production of the play, planned for 2021 (September 2020), Courtesy of Brody.

<sup>188</sup> Brody, in conversation with a Senior Officer (SO), quoted by the SO in email correspondence (April 2020).

<sup>189</sup> Alice Mills and Kathleen Kendall, 'Mental Health in Prisons', in *Handbook on Prisons: Second Edition*, p. 187.



been the case but the pandemic clearly demonstrated that this was no longer their reality, instead they continue to be connected to a community even though circumstances meant that has been physically fragmented for a prolonged period of time. They draw strength from a sense of belonging, whether this is the strength for them to ‘continue to pull through the dark times with my family, friends and the group in mind’ or whether they are actively contributing to activities to help others find creativity in isolation.<sup>190</sup> For individuals serving long sentences for violent crimes to agree to share their creative efforts (drawings, reflections on plays, activities) with the wider prison population and open themselves up to potential criticism and ridicule is a significant act. Their confidence in themselves, their trust in me and their passion for using Shakespeare as a form of human connection were all evidenced by these instances of proactivity.



54. Brody's cartoon-strip of *Othello*, Act 2, drawn for inclusion in the programme for Emergency Shakespeare's production of the play, planned for 2021 (September 2020), Courtesy of Brody.

<sup>190</sup> Leigh, correspondence (May 2020).



## Conclusion

Whether people are dislocated from society on a temporary or a more permanent basis, the connectivity with Shakespeare can offer them the chance to develop a resilience which comes from knowing that they are working with characters which speak to contemporary life just as eloquently as they did to Elizabethan and Jacobean experiences. This invokes Bourdieu's sense of habitus, of belonging to the wider humanity which can help them with dealing with the challenges facing them during the period of isolation. Using Shakespeare to hold up a mirror to themselves and to society helps individuals to calibrate the similarities and differences between the characters, themselves and the wider community. This placing of oneself in the continuum of history provides a vital and powerful sense of autonomy that oppression and social control cannot eradicate. Some are separated from their loved ones and communities for short periods, some for long spells and others for an indefinite period of time, but for all of them this induces feelings of vulnerability, fear and loss, the feelings Liebling and Ludlow ascribe as the primary motivations for suicide in custody.<sup>191</sup> The provision of activities and material which can counteract these emotions is a powerful antidote and when these are in the form of canonical works such as Shakespeare this effect is heightened. They allow people to engage with a world which is not bounded in the realm of their restricted, isolated reality but allow them to find a deeper internal resilience which allows them to survive the negative impacts of their exile from their established network.

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<sup>191</sup> Alison Liebling and Amy Ludlow, 'Suicide, distress and the quality of prison life', in *Handbook on Prisons: Second Edition*, p. 229.

## Chapter 4: Mediated Spaces

Most people's knowledge of applied Shakespeare is refracted through the lens of the media, delivered in easily accessible formats fraught with embedded agendas. Claire Bishop argues that in the context of politically and socially engaged theatre, 'social and artistic judgements do not easily merge' and I would suggest that for many media portrayals of applied Shakespeare the dominant focus of the narrative is the social rather than artistic.<sup>1</sup> Matt Hargrave writes of 'the underlying tension between theatre as a mechanism for social emancipation and theatre as an art form' and although his study is specifically concerned with 'disability arts' the read-across to other forms of applied theatre is strong.<sup>2</sup> As Todd Landon Barnes describes in his monograph, the reality of applied theatre is complicated and to some extent reliant on privilege which plays into a neoliberal agenda where emotional development is seen as being given through what Nicholson terms the 'gift of theater.'<sup>3</sup> Barnes' judgement that the films he critiques 'depict philanthropic practices that risk being perceived as patronising intrusions' partially articulates the core of the issue in media coverage of these types of projects.<sup>4</sup> However, there is a further issue here in that it may be the media itself which is the patronising intrusion and which may at times obscure and distort the truth of the work taking place. Whilst the ethics of applied theatre are complex and challenging to navigate, as any practitioner will agree, the additional layer of then preparing this work in a mediated format for consumption by the general public makes

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<sup>1</sup> Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London and New York: Verso, 2012), p. 275.

<sup>2</sup> Matt Hargrave, *Theatres of Learning Disability: Good, Bad or Plain Ugly?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Todd Landon Barnes, *Shakespearean Charity and the Perils of Redemptive Performance* (Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 2020), p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Barnes, p. 3.

those ethics additionally problematic. Even when a practitioner is mindful of the dangers of intrusion and consciously attempts to avoid this, there is a likelihood that the mediated portrayal will have an embedded narrative which may be patronising and play into perceptions of marginalised people as incapable of cultural or intellectual achievements.

‘Patronising’ has the complexity of the dual meaning of being both to offer support as a patron but also to behave in a condescending manner. This duality is important to media portrayals of marginalised communities, as in one sense the purpose of this type of media is usually to engage support (with the notable exception of tabloid coverage of prison arts projects which will be considered later) from a wider community than may otherwise be aware of the initiatives. However, there is a very real danger that this support is offered from a place of social superiority which becomes patronising in the derogatory sense. A danger that those who create the media play into stereotypes of marginalisation in their portrayal of the redemptive qualities of Shakespeare, as if to achieve the ability to orate Shakespeare makes these people’s lives worthwhile in ways they were not before. It is a very fine balance between showcasing the way in which Shakespeare can offer people an opportunity to have their voices heard and the risk that this becomes a neatly packaged *product* which encourages the audience to feel socially, economically, intellectually or physically superior to those they are watching. This danger exists with physical interactions too but is exacerbated by the fact that audiences consuming the media are not in direct contact with the participants and so some degree of humanity is lost from the experience. My research into the ways in which media can be helpful but also patronise marginalised communities, through the redemptive narratives which often accompany Shakespearean productions, has been fundamental in my own work as a practitioner. As I explore later in

this chapter, the media created by the theatre companies for which I am Artistic Director has been shaped significantly by my research and I attempt to ensure that the voices given centrality are those of the community to minimise the potential of patronising intrusion from non-marginalised perspectives.

Society has become accustomed to the infiltration of media and social media into almost every aspect of our lives, and for many it is a primary gateway for engagement with the world. Although from 1961, Lefebvre's description in *Critique of Everyday Life: Volume II*, provides a relevant starting point:

Radio and television do not penetrate the everyday solely in terms of the viewer. They go looking for it at its source: personalised (but superficial) anecdotes, trivial incidents, familiar family events. They set out an explicit principle: 'everything [...] can become interesting and even enthralling, provided that it is *presented ie present*.'<sup>5</sup>

Whilst media forms have diversified and the impact on lives has intensified I believe that his argument that if an event is *presented* it will become engaging to media consumers, prevails in modern society. The concept that any everyday topic can be interesting if it is *presented* and shown to be of the *present* (relevant in the immediate moment) via the media is one which has been borne out by the rise of reality TV over recent decades. I build on Lefebvre's theory and refer to *presenting* and *presentation* which are linked to *presented* and *present*.

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<sup>5</sup>Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life: The One Volume Edition: Volume II*, trans. by John Moore (London and New York: Verso Publishing, 2002), p. 370.

Presenting in this context is a combination of the act of showing something and the immediacy of the timeframe within which it is shown, layering the physical and the temporal. It is this act of presenting which stokes interest in the media coverage of the artistic endeavors of marginalised people.

Presentation is the act of portrayal of a specific event or series of events with a timebound qualification – the reception of the piece of media is dependent upon the time in which it is given to the public, it either reinforces or challenges the current social framework. Set against the backdrop of cultural and sociological concerns of the moment, these media creations provide a representation of reality which is somewhat distorted – it cannot be an exact replication of the event which took place, as discussed in Chapter 3 where Deleuze’s theory was explored in relation to reflective spaces. There is a natural mediation effect when an event is recorded; the reality is transmuted from objectivity into subjectivity, driven by where the focus is directed and the context within which the media content is set. This chapter is not a critique of the prevalence and influence of mass media but an examination of how this society-wide phenomenon is utilised in the creation of narratives about Shakespeare and marginalised people, making them available to a wider audience.

The media’s influence on the opinion of the individual has been studied throughout the last century, vacillating between the ‘magic bullet theory’ (that media messages had immediate, pervasive effects on those targeted) and claims of minimal impact, with the

reality being more nuanced and complex than either extremity of theoretical opinion.<sup>6</sup>

Much of the recent study in this field has been occupied with improving the theories and measurement tools which 'seek to justify the discipline itself', but there can be little debate that media has the ability to take a story and to present this in such a way as to fulfil the agenda of those creating the material.<sup>7</sup> As Lefebvre argued, 'the art of presenting the everyday by taking it from its context, emphasizing it, making it appear unusual or picturesque and overloading it with meaning has become highly skillful'.<sup>8</sup> This appears to be his 'explicit principle' that the intention of media is always to make things engaging and, where necessary, manipulating them to do so. This principle of things becoming 'enthralling' is intrinsic to the concept of broadcasting; the foundation upon which it has been built and upon which it has flourished. Whilst there is a danger of homogenisation beyond that which is helpful and it is important to recognise the diversity of approach and breadth of subject matter, an underpinning foundation of all media is that it must attract attention in order to be able to disseminate the content.

I will demonstrate the ways in which mediated representations of those from marginalised sectors of society engaging with Shakespeare are embodiments of the explicit principle of *presentation* which defines audiences' receptions, bringing their perceptions into alignment with the pre-determined agenda. Whilst the majority of these agendas are designed to be supportive of the examples they showcase there is, as Todd Landon Barnes articulates, the risk that they are 'as exploitative, as manipulative and as commercial as

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<sup>6</sup> W. Russell Neuman and Lauren Guggenheim, 'The Evolution of Media Effects Theory: A Six-Stage Model of Cumulative Research', *Communication Theory* 21 (2011), 169-96 (pp. 171-72), <https://academic-oup-com.ezproxy.bham.ac.uk/ct/article/21/2/169/4085678>, [accessed 11 July 2020].

<sup>7</sup> Neuman and Guggenheim, p. 172.

<sup>8</sup> Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life: Volume II*, p. 370.

reality television’.<sup>9</sup> They are often created with the intention of encouraging endorsement and funding of the initiative but this, at times, becomes warped by the sociological desire for what Ian Wilhelm terms ‘charity TV – that make doing good – or the appearance of doing good – a key part of their audience appeal’.<sup>10</sup> For a majority of the public their entire sphere of reference for these marginalised groups may be through media representation, endorsing the phenomenon of ‘mediachosis’ which Osborne used to describe the unconscious and unquestioning acceptance of information portrayed through electronic media.<sup>11</sup> As the reality of the worlds inhabited by people who are incarcerated, suffering from mental health issues, who have experienced homelessness or who live with learning disabilities is frequently unknown, people accept blindly the material presented to them, without questioning the truth of the depiction.

The developments in the worlds of media and social media form the field of ‘communication effects’, an often-fragmented discipline which Neuman and Guggenheim attempt to distil into a ‘six-stage model of cumulative research’.<sup>12</sup> Their model coordinates a seemingly disparate field into a series of themes which have developed throughout the last six decades; theories of persuasion, active audience, social context, societal and media theories, interpretive effects and new media.<sup>13</sup> They are not mutually exclusive themes but

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<sup>9</sup> Barnes, p. 14.

<sup>10</sup> Ian Wilhelm, ‘The Rise of Charity TV’, *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, 19.8 (February 2007), p. 24, <https://advance.lexis.com/document/?pdmfid=1519360&crd=69631eb4-25f9-4a22-882d-a774c6e06e2b&pddocfullpath=%2Fshared%2Fdocument%2Fnews%2Furn%3AcontentItem%3A4N5C-RDV0-TX4X-X1VX-00000-00&pdcontentcomponentid=171268&pdteaserkey=sr0&pditab=allpods&ecomp=tb72k&earg=sr0&prid=20b5ee48-bd18-49bf-b0fb-d613a93e9732>, [accessed 11 July 2020].

<sup>11</sup> Richard Osborne, ‘Crime and the media: from media studies to post-modernism’, in *Crime and the Media: The Post-modern Spectacle*, ed. by D Kidd and R. Osborne (London: Pluto Press, 1995), pp. 25-46 (p. 37).

<sup>12</sup> Neuman and Guggenheim.

<sup>13</sup> Neuman and Guggenheim, p. 177-78.

the ones which are particularly relevant within this chapter are active audience theories which consider the 'motivations and psychological orientations of audience members' and interpretive effects theories which 'includes [...] agenda-setting, priming and framing theories'.<sup>14</sup> The active audience theories consider the way in which information received is influenced by the recipients' existing psychological orientations and opinions of the world.<sup>15</sup> The interpretive effects theories, in contrast, focus on the messages being encoded during production and the way in which the media 'may influence salience of, interpretation of and cognitive organisation of information and opinions to which individuals are exposed'.<sup>16</sup> These two are not binary theories; meaning is created symbiotically between the producer of content and the consumer of it, particularly within the social context of the moment of production. To some degree, the media construct the messages being broadcast but in today's society those messages are also driven by public perception and demand. As Jose Van Dijck confirms, 'social media platforms have unquestionably altered the nature of private and public communication'.<sup>17</sup> The exponential rise of campaigns such as Black Lives Matter, in response to incidents of police brutality in the United States, demonstrates the power of social media as a platform upon which to engage and organise protesters. The days of media as a one-way, omnipotent disseminator of information (if it ever existed in that form) have long been replaced by a more complex structure of influence which operates bilaterally.

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<sup>14</sup> Neuman and Guggenheim, p. 177-78.

<sup>15</sup> Raymond A. Bauer, 'The Obstinate Audience: The influence process from the point of view of social communication', *American Psychologist*, 19.5 (May 1964), 319-28, <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1965-01631-001> [accessed 12 July 2020].

<sup>16</sup> Neuman and Guggenheim, p. 178.

<sup>17</sup> Jose Van Dijck, *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 7.



Alongside the developments in media studies there has also been growing academic analysis of the rise of digital Shakespeare over recent years. *Shakespeare and the Digital World* aimed to catalogue and interrogate the changing landscape of Shakespeare being enabled by digital technology.<sup>18</sup> This book was written with the express intention of ‘redefining scholarship’ in light of digital advancements and covered a myriad of topics relating to the rise of online communities, live broadcasts and enhanced accessibility of materials on a national and global scale. David McInnis includes the pertinent warning that there can at times be an ‘uncritical assumption that a project’s merits are unequivocally enhanced if the project is digital’.<sup>19</sup> Erin Sullivan’s work on live broadcasts, digitised Shakespeare and globalisation of his work through media capability over the past decade, both within this edited volume and in other publications, provides a strong basis for understanding the changing world of theatre production.<sup>20</sup> However, as she counsels in *Shakespeare on the Global Stage*, the Olympiad legacy of accessible Shakespeare ‘cannot live on language, rhetoric and symbolism alone- it needs long-term financing and practical policymaking, to thrive’.<sup>21</sup> Sarah Olive’s work on the ‘incidental appropriation of Shakespeare’ within a pedagogical context of increased digitalisation draws on earlier work by academics such as Terence Hawkes and Graham Holderness in the context of televised theatre.<sup>22</sup> Her 2016 article on ‘televised teaching and learning Shakespeare’ focused more

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<sup>18</sup> Christie Carson and Peter Kirwan (ed.), *Shakespeare and the Digital World: Redefining Scholarship and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

<sup>19</sup> David McInnis, ‘Webs of engagement’, in *Shakespeare and the Digital World*, pp 43-55, (p. 43).

<sup>20</sup> Erin Sullivan, ‘“The forms of things unknown”: Shakespeare and the Rise of the Live Broadcast’, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 35.4 (2017), 627-62.

<sup>21</sup> Erin Sullivan, ‘Olympic Shakespeare and the idea of Legacy: Culture, Capital and the Global Future,’ in *Shakespeare on the Global Stage*, p.312.

<sup>22</sup> Sarah Olive, ‘Representations of Shakespeare’s Humanity and Iconicity: Incidental Appropriations in Four British Television Broadcasts’, *Borrowers and Lenders*, 8.1 (April 2013), [https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.bham.ac.uk/docview/1458231920?accountid=8630&rft\\_id=info%3Axi%2Fsid%3Aprimor](https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.bham.ac.uk/docview/1458231920?accountid=8630&rft_id=info%3Axi%2Fsid%3Aprimor), [accessed 12 July 2020].

specifically on the rise of reality television depicting educational Shakespeare, frequently for 'hard-to-reach groups' from financially impoverished backgrounds, building on the sub-genre begun by the 1994 documentary *Shakespeare on the Estate*.<sup>23</sup> Director Penny Woolcock describes how filming this altered her perception as:

instead of imagining a post-industrial vacuum populated by victims [she] started piecing together a picture of a thriving marginal economy with an alternative system for keeping order.<sup>24</sup>

This sub-genre has developed further with more examples of what Bottinelli termed 'substance-based reality television' being created in the past two decades, satisfying a demand for the combination of 'real experiences of learning and performing communicated through techniques common to reality television with a subject culturally constructed as heavyweight'.<sup>25</sup>

The global COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect on live theatre and almost all work produced in 2020 has had to be adapted into a digital format. The long-term economic impacts on the sector are not yet fully known but many institutions have been forced to announce redundancies and some have closed altogether.<sup>26</sup> The Government

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<sup>23</sup> Sarah Olive, "'In shape and mind transformed'? Televised teaching and learning Shakespeare', *Palgrave Communications* 2 (2016), <https://www.nature.com/articles/palcomms20168>, [accessed 11 July 2020]; Penny Woolcock (director), *Shakespeare on the Estate*, BBC, 1994.

<sup>24</sup> Penny Woolcock, *Shakespeare on the Estate*, <https://pennywoolcock.com/shakespeareontheestate>, [accessed 12 July 2020].

<sup>25</sup> J Bottinelli quoted by Olive, 'In shape and mind transformed'.

<sup>26</sup> Royal Shakespeare Company, 'The Royal Shakespeare Theatre in 2020 and 2021' (October 2020), <https://www.rsc.org.uk/news/the-royal-shakespeare-theatre-in-2020-and-2021> [accessed 1 November 2020] announced 158 people in redundancy consultations; Mark Sweney, 'Majority of UK theatres and music venues "face permanent shutdown"', *The Guardian* (9 June 2020),

created a £1.57billion Culture Recovery Fund to offer some degree of support to artists, practitioners and venues but it is highly likely that the impact of COVID-19 will have permanently altered the landscape of performative arts.<sup>27</sup> The amount of content available on line has increased significantly with many organisations streaming digital content of previous productions whilst others have begun to create 'Zoom performances'.<sup>28</sup> The full effects of these changes cannot yet be known but it is likely that digital theatre will have a more prominent presence in the future which brings with it both opportunities for widening access but also challenges regarding financial sustainability and the way this alters the concept of live theatre. On this basis the importance of mediated spaces will become increasingly central to theatre studies, whilst at the same time in some ways it poses additional divisions. The lack of technology within prisons, and amongst many economically deprived sectors of society, means that access is being increased for the general public but with some notable exclusions which exacerbates issues of exclusion and marginalisation.<sup>29</sup>

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<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2020/jun/09/majority-of-uk-theatres-and-music-venues-face-permanent-shutdown> [accessed 1 November 2020]; Chris Wiegand, 'Nuffield Southampton Theatres to close as UK arts crisis deepens', *The Guardian* (2 July 2020), <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2020/jul/02/nuffield-southampton-theatres-to-permanently-close-as-uk-arts-crisis-deepens>, [accessed 1 November 2020].

<sup>27</sup> Government, *Culture Recovery Fund*, <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/culture-recovery-board>, [accessed 1 November 2020].

<sup>28</sup> Arifa Akbar, 'The next act: How the pandemic is shaping online theatre's future', *The Guardian* (21 September 2020), <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2020/sep/21/future-of-live-theatre-online-drama-coronavirus-lockdown>, [accessed 1 November 2020].

<sup>29</sup> Cynthia McDougall, Dominic A.S. Pearson, David J. Torgeson and Maria Garcia -Reyes, 'The effect of digital technology on prisoner behaviour and reoffending: a natural stepped-wedge design', *Journal of Experimental Criminology* 13 (2017), 455-82 <https://link-springer-com.ezproxye.bham.ac.uk/article/10.1007/s11292-017-9303-5>, [accessed 1 November 2020]; Emma J. Palmer, Ruth M. Hatcher and Matthew J. Tonkin, *Evaluation of digital technology in prisons* (Ministry of Justice Analytical Series, 2020), [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/899942/evaluation-digital-technology-prisons-report.PDF](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/899942/evaluation-digital-technology-prisons-report.PDF), [accessed 1 November 2020]; Prisoner Learning Alliance, 'Our work on digital technology', <https://prisonerlearningalliance.org.uk/our-work/digital-technology/>, [accessed 1 November 2020]; Tim Unwin, Mark Weber, Meaghan Brugha and David Hollow, *The Future of Learning and Technology in Deprived Contexts* (London: Save the Children International, 2017), [https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/the\\_future\\_of\\_learning\\_and\\_technology.pdf](https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/the_future_of_learning_and_technology.pdf), [accessed 1 November 2020]; Kevin Hernandez and Tony Roberts, *Leaving No One Behind in a Digital World* (Brighton: K4D Emerging Issues Report, 2018),

In this chapter I will demonstrate the ways in which the media play into the psychological expectations of audiences and also frame narratives about the appropriation of Shakespeare by marginalised people in quite specific ways. In the context of media representations of Shakespeare with excluded communities, the event is never unmediated even if it is spontaneously captured in the moment and location of occurrence. This is true regardless of whether the media chooses to portray such an intervention in a positive light (as is often the case for learning disabled theatre companies) or a negative one (frequently applicable to tabloid headlines relating to prison creativity). There is always a strong underlying subtext to any such reportage, based partly on society's pre-existing opinions and partly on the way in which the story is mediated through the communication of it. This chapter builds on existing studies of this field by academics such as Sarah Olive, Ramona Wray, Susanne Greenhalgh and Todd Landon-Barnes, combined with practitioners' perspectives.<sup>30</sup> It uses these to evidence the importance of centralising the voices of the marginalised and their 'allies' when the media *presents* Shakespearean engagement from such communities.<sup>31</sup> Media coverage of these types of interventions include theatre-programmes, news articles, television documentaries and feature length films depicting a seemingly redemptive narrative through the usage of Shakespeare. This chapter will not include articles and books whether written by academics, practitioners or, occasionally, co-

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c178371ed915d0b8a31a404/Emerging\\_Issues\\_LNOBDW\\_final.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c178371ed915d0b8a31a404/Emerging_Issues_LNOBDW_final.pdf), [accessed 1 November 2020].

<sup>30</sup> Ramona Wray, 'The Morals of *Macbeth* and Peace as Process: Adapting Shakespeare in Northern Ireland's Maximum Security Prison', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 62:3 (2011), 340-63; Susanne Greenhalgh, 'A World Elsewhere: Documentary Representations of Social Shakespeare', *Critical Survey: Special Issue: Applying Shakespeare*, 31.4 (Winter 2019), 77-87; Barnes, *Shakespearean Charity*.

<sup>31</sup> Bree Hadley, 'Allyship in disability arts roles, relationships and practices', *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance* 25:2 (2020) 178-194 (p. 178), <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569783.2020.1729716> [accessed 3 October 2020].

authored with marginalised participants, as the primary focus of such works is academic research rather than media creation.<sup>32</sup>

Media is a crucial way in which wider society is able to understand to some extent the contexts and forms in which applied Shakespeare operates. However, as Greenhalgh counsels, these broadcasts 'are never neutral documentations but rather transcode performance into the conventions of broadcast narrative and presentation'.<sup>33</sup> These are not unmediated recordings of reality, they are carefully constructed in order to present a specific version of a reality into which many would not otherwise glimpse. Many of the media creations aim to provide a behind the scenes look at the work which goes into rehearsals and the transformations the work can engender. However, this does raise challenging ethical questions about who controls the messages which are constructed and to what extent such media productions play into existing narratives of marginalisation and this concept of 'redemptive performance'.<sup>34</sup>

Barnes argues that the logic of 'Shakespearean charity' documentaries is that 'marginalised communities are composed of self-defeating, self-marginalising, failed individuals and families who, through the power of the arts, might be better interpellated into healthy national cultures'.<sup>35</sup> Whilst this is a seemingly harsh accusation there appears to be an element of truth in this perspective, borne out by the narratives delivered by many media examples. Yet this is a simplistic view of those marginalised and suggests a level of

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<sup>32</sup> Curt Tofteland and Hal Cobb, 'Prospero Behind Bars', in *Shakespeare Survey*, ed. by Peter Holland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 429-44; Laura Bates, 'To Know My Deed'.

<sup>33</sup> Greenhalgh, p. 77.

<sup>34</sup> Barnes, p. 2.

<sup>35</sup> Barnes, p. 24.

homogeneity which does not exist and also casts value judgements on those who are different for whatever reason. Whether the mediation and presentation of the work is done by those internal to the project (ie the practitioner facilitating the work, often with input from the community themselves) or by an external observer, whether academic or news reporter, drives the portrayal of a different perspective but the reportage never displays neutrality. All stories told are mediated to some degree, focused more on certain aspects than on others and contextualised in a specific manner which influences the way meaning is derived from the narrative. This framing and agenda-setting of media forms the basis of the interpretive effects theory Neuman and Guggenheim identified, molding the portrayal to deliver a specific interpretation. The narrative of 'the Robben Island Bible' exemplifies this point: the media portrayal of the book's centrality to the 'communal and individual unconscious' of the political prisoners of Robben Island far surpasses the evidence to substantiate this claimed importance.<sup>36</sup> Whilst it was signed by a number of the men, the importance it held for those other than Venkatrathnam is unclear (as discussed in Chapter 3) yet the media have continued to make much of the connection between Shakespeare's text and Mandela, with ownership even being attributed to him in a BBC News headline.<sup>37</sup> It appears connecting these two cultural icons was deemed significant enough that factual details were overlooked as the narrative was moulded to produce the story the media felt 'suited the mood and intellectual agenda of the Mbeki years'.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Shalkwyk, *Shakespeare Unlimited Podcast*.

<sup>37</sup> BBC Entertainment and Arts, 'Nelson Mandela's Shakespeare edition to go on display' (19 June 2012), <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-18502371> [accessed 18 October 2020].

<sup>38</sup> Gordon, 'Mind the Gap', p. 210.

There is a spectrum or ladder of mediation, from the simplest: the protagonist recounting or sharing their version of an event, to the production of a theatre-programme (playbill), to coordinated narration by the facilitator, to the critical analysis of the researcher, to the much-removed perspective of the journalist. Although items such as theatre-programmes would not usually be classified as media, more as merchandise, I have included them in this chapter as they allow those closest to the work, the participants and facilitators, to create a media presence. The chapter is structured according to this ladder, beginning with the most removed from the creation and culminating in media created by the artists themselves. Within the context of Shakespeare with marginalised people, this ladder structure helps to understand and categorise the media representations, focusing on the key concept of whose voice is the one being heard and who controls the power of the narrative. Power is given to the individual or entity who is able to direct the portrayal to their agenda, influencing the audience reception in their chosen way.

Scott Magelssen addresses this point in the consideration of why non-African Americans feel it is acceptable to pretend to be African Americans in a simulated reenactment of the Underground Railroad.<sup>39</sup> The argument of who has the cultural rights and the authenticity of voice which he explores in his chapter is equally applicable with marginalised communities engaging with Shakespeare; who is best able to articulate the benefits and pitfalls of this type of social initiative? Logic dictates that it should always be the participants themselves, but this simplistic line of thinking does not take account of the practicalities that many may be unable to do this or lack a frame of reference against which

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<sup>39</sup> Scott Magelssen, 'Why do they this this is ok? Critiquing Performance as a Means for Change', in *Theatre, Performance and Change*, ed. by Stephani Etheridge Woodson and Tamara Underiner (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 223-33.

to assess the experience. Additionally, participants in a project are usually keen to please those supporting the initiative and to conform to the expected outcomes, seeking validation and ‘saying what they think you want to hear’.<sup>40</sup> In a world where outcomes are crucial for funding applications for the arts, and following the COVID-19 pandemic this is likely to become even more of an underfunded sector, practitioners and participants are keen to expound the virtues of involvement in such a project. The Arts Council England reported receipt of 13,688 applications for emergency funding in a three-week period, compared to a typical annualised figure of 14,000 grant applications, demonstrating the significant and immediate need for funding as a result of the pandemic and of which theatre applications accounted for 15%.<sup>41</sup> In a world where funding is so much in demand, whether grants, private sources or crowd-funding, it is understandable that facilitators want to present the best representation of their work possible to encourage financial support.

It is important to understand whose voice is being heard through the narration and to understand that this is a more complex issue than simply who may be speaking or being quoted. Very rarely is the media brief owned or defined by the marginalised people themselves, even if they are involved in producing the mediated content. Sheila Preston describes how ‘representations of the disenfranchised can so easily become a problematic commodity’ and this commodification is a difficult yet pertinent issue which cannot be ignored.<sup>42</sup> Media productions such as documentaries tend to have clearly defined objectives

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<sup>40</sup> Richard Conlon, interview (12 February 2019).

<sup>41</sup> Arts Council England, *Data Report: Emergency Response Funds for Individuals and Organisations outside of the National Portfolio* (June 2020), <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Data%20report%20-%20Emergency%20Response%20Funds%20for%20Individuals%20and%20Organisations%20outside%20the%20National%20Portfolio.pdf>, [accessed 16 July 2020].

<sup>42</sup> Preston, p. 68.



from the outset, to which they are bound in order to comply with the funding requirements, which means that the messages are pre-determined and the recording needs to adhere to these rather than developing organically, as will be examined later in the context of *Shakespeare Behind Bars*.<sup>43</sup> Further removed along this spectrum are media portrayals of these interventions, those chronicled and analysed by external observers, frequently for either the creation of a documentary or funded academic research. Their perspective is based on their time spent with a project or the performance they were privy to, but as discussed in Chapter 1 it is difficult for an external individual to genuinely experience the dynamic of a group as it is naturally altered by their own temporary inclusion.

As an additional layer of complexity in the fabric of the construction of mediated narratives, observers frequently form some kind of emotional connection with the group, influencing their role as an objective observer, with one such academic writing ‘little did I know that going to prison would be the most important and enlightening experience of my adult life’.<sup>44</sup> Those who are removed sufficiently to avoid such a potential emotional connection are likely to be too distanced to understand the nuances of the dynamic within such a collective, making their analysis relatively superficial, as without that in-depth knowledge of such a complex community it is difficult to avoid talismanic concepts of how Shakespeare offers new opportunities for those marginalised by society. The rest of this chapter is structured on the basis of the closeness of the person making the mediation decisions to the actual work. I will build from the furthest removed, journalistic articles to those most closely aligned, the practitioners themselves. The criticality of whose narrative is

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<sup>43</sup> Hank Rogerson and Jilann Spitzmiller, ‘Shakespeare Behind Bars Grant Application’, in *Give me the money and I’ll shoot!* Nicola Lees (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012), pp. 224-38.

<sup>44</sup> Scott-Douglas, p. x.

being verbalised is clearly evidenced and forms the basis for the media pieces created within my own practice-based research. The issue of reception differing from intent can be problematic in any form of theatre and this is exacerbated within applied theatre, as discussed in Chapter 2. However, to some degree this can offer heterotopic opportunities to challenge expectations of limitations, and the primary way of doing this is through the performance of the theatrical work. However, many of the documentaries and films aim to provide a behind the scenes view where the purpose is not the final production, or not *only* the final production, but the way in which the group develops through the process.<sup>45</sup>

Navigating the line between the aesthetic and the social judgement of the creative practice of marginalised communities is challenging. This chapter aims to isolate the key elements which allow for a successful balance to be struck: true ally-ship from non-marginalised counterparts and control of the narrative taken by marginalised people but in a physical, social and mental space where they are able to express themselves eloquently.

## Journalism

Journalistic articles are perhaps the form of media most widely seen by the general public; a piece in the local or national news is likely to attract attention from readers who may not otherwise have an awareness of the topic. These are usually short, human interest pieces, based on soundbites from practitioners and participants and perhaps observation of a performance or, less frequently, a single rehearsal; these are designed to give a glimpse of this work, not an immersion into the detailed workings.<sup>46</sup> As Ray Surette observed,

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<sup>45</sup> Hank Rogerson (dir.), *Shakespeare Behind Bars*, (Philomath films, 2005); William Jessop (dir.) *Growing Up Downs*, (BBC3, 2015); Tom Magill (dir.), *Mickey B*, (ESC Ltd, 2005), Education Pack includes 30-minute documentary on making the film.

<sup>46</sup> Lyn Gardner, 'Thou ripe bum-bailey: Shakespeare at Pentonville Prison', *The Guardian* (18 November 2002);

People use knowledge they obtain from the media to construct a picture of the world, an image of reality on which they base their actions. This process [is] sometimes called 'the social construction of reality'.<sup>47</sup>

These are also the media examples at the furthest remove from those involved. They can, broadly speaking, be divided into those which are supportive of the work and those which seek to incite what McRobbie and Thornton term 'moral panic'.<sup>48</sup> News coverage of theatre companies working with those with learning disabilities tends to be supportive in nature although focused on the therapeutic rather than the artistic aspects of the process. The presentation of these initiatives often relies heavily on the framing of the narrative as one of social inclusion and participatory benefits. The context of the work as delivering experiential change for those involved is usually a central part of the media with the artistic qualities deemed secondary. There are countless examples of articles in the mainstream press which promote the work of learning-disabled companies such as Graeae Theatre, Side by Side, Firebird, Flute Theatre and Blue Apple Theatre.<sup>49</sup>

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Kyle Norris, 'Shakespeare helps prisoners change', Michigan Radio (28 April 2013) <https://www.michiganradio.org/post/shakespeare-helps-prisoners-change>, [accessed 16 July 2020]; Tim Bouquet, 'Not Shut Up', *The Independent*, (11 April 2015); Susan Elkin, 'Prison Drama Changes Lives', *The Stage*, (22 August 2015).

<sup>47</sup> Ray Surette, *Media, Crime and Criminal Justice*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Wadsworth: Belmont, 1997), p. 1.

<sup>48</sup> Angela McRobbie and Sarah L Thornton, 'Rethinking 'Moral panic' for Multi-mediated Social Worlds,' *The British Journal of Sociology* 46:4 (December 1995), 559-74.

<sup>49</sup> Lyn Gardner, 'Belonging Review – pioneering use of spoken, physical and sign language', *The Guardian* (17 April 2014), <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2014/apr/17/belonging-circus-graeae-roundhouse-review>, [accessed 11 August 2020] - (Graeae Theatre); 'Drama group receives rave reviews', *Stourbridge News* (24 August 2009), <https://www.stourbridgenews.co.uk/news/4558887.drama-group-receives-rave-reviews/>, [accessed 11 August 2020] - (Side by Side Theatre); Claire Williamson, 'Review: A spark and a beating heart', *B247* (16 May 2017), <https://www.bristol247.com/culture/theatre/review-a-spark-and-a-beating-heart-trinity-bristol/>, [accessed 11 August 2020] - (Firebird Theatre); Lyn Gardner, 'The Tempest review – groundbreaking Shakespeare for autistic audiences', *The Guardian* (31 October 2016), <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2016/oct/31/the-tempest-review-groundbreaking-shakespeare-for-autistic-audiences>, [accessed 11 August 2020] - (Flute Theatre); Matt Treacy, 'Coronavirus: Learning Disability

Blue Apple has been featured with some regularity in *The Hampshire Chronicle*, charting their collaboration with the University of Winchester, production reviews and their innovative responses to COVID-19. The news articles are designed to offer a brief overview of positive initiatives with a feel-good element and usually feature soundbites from the company themselves. There is a sense that the newspaper has built a sense of local pride about this regional charity which offers a range of outreach programmes which are showcased in their continued coverage of the work. This combines with the local knowledge the editorial team will have of the readership of the publication, which means they will know of the motivational impacts on their audience of such features. For example, in February 2020, Sam Hatherley wrote about the joint project between the company and the University of Winchester's D@rwin Dance Company, which Noyale Colin described as contributing to 'a more diverse programme of repertoire of dance in terms of representation, abilities and accessibility'.<sup>50</sup> The article also quoted Lydia, a third year dance student, Lawrie Morris, Blue Apple actor, and Simon Morris, General Manager of Blue Apple Theatre, ensuring that all of their perspectives were included in this piece extolling the benefits of this newly formed collaboration.

In contrast, in July 2019, the University of Winchester published a news article for the first anniversary of Blue Apple's residency on-site which was written in support of the

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Theatre Company moves online,' *BBC News* (24 May 2020), <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-england-hampshire-52752308/coronavirus-learning-disability-theatre-company-moves-online>, [accessed 11 August 2020] - (Blue Apple Theatre Company).

<sup>50</sup> Dr Noyale Colin (Senior Lecturer in Choreography and Dance, University of Winchester), quoted by Sam Hatherley, 'University of Winchester teams up with Blue Apple Theatre,' *Hampshire Chronicle* (25 February 2020), <https://www.hampshirechronicle.co.uk/news/18252307.university-winchester-teams-blue-apple-theatre/>, [accessed 11 August 2020].

work but notably excluded the voices of the actors.<sup>51</sup> The article briefly outlined the context of the five-year residency, providing quotations from Alec Charles, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, and Simon Morris. Both of them spoke positively about the opportunity this afforded to both Blue Apple participants and university students, although interestingly the unnamed reporter chose not to include direct comments from either group of participants. Whilst this may not have been a conscious decision, or could have been due to time or logistics, this omission of the voices of the marginalised people about whom the article was written was noticeable and suggested the commodification which Preston warned happens so easily. This was compounded by the two images used, one of which featured the Chair of the Board surrounded by seven of the actors, with no caption provided for identification purposes. The other was of five adults, four of whom were identified in the caption beneath the picture, 'Simon Morris (Blue Apple General Manager); Alan Lovell DL (Blue Apple patron); Jane Jessop (Founder, Blue Apple); Georgiana Robertson (Chair, Blue Apple Board)' but excluding James Elsworthy, a member of Blue Apple Core Company. Given the context of this article was about the way in which differently able performers were integrated with the university community this lack of acknowledgement of the names of any of the actors gave the very distinct impression that they were further marginalised within this piece. This could have been an ideal opportunity to allow their opinions on the work to be shared with an academic audience but this was not the case, instead reinforcing the sense of exclusion. The actors were offered as a voiceless commodity to be utilised by the university as

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<sup>51</sup> University of Winchester, 'Blue Apple Celebration Marks First Year of University of Winchester Residency, University of Winchester Press Centre (11 July 2019), <https://www.winchester.ac.uk/news-and-events/press-centre/media-articles/blue-apple-theatre-celebration-marks-first-year-of-university-of-winchester-residency.php> [accessed 11 August 2020].

publicity, rather than being treated as equals who have a right to articulate the benefits of the collaboration in their own words.

News coverage of programmes within prisons is divided into two distinct sectors: those which endorse the humanitarian benefits of the initiatives and those which aim to incite outrage about the supposedly easy conditions of prison sentences. Taking first the ones which catalogue the positives of the work, there are many examples both within the UK and internationally. These range from Anthony Field's review of The Shakespeare Prison Project in Wisconsin to an article written by Artistic Director Darren Raymond about how he 'found Shakespeare in prison and now I'm passing him on'.<sup>52</sup> Field, former Finance Director of the Arts Council, attended the 2005 production of *King Lear*, at Racine Correctional Institution and his article defended his previous arguments that carceral arts projects should be funded by the prison system not arts organisations. This article typified Ashley Lucas' assessment that

Popular news pieces on prison theatre tend not to analyse the production for its artistry, directing, acting or production values but instead provide a profile of the program in question and sing the praises of its uses for rehabilitation or healing.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Anthony Field, 'Captive audience: drama in prison,' *The Stage* (29 July 2005); Darren Raymond, 'I found Shakespeare in prison, and now I'm passing him on,' *The Stage* (10 November 2015), <https://www.thestage.co.uk/opinion/darren-raymond-i-found-shakespeare-in-prison-and-now-im-passing-him-on>, [accessed 11 August 2020].

<sup>53</sup> Lucas, p. 11.

There was a sense that Field was using the actors as a commodity to argue his political standpoint rather than honouring the validity of their contribution to the artistic community. He wrote of the 'standing ovation' which followed this performance and his article included quotes from some of the actors, identified only by their characters in order to preserve anonymity. However, the language used drew heavily on the trope of redemptive narratives, presenting the material in a way intended to invite emotional responses. He wrote of the crimes of the 'actor-prisoners' including murder, kidnap and sexual offences, closely juxtaposed with personal details about the emotional outlet from the programme.<sup>54</sup> Whilst these were no doubt part of the journey these men had undertaken there was not a single comment on the artistry produced in their performance. There was no review of the process or the production, instead the focus was on the opportunity to 'vent out [...] sadness and frustration' which patronised the quality of the work being showcased. The recordings of productions I have watched from Racine Correctional Institution evidence significant artistic ability, hard work, commitment, passion for nuanced portrayal of the characters and creation of impactful performances.<sup>55</sup> Whilst there is nothing negative written in Field's article, the omission of any detail of the quality of the work suggests in his view it was secondary to the emotional impact and, for a publication such as *The Stage*, this manipulates the reader into thinking the work was of insufficient quality to be reviewed on its own merit.

Darren Raymond's article focuses heavily on his own redemptive journey, begun in a prison session 'led by this overtly camp, extravagant man', which inspired in him a desire to

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<sup>54</sup> Field, 'Captive audience'.

<sup>55</sup> A recording of The Shakespeare Prison Project, *The Merchant of Venice* (Racine Correctional Institution, 2017) shared with me by Jonathan Shailor.

become better acquainted with Shakespeare after a disastrous encounter at secondary school.<sup>56</sup> He presented the material to the reader in such a way as to invite empathy and identify the ways in which they too may have similarities of experience, perhaps disliking Shakespeare in school or finding drama a little overwhelming initially. Although Raymond makes no secret of his criminal record the article is focused on the theatre work rather than this and, in contrast to Field's piece, there is no inclusion of florid details of crimes. The narrative then charts his post-release journey as an actor and then director before he founded Intermission Youth Theatre (IYT), which works 'with young people from London's inner-city boroughs who were at risk of offending or lacked opportunity'.<sup>57</sup> He documents his process of encouraging them to 'use their own words in replacement for the original text' and of the ownership this gives them, inviting them to actively engage with the story and encouraging them to seek further knowledge. His assertion that 'the key to unlocking Shakespeare is to believe you own it' acknowledges the intrinsic challenges of the language for his artists but the attainment of cultural capital from the engagement with his plays.

*London Theatre Reviews* have written media critiques of a number of IYT's adaptations. They describe the adapted narrative, the process by which the company 'unpacked and reassembled the play' and the quality of the artistic endeavours along with 'simply infectious' energy.<sup>58</sup> Their adaptation of *The Comedy of Errors* was applauded for 'skilfully [moving] the action from ancient Greece to contemporary United Kingdom where refugees are no longer welcome' and offsetting Shakespearean and contemporary street

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<sup>56</sup> Raymond, 'I found Shakespeare'.

<sup>57</sup> Raymond, 'I found Shakespeare'.

<sup>58</sup> Christiana Ferrouti, 'Guilt Trip', *London Theatre Reviews* (8 November 2018), <https://www.londontheatrereviews.co.uk/post.cfm?p=641>, [accessed 11 August 2020].



language in a ‘truly inspired artistic touch’, which used the two to illustrate the cultural differences between the twins.<sup>59</sup> The contrast between Field’s work, which focused on an emotional embroilment of the reader, marginalising the artistic work of The Shakespeare Prison Project in favour of arousing a kind of shock and pity about the men’s redemption through the work, and the artistically focused reviews of IYT’s productions was significant. The latter centralised the quality of the theatre rather than the backgrounds of the actors. This connects with Hayhow and Palmer’s desire for a ‘new aesthetic’ in the search for equality, and whilst they wrote this in the context of learning disabilities it resonates with all marginalised groups.<sup>60</sup> This equality has not yet been achieved but the media has a significant influence to play in the journey to this, whether positively (as in these reviews) or negatively (whether obliquely through the work of Field and others or more definably through the negativity some reports incite).

Tabloids such as *The Sun* hardly seem appropriate for inclusion in this thesis but for some members of the public their inflammatory declamations of the injustice of interventions to ‘boost lags’ morale’ may be the only information on this type of work to which they have exposure.<sup>61</sup> They utilise the prejudice many of their readership have against those who have committed crimes in their creation of an agenda of anger. When the newspaper published an account of a Pimlico Opera production, they quoted criticism from Conservative MP David Morris because ‘prisons should be preparing offenders for release

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<sup>59</sup> Terry Eastham, ‘Double Trouble’, *London Theatre Reviews* (11 November 2017), <https://www.londontheatre1.com/reviews/review-intermission-youth-theatres-double-trouble/>, [accessed 11 August 2020].

<sup>60</sup> Palmer and Hayhow, p. 31.

<sup>61</sup> Stephen Moynes, ‘CELL OUT SHOW Inmates at drug-ravaged HMP High Down star in lavish £70-a-ticket ‘West End’ production of Les Miserables’ *The Sun* (23 April 2018), <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/6117572/hmp-high-down-jail-musical/#comments>, [accessed 11 August 2020]; Pimlico Opera <https://grangeparkopera.co.uk/prison/>, [accessed 12 August 2020].

back into the community by training them for proper jobs or giving them skills', seemingly ignoring the skills that creative arts develop and which are directly transferable into the modern labour market (confidence, public speaking, teamwork, and many more).<sup>62</sup> There is a sense that the tabloid sought to validate the fury it wished to incite in their readership through affirmation from a member of parliament and the article used derogatory, sensationalist terms such as 'lags' and 'drug-plagued', citing former inmates such as high-profile paedophile Gary Glitter to encourage a sense of moral outrage. This type of presenting goes beyond the description of patronising, it is dehumanising and as Jewkes writes, such journalists do not 'engage in dispassionate analysis but precisely the opposite – passionate engagement for the purposes of exercising moral sentiment'.<sup>63</sup> Ex-Prison Governor and academic Jamie Bennett draws on the research of R. Freeman when he writes that 'it has also been demonstrated that coverage of both prisoners and prison staff is more likely to be negative than positive' and this is borne out by the sensationalism with which the tabloids commodify those connected with the penal system.<sup>64</sup>

The negative stance of the tabloid press was in extremis in response to *Mickey B*, Educational Shakespeare Company's (ESC) modern adaptation of *Macbeth*, filmed within Maghaberry Prison in Northern Ireland.<sup>65</sup> The project was a first of its kind, a filmic adaptation starring serving prisoners within a maximum-security jail, differing from the documentaries such as *Shakespeare Behind Bars*, in that this was a filmed performance not

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<sup>62</sup> David Morris, quoted by Stephen Moynes, 'CELL OUT SHOW'.

<sup>63</sup> Yvonne Jewkes, 'Prisoners and the Press', *Criminal Justice Matters*, 59 (Spring 2005), 26-27 (pp. 26), <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09627250508553038>, [accessed 12 August 2020].

<sup>64</sup> R.M. Freeman, 'Public perceptions and corrections: correctional officers as smug hacks,' in *Popular Culture, Crime and Justice* ed. by F.Y Bailey and D.C. Hale (Wadsworth: Belmont, 1998), quoted by Jamie Bennett, 'The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: The Media in Prison Films,' *The Howard Journal*, 45:2 (May 2006), 97-115 (pp. 99).

<sup>65</sup> Tom Magill (dir.), *Mickey B*, (ESC Ltd, 2005).

an opportunity to engage with the men themselves. The contextualisation of the penal setting and the deep-rooted violence during the political turmoil of Northern Ireland's Troubles were provided by the two short films which featured alongside the performance on the DVD – 'Category A, Mickey B' and 'Growing Up With Violence'.<sup>66</sup> The project experienced severe logistical problems during filming and Magill and Jennifer Marquiss-Muradaz wrote of the 'suspicion and inflexibility' of prison staff 'appearing either blatantly apathetic or downright hostile'.<sup>67</sup> Wray described the project as 'a test case for the significance of specificity in prison Shakespeare' and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland funded the development of an educational resource entitled *Unlocking Shakespeare* to accompany the film when used for teaching at Key Stage 3.<sup>68</sup> Despite this support from the Arts Council, winning the Roger Graef Award for Outstanding Achievement in Film at the 2008 Koestler Awards and being translated into seven languages, the initial media reaction was negative.

The absconsion of a cast member during permitted compassionate leave stirred up coverage of his original convictions and 'the gutter press ran sensationalist stories saying [the] makeup girl was impregnated' and guns and ammunition had been smuggled into the prison by the crew as they indulged in 'a sick twisted "Driller Killer" flick with murderers playing murderers'.<sup>69</sup> Magill's own story is one of 'transformation through arts education that began in prison' but, following the controversy encountered both inside the prison and

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<sup>66</sup> Tom Magill (dir.), *Mickey B*, (ESC Ltd, 2005).

<sup>67</sup> Tom Magill and Jennifer Marquiss-Muradaz, 'The Making of *Mickey B*: a modern adaptation of *Macbeth* filmed in a maximum-security prison in Northern Island', in *Dramatherapy and Social Theatre*, pp. 109-16 (p. 110).

<sup>68</sup> Wray, p. 344; *Mickey B* Education Pack, <https://esc-film.com/product/mickey-b-education-pack/>, [accessed 14 August 2020].

<sup>69</sup> Magill and Marquiss-Muradaz, p.111.

in the media in relation to *Mickey B* he ceased prison work in 2009 and now focuses his time instead working on projects associated with mental health.<sup>70</sup> The trailer on ESC's website revels in the notoriety the film provoked, blood red lettering proclaiming 'Made By Prisoners', 'Censored by the State', 'Imagine being known for the worst thing you have ever done', 'should this film ever have been made' and 'Northern Ireland's Hardest Men' against a powerful drumbeat and atmospheric shots of close ups of their faces.<sup>71</sup> Johnny McDevitt's article in *The Guardian* in 2009 offers a balanced perspective on the news coverage of 'the close-to-the-bone nature of the project, some of which centred around the decision to film one of the more macabre of Shakespeare plays' and the time-delay of release for public viewing due to laws relating to prisoner anonymity.<sup>72</sup> The project has a positive legacy and now that the tabloid furore has died down the film and associated documentaries provide evidence of an event described by one inmate as 'the most important thing I've ever done'.<sup>73</sup> The relative distance of journalists from the reality of the projects analysed means their media coverage will always be somewhat detached from the participants' experience but their versions of the narrative are often the only ones heard by mainstream society.

## Documentaries

Documentaries are able to provide a more detailed and at times more nuanced portrayal of the work; it is however important to be mindful of who is defining the narrative even if the

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<sup>70</sup> Tom Magill, email correspondence with the author (25 October 2017).

<sup>71</sup> *Mickey B* trailer, <https://esc-film.com/portfolio-item/mickey-b/>, Mickey B education pack, <https://esc-film.com/product/mickey-b-education-pack/>, [accessed 14 August 2020].

<sup>72</sup> Johnny McDevitt, 'Bard Behind Bars' *The Guardian* (9 January 2009), <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2009/jan/09/macbeth-northern-ireland-prison>, [accessed 16 August 2020].

<sup>73</sup> Sam McClane, cast member of *Mickey B*, quoted by McDevitt, 'Bard Behind Bars'.

voices speaking are those of the marginalised community. Many of these filmed outputs typify what Susan Murray describes as 'defy[ing] easy classification'.<sup>74</sup> They do not fit neatly into the accepted definitions of either documentaries or reality television, forming a hybrid in which 'extratextual factors can impel the viewer to see a non-fiction television text as either documentary or reality television'.<sup>75</sup> Applied Shakespeare programmes can accurately be described as 'tend[ing] to focus on the everyday lives of their subjects in somewhat "natural" settings,' as this is the predominant mode of presenting the material to viewers.<sup>76</sup> Murray is not actually describing documentaries, she is writing about the genre of reality television which frequently masquerades as documentary and to which Bottinelli ascribed the definition 'substance-based reality television'.<sup>77</sup> There are many to choose from and Barnes surveys many of those targeting 'at risk' youth including *The Hobart Shakespearean*, *Shakespeare High*, *Kings of Baxter* and *Why Shakespeare?*.<sup>78</sup> In his assessment the one exception to the widespread preoccupation with the dialectical struggle of class and capitalism is *A Touch of Greatness: A Portrait of a Maverick Teacher*. This is marked out by multiple differences from the rest of the genre, including interspersed footage from 1964, a focus on the playfulness of Shakespeare and the fact that the children involved are not 'marked as at risk or in need of salvation'.<sup>79</sup> Whilst his approbation is based on the focus which is afforded to the pedagogy of the process, in the absence of a redemptive narrative this is the very reason that it is inappropriate for inclusion in this chapter. My interest lies in those documentaries which feature marginalised people and specifically those created by,

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<sup>74</sup> Susan Murray, 'I Think We Need a New Name for It', in *Reality TV: Remaking Television Culture: Second Edition*, ed. by Susan Murray and Laurie Ouellette (New York: New York University Press, 2009), pp. 65-81 (p. 66).

<sup>75</sup> Murray, 'I Think We Need a New Name for It', p. 66.

<sup>76</sup> Murray, 'I Think We Need a New Name for It', p. 67.

<sup>77</sup> J. Bottinelli quoted by Olive, 'In shape and mind transformed', p.2.

<sup>78</sup> Barnes, *Shakespearean Charity*.

<sup>79</sup> Barnes, p. 81.

or with significant input from, the facilitators of the projects. Notable examples are *Shakespeare Behind Bars*, narrating the story of the U.S. prison project of the same name, and *Growing Up Downs*, which featured the work of Blue Apple Theatre Company.

Shakespeare Behind Bars was founded in the U.S. in 1995 by Curt Tofteland and continues to deliver projects with incarcerated, released and at-risk adults and youth, forming 'circles of trust' in which the participants are encouraged to reflect and to develop.<sup>80</sup> Tofteland is a consummate publicist of his work and has written and spoken extensively on the topic, as well as being a co-founder of the Shakespeare in Prisons Conference which draws together practitioners, academics and alumni of such programmes from the international community.<sup>81</sup> In 2005 a documentary, directed by Hank Rogerson, was produced by Philomath Films about creating a production of *The Tempest* in Luther Luckett Correctional Facility.<sup>82</sup> It has become one of the best known of this genre and was partially funded by an ITVS Open Call 2004, Phase III grant, secured during production.<sup>83</sup> Whilst there are several large funds such as this one, the average success rate for applications is below 2% for the ITVS Open Call.<sup>84</sup> However, Rogerson and Spitzmiller's

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<sup>80</sup> Curt Tofteland, *TedX Berkeley*.

<sup>81</sup> Shakespeare Behind Bars Media Gallery <http://www.shakespearebehindbars.org/media/> [accessed 19 July 2020]; Tofteland has delivered four Ted X talks; Tofteland and Cobb, 'Prospero Behind Bars'; Curt Tofteland, 'The Keeper of the Keys', in *Performing New Lives*, pp. 213-30; *The Shakespeare in Prisons Conference* (the flagship programme of the Shakespeare in Prisons Network), <https://shakespeare.nd.edu/service/shakespeare-in-prisons/#:~:text=Shakespeare%20in%20Prisons%20Conference,Notre%20Dame%20by%20Curt%20L.&text=Peter%20Holland%2C%20McMeel%20Family%20Chair,the%20University%20of%20Notre%20Dame>. [accessed 19 July 2020].

<sup>82</sup> Hank Rogerson (dir.), *Shakespeare Behind Bars*, (Philomath films, 2005).

<sup>83</sup> Rogerson and Spitzmiller, 'Shakespeare Behind Bars Open Call 2004, Phase III application' in Nicola Lees, *Give Me The Money and I'll Shoot!*, p. 224; DVD credits cite funding from ITVS, The Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Sun Institute, The JKW Foundation and The International Documentary Association.

<sup>84</sup> Lees, p. 215.

application successfully met the criteria and a shortened but accurate copy of the application is included in Nicola Lees' book which explores funding options for film projects.

The 93-minute documentary opens with three men outside reciting a speech from *The Tempest* before the camera pans back to reveal a prison watch tower and miles of razor wire fences.<sup>85</sup> It continues in this vein, interspersing rehearsal room techniques and scenes of Tofteland's 'interventions typically urging the actors towards finding "truth" through emotionally charged performance' with reportage of the mundanity of prison regime, a seemingly endless cycle of headcounts, mealtimes and cleaning.<sup>86</sup> The grant application stipulated the way in which the documentary was to be framed:

The words of Shakespeare act as a vehicle to transport this group of incarcerated men to a potentially better place in their hearts and minds [...] They have the support and encouragement needed in order to examine their darkest selves, and to shed light on how they might find healing and redemption.<sup>87</sup>

The use of vehicular transportation metaphor suggests a passivity to the men's experience with the programme and that they will arrive at a destination somehow altered from their original state, but with someone else having charted the journey and provided the impetus for the transition. The concept of redemption through their involvement in the production and documentary is suggestive of the emotional labour of which Arlie Russell Hochschild

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<sup>85</sup> Rogerson (dir.), *Shakespeare Behind Bars*.

<sup>86</sup> Greenhalgh, p. 81.

<sup>87</sup> Rogerson and Spitzmiller, '*Shakespeare Behind Bars* Open Call 2004', p. 226.

writes and that 'institutional purposes are now tied to the [individual's] psychological arts'.<sup>88</sup>

As a practitioner I can attest to the emotional journey undertaken by those incarcerated who have become co-owners of the theatre companies we collectively run and this documentary explicitly focuses on the concept of redemptive development . The extent to which this grant application relies on the 'close up visceral experience' of the emotions of the incarcerated actors probes beyond the artistic and makes social discourse the central tenet of the film.<sup>89</sup>

The actors featured are predominantly 'experienced members of the project from previous years' and yet they are invited by the filmmakers to lay bare their past lives, regrets and details of their crimes for consumption by the film's audience.<sup>90</sup> This embodies the *presentation* element of media: personal admissions made within trusted support networks of the theatre project are then reconstituted for audience perusal. The timeline of the project is subverted and 'their past acts will be revealed gradually over the course of the film to build dramatic tension' when in actuality these details had been shared with the group and Tofteland prior to the grant application submission.<sup>91</sup> The power of the film in attracting audiences lies in this reconstitution of authenticity of confessions. Sammie Byron's emotional account of his troubled childhood and explosive relationship which culminated in the murder of his mistress is not included for the sake of his psychological processing or the production of *The Tempest* but for the viewers to see this moment of

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<sup>88</sup> Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 185.

<sup>89</sup> Rogerson and Spitzmiller, 'Shakespeare Behind Bars Open Call 2004', p. 227.

<sup>90</sup> Greenhalgh, p. 80.

<sup>91</sup> Rogerson and Spitzmiller, 'Shakespeare Behind Bars Open Call 2004', p. 226.



reflection as being of the instant the film was made.<sup>92</sup> Tofteland explicitly references the concepts of 'habilitation', Shakespeare and the redemptive narrative in his statement that 'Shakespeare would adore this group, we are very true to Shakespeare, theatre people were seen as pickpockets, rapists and murderers'.<sup>93</sup> There is no evidence given to corroborate this claim and whilst people associated with the theatre in the Jacobean and Elizabethan periods were treated with mistrust and often seen as petty criminals I am not aware that a large number of players were deemed to have committed murders or sexual offences.<sup>94</sup> This assertion has the effect of claiming Shakespearean patronage and validity for the work being done by the project, placing it within the lineal history of Shakespeare's legacy. Osborne's phenomenon of 'mediachosis' means that for many viewers this unfounded claim will assume the status of fact through its portrayal in digital media, which is accepted without question by the majority.<sup>95</sup>

The construction of this piece of media affords centrality to the voices of Tofteland and Rogerson and whilst the viewer may feel they hear mainly from the 'characters', the entire documentary is carefully arranged to convey specific messages. The cast are 'not your ordinary stereotypical prisoners' but have exemplary behavioral records within the penal system.<sup>96</sup> Whilst Harriet Walters claims that 'theatre is the antithesis of prison it gives you a voice', within media spaces that voice may not be your own; instead, the actors are the mouthpiece for the documentary makers who in turn are satisfying commitments made to

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<sup>92</sup> Sammie Byron speaking in *Shakespeare Behind Bars*.

<sup>93</sup> Curt Tofteland speaking in *Shakespeare Behind Bars*.

<sup>94</sup> Chris Laoutaris, *Shakespeare and the Countess* (London: Penguin, 2014), pp. 183-8 and 282-5

<sup>95</sup> Richard Osborne, 'Crime and the media: from media studies to post-modernism' in *Crime and the Media*, pp. 25-46, (p. 37).

<sup>96</sup> Rogerson and Spitzmiller, '*Shakespeare Behind Bars* Open Call 2004', p. 228.

fundings.<sup>97</sup> The grant application documents the aspiration that ‘public television and this programme will be a perfect match-up’, allowing the wide-spread dissemination of ‘vital issues that deserve more public discourse and consideration’ as the US prison population continues to rise exponentially.<sup>98</sup> The aims of the film-project are laudable and sought to open up national and international dialogue about the potential solutions to crime, claiming appeal to people in a ‘wide range of disciplines’.<sup>99</sup> As Greenhalgh notes this documentary is ‘the best-known example of the genre and also the one most used in teaching’, which suggests that to some degree the aims of the project were successfully realised.<sup>100</sup> However, to some extent the men involved are commodified through the emotional labour they are asked to perform in order to convey the aims of the project to the audience with authenticity and pathos. The final scene of the documentary, a montage of exultant images from the final production, is evidently crafted as an uplifting end to the process of the project but a bitter irony pervades in that they remain incarcerated and the release offered by the theatre is but a temporary interlude in the monotony of their sentences.

William Jessop’s 60-minute documentary *Growing up Down’s* charts the work of Blue Apple Theatre as they rehearsed and toured a greatly-abridged version of *Hamlet*.<sup>101</sup> The familial connection is immediately established as Jessop introduces himself as the brother of Tommy (who plays the lead role in the performance and the documentary) and son of Jane (founder of Blue Apple Theatre in 2005). The focus of the programme, the edited result ‘of

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<sup>97</sup> Harriet Walters, speaking in the documentary footage of Phyllida Lloyd (director), *Donmar Theatre Shakespeare Trilogy*, Opus Arte (2019).

<sup>98</sup> Rogerson and Spitzmiller, ‘*Shakespeare Behind Bars* Open Call 2004’, p. 234.

<sup>99</sup> Rogerson and Spitzmiller, ‘*Shakespeare Behind Bars* Open Call 2004’, p. 234.

<sup>100</sup> Greenhalgh, p. 82.

<sup>101</sup> William Jessop (dir.), *Growing Up Down’s* (Maverick Productions, 2014).

hundreds of hours of amazing footage', foregrounded the social aspect of the work of the learning-disabled actors more than the artistic result of the production.<sup>102</sup> The reportage-style film followed Tommy, Katy, Lawrie and James through the process of rehearsal and touring of the show in what Greenhalgh describes as 'the rights of passage these young people undergo as they embark on adult life with Down's syndrome'.<sup>103</sup> Down's Syndrome has a significant impact on the mental age of the individual with 'independence and social lives noticeably more restricted' than neurotypical individuals so Greenhalgh's assessment makes logical sense on one level, fueled by the fact that much of the airtime is focused on friendships, relationships and love, both requited and unrequited.<sup>104</sup> William Jessop is cited as saying that 'the actor's learning disabilities mean that they are to some extent still going through their teenage years', although the situation was more complex in that James (aged 32) does not have Down's syndrome and is instead likely to be on the Autism spectrum whilst Katy lives independently.<sup>105</sup>

The opening sequence – Tommy climbing onto a stage before delivering lines from the 'to be or not to be' soliloquy – establishes the artistic context of the work at the outset, in what William describes as a visual 'taking of this space'.<sup>106</sup> However, much of the focus is on the personal development of the individuals and significant time is given to intimate scenes of the actors at home and in social situations. In the context of what Neuman and Guggenheim classify as 'interpretive effects theory', the framing of this media is more

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<sup>102</sup> Growing Up Down'sStory website, <https://growingupdowns.co.uk/story/>, [accessed 23 August 2020].

<sup>103</sup> Greenhalgh, p. 83.

<sup>104</sup> Janet Car, *Down's Syndrome: Children Growing Up* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 170.

<sup>105</sup> William Jessop quoted by Jeremy Wright, 'Growing Up Downs: Tommy's Got Talent', *The Independent* (21 January 2014).

<sup>106</sup> William Jessop, interview by telephone (11 September 2020).

predominantly social than artistic. The viewer is invited to witness extremely personal conversations, tears and frustrations as Lawrie confesses his love for Tommy, Katy reveals the photograph kept beneath her pillow, Jane describes her depression following the Doctor's prognosis that Tommy 'would never develop' and James has contact with the police.<sup>107</sup> Disability Arts Online described it as 'a compelling documentary made with honesty and integrity that gives a truly refreshing slice of life in the world of learning disability arts'.<sup>108</sup> The honesty of the filming is evident and William Jessop comments on how 'powerful' the footage of Tommy and Katy's break-up is just before the tour commences.<sup>109</sup> However at times this level of emotional intimacy with the actors feels intrusive, such as when the couple are about to share what appears to be their first kiss. The inclusion of this type of deeply personal footage (and that of Lawrie's response to their relationship) appears intended to stimulate empathy from the viewer as a result of what Hochschild terms 'sincere display'.<sup>110</sup> This sincere display is an engagement tool utilised in media to invoke an emotional response from a social perspective. From an artistic angle however, it begins to hint at the commodification which Preston warned was so often intrinsic in applied theatre.

This raises a fundamental question of intention and reception with this documentary. William explained 'you're not tuning in to watch a deconstruction of working practice – you're tuning in for an emotional rollercoaster' and this is evident in the way the

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<sup>107</sup> Jane Jessop, *Growing Up Downs*.

<sup>108</sup> Colin Hambrook, 'Growing Up Downs: Blue Apple Theatre Documentary on BBC3' (6 February 2014), <https://www.disabilityartsonline.org.uk/growing-up-downs-blue-apple-theatre-bbc3>, [accessed 23 August 2020].

<sup>109</sup> William Jessop quoted by Jeremy Wright.

<sup>110</sup> Hochschild, p. 77.

documentary is edited, with emphasis on the social far more than the artistic.<sup>111</sup> From speaking with William it is clear that he feels deep emotional attachment to all of them, not just Tommy, and he attempted to convey this through cinematic images and evocative music, his attempt to 'bottle the essence and make it come to light, a new way of showing people with learning disabilities'.<sup>112</sup> As he explains

With film-making you can't step outside of yourself and be objective, it's always filtered. People that are in that film look at it and see a version of themselves – they may not always recognise themselves.<sup>113</sup>

This explicit acknowledgement of the effect of media presentation of reality is insightful and, in many ways, provides the link between intention and reception; the act of mediating a story naturally leads to some degree of distortion.

As Greenhalgh notes 'very little camera time is given to the director, Peter Clerke' and the appearances he does make seem removed from the main narrative of the documentary.<sup>114</sup> His first comment in the film, 'the worst that could happen is it's a crap show, got to be sure they're not put in a position they can't cope with', seems to deny them active agency and infantilise them to some degree.<sup>115</sup> His director's notes discuss using *Hamlet* as a way of articulating themes before it is too late, 'too late to speak of people who are marginalised or disenfranchised because they don't "fit in"', but his role in the

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<sup>111</sup> Jessop, interview.

<sup>112</sup> Jessop, interview.

<sup>113</sup> Jessop, interview.

<sup>114</sup> Greenhalgh, p. 83.

<sup>115</sup> Peter Clerke, Artistic Director, Blue Apple Theatre, *Growing Up Downs*.

documentary is marginal.<sup>116</sup> The editing of his involvement does not present him in an overly positive light: one of his rare directorial moments in front of the camera shows him giving Tommy the note 'you've got to stop stuttering on your lines,' not something that those who have any form of speech impediment are able to influence in that manner.<sup>117</sup> However William was keen to explain that the reason for Clerke's relatively marginal screen-time was a desire to keep the focus on the actors and that to view it otherwise is a 'slightly unfair interpretation'.<sup>118</sup> William spoke warmly of Clerke's contribution to the company and the sense of professionalism he brought to what was previously, essentially, a community theatre, so it is clear that the portrayal in the documentary can be interpreted differently from the way he meant Clerke to be viewed.

The focus of the lens, and therefore of the viewer's attention, is the interpersonal relationships and the emotional development of the central four actors. I would contest Greenhalgh's claim that 'the majority of sequences deal with the rehearsal process' as very few scenes focus on the process of rehearsing the play. The footage in the rehearsal space features little about the artistic process, focusing instead on the friendships and tensions within the group. Bishop argues the 'necessity of sustaining a tension between artistic and social critiques' in the context of socially engaged participatory-art.<sup>119</sup> However, the media depiction of Blue Apple's work in this documentary veers decisively towards the social, leaving the artistic critique largely unexplored except for relatively fleeting glimpses of

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<sup>116</sup> Peter Clerke, 'Hamlet: The fundamental question' blog, Blue Apple website, (2012), <http://blueappletheatre.com/hamlet#hamlet-directors-notes>, [accessed 23 August 2020].

<sup>117</sup> Jessop (dir.), *Growing Up Downs*.

<sup>118</sup> Jessop, interview.

<sup>119</sup> Bishop, p. 277.

rehearsal activities and audience feedback on the ‘stunning’ production.<sup>120</sup> Even that is counterbalanced by Katy’s closing thoughts on the touring project which focus on the personal impact above the professional or artistic as she states happily ‘we’re famous and I can’t believe it for my life’.<sup>121</sup>

### Low budget media

In contrast to the professionally produced world of documentaries are the pieces of low/no budget media produced by the theatre companies themselves. These are the ones most closely connected to the participants and facilitators and offer perhaps the most authentic version of mediation, although it cannot be forgotten that they too will have an agenda of how they wish to be perceived by the public. The voices of Blue Apple actors were heard loud and clear in their COVID-19 inspired ‘newly discovered Polonius’ speech’ which they filmed during the pandemic lockdown.<sup>122</sup> They created a YouTube recording in which they interlaced Shakespearean lines with advice about dealing with COVID-19, in what Artistic Director, Richard Conlon described as them having ‘some fun with what Shakespeare might have to say about the pandemic’.<sup>123</sup> The script was written by Conlon and incorporated well-known lines and references from multiple plays such as ‘neither a borrower nor a lender be’, ‘slings and arrows’, ‘households – alike in dignity or not’ and ‘rotten boats, not rigged,

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<sup>120</sup> Jessop (dir.), *Growing Up Downs*.

<sup>121</sup> Jessop (dir.), *Growing Up Downs*.

<sup>122</sup> Blue Apple Theatre, *Polonius Speech Reimagined* (June 2020), <https://youtu.be/KfMEWPevqj8>, [accessed 25 July 2020].

<sup>123</sup> Richard Conlon, quoted in ‘Famous Shakespeare speech reworded to resonate with current times’, *Blue Apple Theatre newsletter* (30 June 2020), <http://blueappletheatre.com/news-1>, [accessed 25 July 2020].

no tackle, sail, no mast'.<sup>124</sup> This was interspersed with snippets from the multitude of Government and Public Health guidance which has been disseminated via media and social media during the pandemic, relating to keeping 2 metres apart, washing hands, the creation of 'social bubbles' and the enforcement of localised lockdown measures in Leicester.<sup>125</sup> The impact of the suspension of rehearsals for Blue Apple was significant to the participants, many of whom have multiple, complex learning disabilities and the staff were concerned about them experiencing feelings of isolation.<sup>126</sup> As Debanjan Banerjee and Mayank Rai describe in their article on the social impacts of COVID-19, 'the modern world has rarely been so isolated and restricted', citing a number of studies which document the feelings of loneliness this situation has generated and the negative effects on mental and physical wellbeing.<sup>127</sup> Those with learning disabilities already have generally more isolated lives with smaller social networks and 77% of those surveyed aged 18-34 reported feeling lonely, prior to the pandemic, which it was anticipated would exacerbate the situation.<sup>128</sup>

Blue Apple Theatre responded to this by initiating weekly Zoom meetings, an opportunity for the members to engage and to speak about their experiences. It was from these sessions that Conlon developed the concept of drawing on Blue Apple's long engagement with Shakespeare to create a short media clip to showcase their work to a

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<sup>124</sup> William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 1.3.75. 3.1.58; William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Prologue, line 1; William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, 1.2.146-147; Richard Conlon, *Polonius New Speech Updated* (v2) (unpublished, July 2020).

<sup>125</sup> Coronavirus (COVID-19), <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>, [accessed 16 August 2020].

<sup>126</sup> Simon Morris, General Manager – Blue Apple Theatre, email correspondence with the author (24 April 2020).

<sup>127</sup> Debanjan Banerjee and Mayank Rai, 'Social isolation in COVID-19: The impact of loneliness', *International Journal of Social Psychiatry* (29 April 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020764020922269>, [accessed 26 July 2020].

<sup>128</sup> Sense, '“Someone cares if I'm not there”: Addressing loneliness in disabled people' (Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness: Disabled People, 2017), <https://www.sense.org.uk/support-us/campaign/loneliness/>, [accessed 26 July 2020].



wider audience as ‘the digital format means it can be shared with lots of people’.<sup>129</sup> Those who were involved in the previous Shakespeare productions (a promenade-version of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* 2010, *Hamlet* 2012 and *The Tempest*+ 2019) speak with pride about these performances and it is evident that they hold them to be in some ways more of an achievement than their many other successful productions.<sup>130</sup> Conlon harnessed this pride and created a comic pastiche of Shakespeare and Government guidance which linked their past connection with the cultural capital of Shakespeare to the current concerns and often confusing information about how to actualise social-distancing. Although social and artistic agendas rarely merge in the context of media coverage of applied theatre, this is one where I think to some degree this fusion is achieved. The script was written by Conlon, as the actors would not have had the capacity to write something like that unaided, but the wording was designed to draw together Shakespeare, COVID-19 language patterns and the abilities and personalities of the actors for whom the speech was written. Filmed presentations of marginalised communities can offer a deeper insight into the artistic work being undertaken but often the packaged product is heavily influenced by funding requirements and participants are encouraged to labour the emotional element of their involvement to the detriment of the aesthetics.

## Written media

In contrast, written media is another important mechanism for community theatres to publicise their work and does not have large-budget funding requirements to fulfil. I

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<sup>129</sup> James Benfield, Blue Apple Theatre - Core Company, Zoom discussion with author (21 July 2020).

<sup>130</sup> Blue Apple Theatre - Core Company, (21 July 2020).

consider firstly the theatre-programme for Acting on Impulse's *Dream on the Streets* which they performed in Altrincham in May 2010. Acting On Impulse is a Manchester-based performance charity which aims to 'develop the acting skills of people with experience of homelessness', enabling them to 'share their stories with a wider audience on screen and stage'.<sup>131</sup> They provide professionally run acting workshops over a period of time, which culminates in the creation of a short feature film which they make available on-line to challenge perceptions of those who have experienced homelessness and to promote the acting talents of those involved, actively seeking agent representation for them.<sup>132</sup> This focus on employment opportunities and agents suggests that the organisation actively prioritises the artistic agenda rather than the social one, or at least gives each equal priority. However, in the programme Director Lauren Tomlinson wrote for their 2010 *Dream on the Streets*, the focus appeared to have been more on the social aspects. This was their first live performance and Tomlinson wrote that this was a 'new challenge' she had elected to set for them, alongside tackling Shakespeare for the first time as his 'stories can be told in any setting and era'.<sup>133</sup> The play was set in a fictional location with Theseus and Hippolyta employed at The Mustard Tree Law Firm whilst Titania and Oberon were patrons of the Hilton Day Centre for the Homeless, all details documented in the programme.<sup>134</sup> The film and production (although I did not see the live performance) made a significant feature out of being set in the world of which the actors have lived experience, using Shakespeare to bring these issues to the attention of a wider audience. Homelessness is a significant yet

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<sup>131</sup> Acting on Impulse, <http://www.actingonimpulse.net/about-us/>, [accessed 18 July 2020].

<sup>132</sup> Acting on Impulse, <http://www.actingonimpulse.net/actors/>, [accessed 18 July 2020].

<sup>133</sup> Acting on Impulse *Dream on the Streets* Programme (unpublished, May 2010), p. 2.

<sup>134</sup> *Dream on the Streets* Programme, p. 6.

often overlooked issue which is estimated to affect over 280,000 people in England alone.<sup>135</sup>

However, Tomlinson chose not to use the scale of the issue as a framing mechanism, instead focusing more on the individual plights of the actors.

The programme provided a combination of background on the work of Acting on Impulse, headshots and short bios of the actors, a synopsis of their adaptation and acknowledgements of support, along with a plea for further funding. The fact that their own voices were not heard directly in this programme shifted the emphasis in a subtle yet powerful way; the narration heard was that of Tomlinson as facilitator. The only direct quotation from an actor was in relation to Tomlinson being ‘forcibly told by one of the actors “It’s hard to learn your lines when you’re sleeping under the arches!”’<sup>136</sup> The exclusion of their reactions to the process of producing a live production or tackling Shakespeare, in what we would assume was their first foray into his work within the theatre, suggests that the media of the programme was more focused on their previous or current experience of homelessness than their standing as artists. The artist biographies included professional headshots taken by a local photographer who it appears donated his time and expertise to the project. The text for each actor documented their relationship with rough sleeping as well as their involvement in previous Acting on Impulse films, giving equal weighting to the two issues. The multi-coloured flyers produced for the performance, which were used to generate publicity and encourage ticket sales, also centralised the headline-issue of homelessness and gave information on the organisation. The overall

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<sup>135</sup> Shelter, *This is England: A picture of homelessness in 2019: the numbers behind the story* (London: Shelter, 17 December 2019), p. 6, [https://england.shelter.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/1883817/This\\_is\\_England\\_A\\_picture\\_of\\_homelessness\\_in\\_2019.pdf](https://england.shelter.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1883817/This_is_England_A_picture_of_homelessness_in_2019.pdf), [accessed 26 July 2020].

<sup>136</sup> *Dream on the Streets* Programme, p. 2.

narrative of the media surrounding this adaptation and the staging itself was much more orientated towards telling the reality of life on the streets (although not referencing the widespread and growing nature of the problem which saw homelessness affect 1 in 200 people in the first quarter of 2019 compared to 1 in 213 people in Q2 2016) through the medium of Shakespeare.<sup>137</sup> The lack of the voices of the participants was noticeable and led to a lack of clarity regarding their own opinions about the work they produced.

The analysis of media creations so far has revealed significant opportunities for these to promote visibility to a wider audience than would otherwise be possible, encouraging society to be aware of this work and the benefits it can offer. However, often these narratives play into 'active audience theories', foregrounding the social over the aesthetic and not challenging people to see this work as truly artistic.<sup>138</sup> It has also demonstrated the need for marginalised artists to be given centrality in defining the presentation of media and for 'ally-ship' from non-marginalised collaborators and this final section examines the ways I was able to put this into practice as a blue-print for this type of media-coverage.<sup>139</sup> To illustrate this, I will consider two examples from HMP Gartree: a number of articles included in *The Grapevine* (the in-prison magazine written and produced by inmates for inmates) and the programme created by The Gallowfield Players for *The Merchant*. *The Grapevine* reported on each production and several inmate journalists wrote about the work of The Gallowfield Players, covering reviews of the performances as well as interviews with the cast and attendance at rehearsals to generate some 'behind the scenes' insight for the wider prison population. The reviews always lauded the company with praise

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<sup>137</sup> Shelter, *This is England*, p. 7.

<sup>138</sup> Neuman and Guggenheim, p. 177.

<sup>139</sup> Hadley, 'Allyship in disability arts', p. 178.

but highlighted any issues with performances such as ‘the one who giggled his way through his monologue of the soon-to-be-vanquished Banquo’ in *Macbeth*.<sup>140</sup> The magazine evidences the active audience theory: content and topics included are selected for their appeal to its readers. Over the years the column space dedicated to the company grew, increasing from one page to two to a six-page spread on *The Merchant*, with the editor explaining that this was due to the theatre company becoming an ever more prominent part of life in Gartree and a burgeoning good news story which inmates wanted to read about.<sup>141</sup>

The review of *The Merchant* included reviews from invited guests including the Mayor of Leicester who enthused ‘it was absolutely wonderful, I really enjoyed myself’.<sup>142</sup> Unfortunately the COVID-19 lockdown prevented me from being able to ask the editor why he had made the decision to include comments from invited guests rather than inmates. My hypothesis is that the inclusion of complimentary feedback from external persons was interpreted to give a more powerful validation than similar enthusiasm from peers would. In the context of whose voices are being heard and who controls the dialogue this raises a complex issue. The Grapevine is written and edited by inmates with only a final check by staff prior to printing to ensure that nothing inappropriate is included. The intention is that it speaks to inmates in the voices of their peers, not those of staff or external agencies. The magazine features interviews with senior management, articles of interest such as the in-prison industries, book and music reviews, puzzles and recipes and is notable in that in the more than two dozen editions I have read, none features quotes from people external to

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<sup>140</sup> ‘Gartree players give Macbeth the treatment’ *The Grapevine* (unpublished, January 2019), p. 19.

<sup>141</sup> Discussion with Editor of The Grapevine when he attended a rehearsal for *The Merchant* (19 April 2019).

<sup>142</sup> Mayor of Leicester, Annette Byrne, quoted in ‘The Gallowfield Players proudly present *The Merchant*’, *The Grapevine* (unpublished, February 2020), 14-19 (pp. 8).

the prison. It seemed that the editors wanted to evidence that external guests felt the performance to be high caliber, in some way affirming the success of the work, in the context of the artistic agenda which has become increasingly a focus for The Gallowfield Players. The editor added his own judgements on the 'talented theatre company' whose performance 'meant so much to everyone' and then concluded the article with a quotation from the programme in which the actors described the personal connections they had formed with the theatre company.<sup>143</sup>

Will, one of the actors, was invited to write a guest article for the magazine following the *Julius Caesar* production, which he did, acknowledging 'as one of the performers, I find it difficult to write about the play as I was obviously not looking on, but performing was great fun'.<sup>144</sup> He framed the article as a reflection on the progress made from the outset as he was one of the very first to join, a fact in which he demonstrates ongoing pride. He affirmed, 'we've come a long way', documenting the way in which the company was an integral part of the prison community with twice yearly performances.<sup>145</sup> The choice of language used, such as 'community', 'supportive', 'impressed' and 'family feel', suggests a desire for The Gallowfield Players to be seen as a crucial part of the positive elements of the prison regime and offering benefits for all concerned.<sup>146</sup> The way in which the narrative is positioned within media coverage is evidenced by this short article. Will, although a conscientious attender of rehearsals, was frequently frustrated by what he saw as others' lack of seriousness about the work. His rehearsal diary documented annoyance at others'

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<sup>143</sup> 'The Gallowfield Players proudly present *The Merchant*'.

<sup>144</sup> Will, 'Gallowfield Players take an audience to Rome, *The Grapevine*, (July 2019), 14-17 (pp. 14).

<sup>145</sup> Will, 'Audience to Rome', p. 14.

<sup>146</sup> Will, 'Audience to Rome', p. 14-15.

perceived flippancy towards the production, noting ‘what a wash out! Felt like a wasted morning’ only four weeks before the performance and that he had been enlisting the support of other actors during their gym session to agree with his perspective in the ‘hope we can make it all a bit more serious’.<sup>147</sup>

However, his perspective given to those outside of the group reflected none of these frustrations and presented an image of rehearsals as ‘a place to relax and have a laugh, for these hours every week we can forget that we are in jail’.<sup>148</sup> He and I discussed his annoyance when others were in his estimation ‘messing around’ and he was able to acknowledge that he finds group settings difficult and feels unable to participate in the banter which abounds. Over the thirtyish months I have worked with him to the point of writing this, he has made some progress with regards to joining in with communal jokes but still often remains on the fringes during the comedic interludes. However, his allegiance to the company meant that he would not publicly air his personal gripes and instead portrayed a unified image in the magazine article, evidencing Neuman and Guggenheim’s ‘interpretive effects theory’ through his conscious use of framing and agenda setting to project an image of unity beyond even the solid basis which exists in reality. He reflected on his response to the group dynamic in a piece he presented to me after *The Merchant*, writing:

for someone like myself who is not the most social of animals, this group  
can be challenging, bouts of banter in large groups can overwhelm me, so

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<sup>147</sup> Will, Rehearsal Diary for *Julius Caesar* (24 May 2019).

<sup>148</sup> Will, ‘Audience to Rome’, p. 15.

the Gallowfield Players do not only produce plays there are aspects of social therapy too.<sup>149</sup>

## The Merchant or Two Welshmen and a Parrot

The Gallowfield Players is run entirely as a collective with all decisions made jointly by the actors, for our third play we elected to tackle *The Merchant of Venice*. However, instead of dealing with the often-problematic anti-Semitic issues of the original text where Shylock is parodied and shunned for his religious beliefs, we wanted to use this as a way of exploring the stigma of being a released lifer.

This is so topical and something we felt should be considered – in relation to those sentenced but also their families, friends and previous associates. What you will see in this production may be quite different from any production of *The Merchant of Venice* you have seen before, but we hope that you will understand more about the lives and personalities of those involved through sharing the humour, the sadness and the pathos of the plot and the characters.

We have blended Shakespeare's language with some more modern text to create a story of resentment, bitterness, betrayal and anger which during the play softens to acceptance and, finally, forgiveness. We did not want to sugar-coat the reality of the situation people face and the impact on their loved ones, family and friends. We have drawn inspiration from the experiences of those in the group and the people they know, to give a view on how it may feel to be released, but have the continuing life sentence hanging over one's head.

We hope that you find our performance, thought provoking, humorous and authentic as we see Shylock's return to the outside world – an event probably much longed for during his time inside. But the reality of release is more complex and challenging than he may have expected and his daughter Jessica seems keen to put as much distance between herself and the father, who was absent for much of her childhood, as possible. Will there be a chance for them to put aside the past and consider a positive future or will the weight of his sentence be too great to bear?

**The Gallowfield Players**

55. The Gallowfield Players, *The Merchant Programme* (unpublished January 2020), p. 3.  
Courtesy of The Gallowfield Players.

<sup>149</sup> Will, *The Gallowfield Players: A 24 Month Journey So Far* (unpublished, February 2020), p. 4.



The Gallowfield Players also produced a theatre-programme for their 2020 production of *The Merchant*. The first two productions did not include a programme but the company decided they wanted to produce one for the third, an idea I supported and which allowed me to implement much of the learning from my research back into my practice. The idea of a programme was raised during a Production Meeting organised and chaired by Michael. They felt it was a way of providing a meaningful memento of the performance for families to cherish and a promotional item for invited guests, to share a little more of the ethos and culture embedded within the group.<sup>150</sup> A unanimous vote approved the concept and, after securing confirmation of prison permission to issue them to families, the actors began to create the content with Leigh taking overall ownership as she was prohibited from attending rehearsals for a period of time following anonymous threats made as a result of her transgender identity. During this period of suspension from rehearsals I visited her weekly for half an hour before or after rehearsals to ensure she continued to feel part of the group dynamic and ownership of this content helped to ensure this on a tangible level. My research into the media representation of marginalised groups had highlighted the importance of whose voice is being heard and I was keen that the ownership, creation and editing belonged in totality to the actors, not mediated by myself or the prison. This meant that the actors had the opportunity to promote their perspective of The Gallowfield Players in the professionally printed programme for *The Merchant*. The creation was driven by a conscious focus on the reception it would receive; there were two clearly different intended audiences and the actors were keen to balance these contrasting requirements. Interestingly for many of them the priority was to generate publicity for the

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<sup>150</sup> Michael, The Gallowfield Players Production Meeting, HMP Gartree (28 October 2019).

company and evidence our professionalism to invited guests. They were also keen for their families to have a memento but felt that they would be proud to receive content suited to a semi-professional theatre company programme.

Whilst frequently the social element of media narratives on applied Shakespeare takes precedence over the artistic, the actors were keen to avoid this being the case in this piece of work. They wanted to evidence their abilities as a theatre company not as a theatre company of prisoners, or any other label society may have accorded them since their arrest, although there was a desire to use the programme and the content-matter of the play to explore the challenges of those who have a life sentence. They 'did not want to sugar-coat the reality of the situation people face and the impact on their loved ones, friends and family' and were keen to use this as a way of showing themselves as artists exploring a complex topic of which they had lived experience.<sup>151</sup> They asked me to take in some examples of programmes from professional theatre companies and modelled the layout on those of the Royal Shakespeare Company and the National Theatre. The programme consisted of articles from myself as Artistic Director and Michael as scriptwriter, a timeline for the adaptation, interviews with the cast as actors and as characters, a thankyou page and details for mental health support for anyone experiencing difficulties, as well as a section on the actors' previous roles for the company. Understandably they were unable to include headshots of the cast and had to restrict identities to first names only for the purposes of relative anonymity as the programmes would be taken away by visitors, but a cleverly drawn caricature image of the cast was included.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> 'The Merchant or Two Welshmen and a Parrot,' *The Merchant Programme*, p. 3.

<sup>152</sup> Caricature strip of the entire cast drawn by Richard, 'Casting Call' *The Merchant Programme*, p. 12.



56. Motif of The Gallowfield Players in character for *The Merchant*, drawn by Richard (January 2020), Courtesy of Richard.

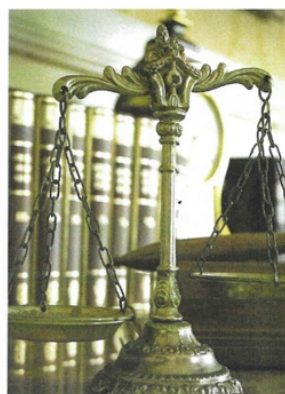
From the article I wrote for inclusion they selected the quotations they wanted to highlight, choosing to centralise two elements: ‘we are, I believe, the first UK theatre company to be co-owned by me and a number of serving prisoners’ and ‘I was asked if this group had become what I thought it would. The simple answer is no – it has far surpassed my expectations, my hopes and my aspirations’.<sup>153</sup> These were both chosen to appeal to invited guests and to show The Gallowfield Players in a positive light as a company which was breaking new ground and in which I publicly announced my personal pride. Michael’s article described the process of script writing as an ‘undeniable opportunity to say something of worth’ whilst acknowledging that ‘writing to suit a disparate group is difficult’.<sup>154</sup> Michael has dyslexia and is open about this with his fellow actors and other inmates but chose not to include this in the programme as he wanted the focus of the piece of media to be the achievements of the theatre company. As mentioned in Chapter 2 he

<sup>153</sup> Mackenzie, ‘Bassanio, this woman is a force of nature’, *The Merchant Programme*, p. 4-5.

<sup>154</sup> Michael, ‘Late Nights and Friday Mornings’, *The Merchant Programme*, p. 8.

## Late Nights and Friday mornings

, our own Upstart Crow and writer of *The Merchant*, sits down with us to discuss what the Gallowfield Players means to him, why his Shylock is wearing a set of “L plates” and why some cast members wish they had not been quite so candid with him.



Like many of the men around the prison, I had seen posters advertising a Macbeth related group. I was not sure what such a group would entail and so did not give it much more thought. It was only when one of the members, some-time later, invited me to join did I consider it. I went along for a session believing I'd think it a waste of time and I would leave.

How wrong I was.

The first few weeks were a bit of a laugh but it was only as the performance date grew closer that I began to feel the group was something special. Gradually the role I assumed suited me more and I became utterly hooked.

However, with such a position came a sense of responsibility, a feeling that I had to repay the faith put in me., an idea that there was a real possibility that the Gallowfield Players could grow into a very special entity.

Indeed, I've watched the Gallowfield Players become so ingrained in the lives of its members that it can genuinely be called a community.

Who knew it could be so powerful. Most of the magic in the group is thanks to Rowan, and her sheer power of will to make things happen.

I cannot believe that from such humble beginnings, The Gallowfield Players has become such an important part of my prison life and is now constantly growing

57. Michael, 'Late Nights and Friday Mornings', *The Merchant Programme* (unpublished, January 2020), p. 7, Courtesy of The Gallowfield Players.

described the script as 'a love letter to [his] children [...] something that would last beyond a prison sentence, something that will endure'.<sup>155</sup> This concept of creating a legacy is something which has motivated him from the formation of The Gallowfield Players and is a trait evidenced from research with those serving life sentences.<sup>156</sup> In pursuit of that aim

<sup>155</sup> Michael, 'Late Nights and Friday Mornings', p. 9.

<sup>156</sup> Ben Crewe, speaking at the book launch for *Life Imprisonment from Young Adulthood: Adaptation, Identity and Time*, online event (30 October 2020).

Michael has been a driving force behind many of the decisions taken; including the creation of programmes, a request to explore the possibility of publication of scripts and a fundraising programme which saw him organising the actors to send out dozens of letters to potential benefactors. This initiative resulted in financial donations which were paid into a separate bank account within the prison to fund costumes and props and significant donations of DVDs of productions and books on relevant topics allowing The Gallowfield Players to compile a specialised library of resources which they can loan to enhance their learning.

The two cast interviews (one in character and one as the actors themselves) were designed by the group as a methodology to ensure all voices were heard and that the ensemble nature and genuine warmth of the company as a whole were portrayed. The equality and collaborative nature of the work was subtly yet importantly conveyed through the way in which throughout the programme my name was shortened to first name only and initialised when others were and that the 'interviews' were facilitated by the narrator Liam with my responses treated equally to those of other cast members.<sup>157</sup> This piece of media differed from many of the other forms considered in this chapter as it was genuinely owned and designed by the actors, enabling them to own the space it occupied and for their voices to be the ones heard. It was not mediated by anyone external as the editing was owned entirely by Richard, Leigh and Michael, but they were rigorous in ensuring that the image it presented conformed to their desire to be taken seriously as a theatre company.

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<sup>157</sup> 'Questions for the cast' and 'So, what happened next?', *The Merchant Programme*, pp. 14-18 and pp. 20-24.

## So, what happened next?

The play may be over, but that is not the end of our story. We catch up with some of the characters from “The Merchant” to see how they are getting on a few months down the line.



**AL** — Well it has been a little while now since we last caught up with the characters of *The Merchant* and they have gracefully agreed to have a catch up with me so we can find out how they adjusting to life after all that has happened.

I'll begin with you Shylock if that is ok? I suppose what most people will want to know is what are you doing with yourself nowadays?

**Shylock** — I was once someone, an important figure in my community, but that is all in the past, no thanks to Antonio, his whelp Bassanio and that woman of his. I survived prison when many others did not, but prison comes at a cost. It takes it all. It takes its toll. It takes all you love, and when I left I sought to make amends, restore myself to my deserved position. And yet again, dealing with Antonio left me ruined, further from my station than ever before. My days are filled now by the struggle to once more raise my business from the ashes, my fortune to what it should be.

My only comfort is that my sweet Jessica has found it in her heart to forgive me for my past mistakes and allowed me to be part of her life.

**AL** — On the note of your daughter, Jessica how is your relationship with your father now?

**Jessica** — it is what it is. I'm not going to say we have what you would call a normal father/daughter relationship, but we are working on it. We're spending more time together, taking the steps we need to and we'll see where it goes. I think my father has

58. The Gallowfield Players, interviewed in character, *The Merchant Programme* (unpublished, January 2020), p. 20, Courtesy of The Gallowfield Players.

They used the concepts of active audience theory but instead of playing into the pre-existing beliefs of the audience they wanted to challenge them, delivering a theatrical experience of far greater artistic quality than expected. They elected to follow the conventions of traditional theatre publicity in order to invite assessment as a theatre company, choosing to ask for judgement of the play's artistic merits rather than as theatre made by a marginalised group. Whilst they have expounded the personal and community

benefits of the group in their diaries, in letters seeking financial support and in interviews, they felt keenly that they wanted to avoid the way in which the 'benefits of participation are highlighted far more than the resulting aesthetic product' for the creation of this media to accompany the production.<sup>158</sup> They wanted the programme to serve as a piece of theatre memorabilia not as an exploration of their marginalised status and it was they who controlled the narrative of this media.

Theatre-programmes of very similar style are produced by Shakespeare Behind Bars (SBB) in Kentucky where Hal Cobb (a founding actor in SBB) 'who works in the prison print shop, lays out the playbill and then has it printed in color', although I did not see these examples until after the creation of The Gallowfield Players' version.<sup>159</sup> The layout of the SBB programmes closely resembles the professional theatre-programmes an audience member would purchase at a mainstream theatre. The playbill for their most recent production, *King Lear*, included a welcome endorsement from Warden Scott Jordan who acknowledged 'the pride taken in the preparation, production and performance of this programme shows the dedication of everyone involved'.<sup>160</sup> The actors each had a half page where they articulated their own involvement in the initiative and the personal connections they felt with the character they played, as well as a selection of images from rehearsals. Hal Cobb who played the title role wrote that 'I knew to properly take on the role I would have to look at dark corners of my soul long avoided and bring to the surface residual issues in

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<sup>158</sup> Hargrave, p. 35, quoting D. Goodley and M. Moore, *Disability Arts Against Exclusion: People with Learning Difficulties and their Performing Arts* (Kidderminster: British Institute of Learning Disabilities, 2002), p. 5; The Gallowfield Players, Production Meeting, HMP Gartree (28 October 2019).

<sup>159</sup> Email correspondence between Curt Tofteland, Matt Wallace and the author (11 August 2020).

<sup>160</sup> Shakespeare Behind Bars, Luther Luckett Correctional Complex, *King Lear Playbill* (unpublished, 2019) p. 4.



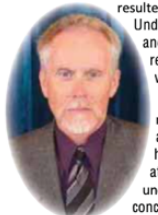
**Hal Cobb***Lear, King of Britain*

*King Lear* has called to me for a long time. Hauntingly so. I've approached him with great fear and trepidation. I knew to properly take on the role I would have to look at dark corners of my soul long avoided and bring to the surface residual issues in need of healing. I've had to put myself in my late father's declining shoes as he lost autonomy and became dependent on others. He passed away nearly five years ago as his declining

health and resulting depression overtook him a few months before turning 90. I ponder my 91 year old mother's progressing dementia. She often doesn't recall I'm in prison when she remembers me at all. I am struck with guilt at not being available to care for her, a task lovingly born by two of my siblings. When I stumble on a word or speech, can't recall a name I've known for decades, or have any form of memory glitch, I stifle the fear my mind may be falling down her forgetful path.

One of the themes of *King Lear* is aging and mortality. As a man in his 60's serving a life sentence, I face the very real possibility of dying alone in prison. When my contemporaries are preparing for retirement, finalizing plans to be taken care of while not becoming a burden to others, I wonder if I'll ever be able to reconcile with the daughter and family I've estranged before I'm buried unremembered at Chicken Hill, the pauper prisoner's cemetery behind Kentucky State Reformatory.

Like Lear, the damage I've done to my family, friends and community was rooted in self-absorption, lack of self-awareness, and inconsideration. Lear is never purposely a jerk. As a king, raised and surrounded by sycophants, he was never told no. In contrast, as a cowering child striving to be the best little boy in the world, it felt like I never heard yes. Both backgrounds resulted in a sense of narcissistic entitlement. Underneath it all Lear and I want to love and be loved — to atone, be forgiven, reconciled and loved by the dear ones we wronged the most.



Unfortunately, like *King Lear*, my personal growth, redemption, and ability to take responsibility may have come too late. Life behind bars, at present, has the same sense of unease that many may be left with at the conclusion of Shakespeare's great tragedy.

10 **Shakespeare Behind Bars****John Sheesley***Goneril, Lear's eldest daughter & Albany's wife*

Pity poor Goneril. In the midst of a tragedy, Goneril's whole life has been one long tragedy. There's no queen, so Goneril has been raised by her father. As she points out, even in his younger years he was harsh, that must have been no joy. She has to deal with two sisters, one she clearly doesn't

get along with and the other her father's clear favorite. She's trapped in a marriage to a man she doesn't respect or love — probably the result of an arrangement by her father. Finally, much like Queen Elizabeth I of Shakespeare's time, as the eldest daughter to a king with no male heirs, she probably assumed her whole life she'd be queen of all of Lear's lands — only to be forced to grovel for a mere third less "opulent" than her baby sister's.

So, in such a situation, what is a good Shakespeare female character to do? Hatch a plot! Find true love! Win the day! And ... well anything more would require a <spoiler alert>.

Pity poor Goneril further — she was not my choice to play this year. After Oberon last year, I had settled on Servant #1 this year, now played by Michael Malavenda, because it was a small role where I could take a little in-play hiatus. But I was asked to take the part when a member decided to take an out-of-play hiatus. So, to reword



Shakespeare a little; some men chose their roles, some roles chose them, others have roles thrust upon them.



But I feel sorry for poor Goneril and will do my best for her (and you). Try to give her the benefit of the doubt because she really has been through a lot. And, as any good psychiatrist will tell you, it's all her daddy's fault anyway!



P.O. Box 83

Macatawa, MI 49434

59. Shakespeare Behind Bars, *King Lear Playbill* (April 2019), p. 10, Courtesy of Curt Tofteland and Matt Wallace.

need of healing'.<sup>161</sup> There are statistics about the levels of incarceration in the U.S. and acknowledgements of financial funders. Matt Wallace, Keith McGill and Brian Hinds as facilitators each have a half-page resume written in the third-person, as does Holly Stone (Communications) and Donna Lawrence-Downs (Costumes). Tofteland's resume spans two full pages and documents all of his public engagements since founding SBB.

<sup>161</sup> *King Lear Playbill*, p. 10.



It is evident that those creating the playbill for SBB Kentucky understand the importance of framing the media they present to portray their messages. There is balance between the artistic achievements of the company with its long history of productions listed in full on page 35, the 'professorial patronage' and a traditional style plot synopsis with the social elements of the process.<sup>162</sup> Many of the actors make personal dedications to family, such as Chad Meadows' 'this smile's for you Mom!', whilst a past participant is quoted as saying 'the play's not always the thing' and a detailed Ensemble History lists all those who have been associated with the programme as well as whether they remain incarcerated, have been paroled, released or are now deceased.<sup>163</sup> Bishop's argument that the social and the artistic discourse of participatory art are binary and cannot be reconciled has many points of validity on a macro-structural level.<sup>164</sup> However, it seems to be less applicable when considering the work of companies such as Shakespeare Behind Bars and The Gallowfield Players which harness the two in tandem and invite audience engagement on multiple levels. They utilise small-scale media such as programmes to offer their artistic work as a creative commodity which they temper with their position as prisoners, excluded from mainstream society by the crimes of which they have been convicted. The underlying message to the audience is 'there is not so much difference between myself and you' and that they hope the shared humanity adds resonance to their artistic endeavours.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> *King Lear Playbill*, p. 31.

<sup>163</sup> *King Lear Playbill*, p. 15, p. 8.

<sup>164</sup> Bishop, p. 275-77.

<sup>165</sup> The Gallowfield Players, *The Merchant – Script* (unpublished, 2019), 3.1.67.

<p><b>Robert Divine</b> <i>Duke of Cornwall, husband of Regan</i></p>  <p>This is my second year in SBB. My first year was a real learning experience. I started off with one role Snug the Joiner and ended up with a different role – Queen Titiana, Queen of the Faeries. I was real apprehensive about a female role because of being a male, but ended up having a lot of fun with her character.</p> <p>This year I am the Duke of Cornwall. We are really encouraged to find ourselves in the role and I have had a real difficult time with this. I never saw myself as fiery or angry as the Duke seems to be, but as it turns out I have found I do have some of his qualities. And now I have learned to better deal with my anger.</p> <p>This is a great group of people who help each other to learn from our failures and mistakes, and to make better choices for the future. I now find the silver lining in those bleak moments.</p> <p>"The blackest nights produce the brightest stars." -unknown</p> <p>Thanks SBB!</p>  	<p><b>Chad Meadows</b> <i>Oswald, Goneril's chief steward</i></p>  <p>Hello everyone! It's that time of year again for our SBB performance. This year, I am playing Oswald who is the Steward to Goneril, the King's Daughter. Oswald is very loyal to Goneril, so much that he'll do anything for her no matter the cost. Goneril is agitated with her father, and in being so, gives Oswald permission to neglect anything the King says. Oswald, being the loyal Steward he is, neglects the King to the point of disrespect. Although Oswald is doing what he thinks is right, the neglect and disrespect to the King gets him cursed out, smacked, tripped, and so on.</p> <p>Sometimes in life what we think may be right may be a misconception. We may be doing right by one person, according to them, but neglecting others around us whether it's family, friends, or otherwise. In doing so, we set ourselves up for a downward spiral that puts us on the wrong path of depression and destruction as well as separates us from the ones who truly care. In the midst of this we do not realize what we are doing, nor do we adhere to any of the warning signs.</p> <p>Having been through something similar in life is the reason this character spoke to me enough to play the part. I wanted to face those issues I caused from the point of knowing the difference and obtain a deeper sense of empathy. It's not just learning from your mistakes, it's the knowing the how and why, the triggers and coping skills, and preventing yourself from making the same mistakes in the future.</p> <p>In closing, I'd like to extend special thanks to my scene partners and SBB brothers, and the Facilitators Matt, Keith, and Brian. I have enjoyed learning from &amp; working with each of you, and you have helped to make this season a fun success. I also extend a personal thanks to God, my wonderful Mother, and Tim Winters – my mentor from "A Prisoner's Hope" for your encouragement and support in continuance of the Shakespeare Behind Bars Program.</p>   <p><b>This smile's for you, Mom!</b></p>
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**KING LEAR**      May 2019      LLCC      [www.shakespearebehindbars.org](http://www.shakespearebehindbars.org)      15

60. Shakespeare Behind Bars, *King Lear Playbill* (April 2019), p. 15, Courtesy of Curt Tofteland and Matt Wallace.

## Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates the way in which media consciously and subconsciously frames and articulates the narrative when depicting marginalised community engagement with the cultural capital of Shakespeare. The recipient of the mediated messaging is not presented dispassionately with facts with which to formulate their own objective opinion, instead they are invited to engage with an initiative carefully packaged in a specific way. This act of

presenting the material as being current and relevant, combining the physical and temporal, is deliberately designed to attract the attention of the viewer. It is in this way that it allows those defining the strategy to influence the response of those who engage with the media. As Hughes and Nicholson acknowledge, applied theatre contains 'complex networks of power' and this complexity is multiplied by the addition of media with its own multi-layered infrastructure of influence.<sup>166</sup> Frequently media representation works with the psychological motivation of the recipients, as is the case in examples such as the Hampshire Chronicle's supportive coverage of Blue Apple Theatre and 'the opportunity to be shocked and outraged' by tabloid coverage of prison initiatives. Alternatively it can seek to challenge or subvert widely held opinions (and prejudices) such as in the theatre programmes produced by The Gallowfield Players and Shakespeare Behind Bars.<sup>167</sup> Understanding the motivation and acknowledging the active agency of the audience enables those mediating the messaging to do so in a way which frames the narrative for maximum receptive impact.

Barnes' judgement of the 'patronising intrusions' such interventions can be within a community remains a cautionary tale which any practitioner would do well to heed.<sup>168</sup> The presence of the media can and often is a noticeably patronising intrusion which can seek to dehumanise the very group whom the story depicts, as is the case with the University of Winchester's article which failed to name or represent views from the Blue Apple actors. Even those media explorations which heavily involve the facilitator and participants will often divert the focus from the aesthetic towards the social and this refraction begins to undermine the importance and quality of the artistry by centralising the redemptive

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<sup>166</sup> Hughes and Nicholson, p. 5.

<sup>167</sup> Jewkes, 'Prisoners and the Press', p. 26).

<sup>168</sup> Barnes, p. 3.

qualities for the participants in preference of the quality of the performances. There is no simple solution to this quandary as the seemingly logical answer of always centralising the voices of those marginalised continues to be fraught with pitfalls and complications. There are occasions where this approach is appropriate and where they are able to represent their own work with authenticity and authority. There are other instances where it would not be within their capabilities to do so, whether physically, intellectually or emotionally. Even where a marginalised group is able to create and edit their own media we need to remain mindful of the complexity of this infrastructure of influence and that nothing mediated is ever neutral. Media is weighted with meanings, signifiers and codes.



61. The logo for Shakespeare UnBard, designed and drawn by Michael, The Gallowfield Players (August 2020), Courtesy of Michael.

## Conclusion

This thesis has developed lines of interdisciplinary enquiry across fields which have traditionally been considered separate, drawing together research from multiple marginalised sectors of society: people with learning disabilities, people with mental health issues, incarcerated people and people who have experienced homelessness. Given the significant overlap between these groups, this cross-fertilisation of consideration is necessary when analysing communication methodologies through theatre, and specifically, Shakespeare. Considering a broad range of projects which had at their core marginalised people using Shakespeare creatively through reflection, rehearsal, performance and media production this thesis aims to open up new avenues for academic dialogue. In many ways Shakespeare's work and marginalised people are at opposite ends of a spectrum – Shakespeare deemed the epitome of culture, internationally revered, with a rich cultural history, and people frequently ostracised, facing judgement and prejudice from wider society. Yet the combination of the two can bring about paradigm shifts as Shakespeare is appropriated and used as a method of communication for those often previously silenced. This field of academic research is rapidly expanding but predominantly continues to focus on the benefits of theatre for a singular type of marginalised person (for example those with learning disabilities or people incarcerated), not taking account of the intersectionality which exists in this sphere. As outlined in the Introduction, the overlap between those with learning disabilities, mental health issues, people who experience homelessness and/or the criminal justice system is extensive and my research is designed to build on this intersectionality. The beneficial impacts of the arts are widely documented and acknowledged, with a growing desire to ensure that such interventions do not become an

‘unwelcome intrusion’ and instead facilitate personal growth through ‘allyship’ not patronage.<sup>1</sup>

Through combining a theoretical framework informed by Lefebvre, Foucault and Bourdieu, with robust academic enquiry, extensive policy examination and long-term practice-based research, my thesis affirms my key hypotheses and demonstrates practical ways for these to be successfully implemented. Shakespeare enables the alteration of spatial constraints for those who feel imprisoned (either physically or metaphorically) through allowing them to speak and to be heard in ways which may have been previously inaccessible. Cox and Thielgaard state ‘Shakespeare contributes to present day psychological understanding of the dynamic processes which activate an individual’s feelings, thoughts and actions’.<sup>2</sup> This, combined with the intrinsic cultural capital of his canonical works, means Shakespeare opens up alternative opportunities which may otherwise remain closed to those who are marginalised within society. His characters offer people an opportunity to consider the world from a myriad of perspectives, considering the choices and decisions the characters face and the factors influential in those decisions. As Michael explains ‘Shakespeare has allowed us to reinvent ourselves as human once more, through his works and his creativity we are inspired’, a positive affirmation of Shakespeare’s power from a man who initially argued against what he saw as an unjustified deifying of the Bard.<sup>3</sup> ‘Dramatic distancing’ allows people to choose the level of personal reflection they

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<sup>1</sup> Helen Nicholson, *Applied Drama: The Gift of Theatre* (London: Macmillan Education, 2015), p.166; Bree Hadley, ‘Allyship in disability arts: roles, relationships and practices’, *Research in Drama Education Vol 25 (2)* (2020) 178-194.

<sup>2</sup> Murray Cox and Alice Thielgaard, *Shakespeare as Prompter: The Amending Imagination and the Therapeutic Process* (London and Bristol, Pennsylvania: Jessica Kingsley Publishing, 1994), p. 388.

<sup>3</sup> Michael, The Gallowfield Players, *Reflections on Creative Space* (unpublished, August 2020), p. 6..

engage in when they encounter a Shakespearean character – these creations at once are like them and not like them, allowing the mirror of reflection to be held at a comfortable distance.<sup>4</sup> Tom Magill described Shakespeare as ‘a safe environment through the mask of classical theatre’ when discussing the filming of *Mickey B* and this is equally applicable across other projects utilising Shakespeare with those who are marginalised.<sup>5</sup>

Each chapter in this thesis analysed activities taking place within differing types of space and the impact of each; further calibrated by nuances such as longevity of intervention, the primary purpose of the space, the source of dislocation from society and the method of portrayal of the work to a wider audience. Superordinate themes of communication (both verbal and non-verbal), resilience, emotional growth and positive autonomy were evidenced through a multitude of diverse projects and programmes in the UK and internationally. People who are marginalised have often suffered trauma in one form or another, so my work follows the principles that guide a trauma-informed approach: developing safety, trustworthiness and transparency, peer support, collaboration and mutuality, empowerment and choice, and addressing cultural, historical and gender issues.<sup>6</sup> Making these a central element of my own practice-based research enabled me to ‘be aware of power, control and interpersonal boundary issues’, which are highlighted as critical

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<sup>4</sup> Sue Jennings, ‘Therapeutic journeys through *King Lear*’, in *Dramatherapy: Theory and Practice Volume 2* ed. by Sue Jennings (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp.4-18 (p.17).

<sup>5</sup> Tom Magill in interview with Robert Landy (26 August 2010), quoted in Robert J. Landy and David T. Montgomery, *Theatre for Change: Education, Social Action and Therapy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 155.

<sup>6</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S., *SAMHSA’s Concept of Trauma and Guidance for A Trauma-Informed Approach* (Rockville: MD, 2014), [https://www.cdc.gov/cpr/infographics/6\\_principles\\_trauma\\_info.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/cpr/infographics/6_principles_trauma_info.htm) [accessed 14 July 2020].

to successful implementation of this approach, whilst providing environments which offered safe places within which to work and to develop.<sup>7</sup>

My own positioning as both practitioner and academic enabled me to carry out ethnographic research from a position of relative inclusion, witnessing first-hand the changes such interventions are able to engender both for those who are marginalised and for wider society's opinions of them. Working alongside marginalised people for prolonged periods of time gave me a unique integration into the fabric of the theatre companies and developed deep levels of reciprocal trust that yielded at times painfully honest insights into the transformative effects of the work. This transformation was symbiotic – affecting both those involved and those who saw the work. I was mindful to consciously avoid:

the social dynamic in which the normals feel pity for the stigmatized and express their good intentions and well wishes – in other words, their disavowal of stigma – through charity, or at least through a charitable attitude which often comes across as patronizing.<sup>8</sup>

My own participatory practice aimed to centralise the voices and opinions of those marginalised, not as stigmatised people but as talented artists with important messages to express.

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<sup>7</sup> David W. Freeman, 'Trauma-informed services and case management', in *Using Trauma Theory to Design Service Systems*, pp. 75-82 (p.75).

<sup>8</sup> Jeffery R. Wilson, 'The trouble with disability in Shakespeare Studies', *Disability Studies Quarterly* 37 (2017), <https://dsq-sds.org/article/view/5430/4644>, [accessed 12 October 2020].



Chapter 1 focused on the creative spaces of rehearsals and workshops, where ideas can be formulated, explored and refined without the gaze of an audience. Considering the intersectionality of space, time and power during the rehearsal process by categorising projects according to longevity enabled me to examine the way in which spaces are affected by the activities being undertaken within them. The conceived space of Lefebvre's spatial triad provided the concept of space being altered and manipulated by the creativity unleashed within the locations. Whilst singular interventions such as workshops offered a brief respite from normality and evidenced some potential for changes in confidence and communication, the effects became increasingly powerful with longer timeframes. Medium-term projects enabled the beginnings of more social cohesion, giving rise to greater self-expression and emergent communication strategies. There were some issues around interpersonal relationships and accountability within HMP Leicester which elucidated the importance of having a longer-timeframe in which to form supportive networks and the cruciality of participants' willingness to engage productively.

The lessons learned from this served to inform the creation of The Gallowfield Players and Emergency Shakespeare and have been intrinsic to my practice-based research journey, forming the basis for two of the long-term case studies, alongside Blue Apple Theatre and Acting Up! The relative permanence of these theatre companies allowed the time for development of more deeply supportive communities amongst those participating; encouraging friendships to form and communication both inside and outside of the rehearsal spaces to flourish. The spaces in which the creative processes took place became felicitous spaces, to borrow Bachelard's phrase, embedded with comforting memories of

using Shakespeare in a safe corner of a world which is often intimidating or overwhelming.<sup>9</sup> The imprinting of these memories within spaces altered the participants' perceptions of the locations not just during rehearsals but on an ongoing basis. Considering the central tenets of trauma-informed methodologies – safety, transparency and trust, peer support, collaboration and mutuality, empowerment and choice, cultural, historical and gender issues – permanent theatre companies allow these to develop in ways which short-term interventions are unable to. They encourage participants to experience emotional growth through the prolonged interaction with Shakespeare's characters, the positive autonomy of owning the work being created and the depth of trust in themselves and each other which challenges their marginalised position. Michael described that:

To change a space is to change a mindset – to alter the way the physical body operates within it, to remove longstanding attitudinal barriers and change perceptions, but it is not only physical, it is philosophical, altering images of space within the mind, changing purposes of space changes people. By doing this [the Gallowfield Players] the mind can be opened to a series of psychological possibilities, a re-wiring of long-standing beliefs and a rethinking of misconceptions.<sup>10</sup>

These philosophical changes to belief systems have a significant effect on people's lives and although they take time to germinate, once they do begin to flourish they are powerful and

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<sup>9</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. by Maria Jolas (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1964, p.27.

<sup>10</sup> Michael, *Reflections on Creative Space*, p. 4.

can leave a lasting sense of autonomy and self-belief which can alter perceptions of the future.

Chapter 2 focused on the way in which marginalised people can use Shakespeare to create heterotopias which challenge not only their own perceptions but those of the wider public. Using as a foundation Tompkins' theory that a heterotopia is created by the juxtaposition of two seemingly contradictory states (the constructed space of the theatre and the abstracted space of the performance), I assimilated this within the context of Shakespeare with marginalised people.<sup>11</sup> The constructed space of the theatre takes on differing qualities depending on whether the production is performed in a demarcated theatre space or an appropriated space which has a differing primary function. The abstracted space is replaced with an abstracted concept – that of marginalised people performing this highest form of theatrical art: Shakespeare. Juxtaposing the two elements of the embedded cultural signifiers of a production of classical theatre with a group society typically ostracised for being different creates a heterotopia through which social and aesthetic expectations are challenged. Tompkins focused on the third of Foucault's principles of heterotopias – 'the heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible' – and largely dismissed the others.<sup>12</sup> Foucault's other principles, that heterotopias are increasingly becoming used by those whose behavioural

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<sup>11</sup> Joanne Tompkins, *Theatre's Heterotopias: Performance and the Cultural Politics of Space* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

<sup>12</sup> Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias', *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuite*, trans. by Jay Miskowiec (October 1984), p.6, <https://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/foucault1.pdf>, [accessed 6 September 2020].

habitus deviates from societal norms and, that they exist in 'slices of time' also resonate strongly with marginalised communities.<sup>13</sup>

Audience studies is a growing field of academic enquiry but focuses primarily on mainstream theatre and audiences, albeit with developing interest in learning disability theatre which 'has progressively moved from the domains of the therapeutic or community orientated to that of art'.<sup>14</sup> My research focused on the ways in which inverting the cultural capital of Shakespeare, and the attached concepts of it as being elitist and exclusionary in many ways, served to 'disrupt the very fundamentals of theatre' identified by Reason.<sup>15</sup> However, it went further by disrupting the fundamentals of society's perception of marginalised people as evidenced by the professional actors' reassessment of their previous opinions of the patients at Broadmoor and The Gallowfield Players' proud feedback that 'performing for family and friends is so inspiring, it's so good for them to share in what we do, to feel pride for what we can do'.<sup>16</sup> The performances impacted on the actors' self-perception (these perceptions of self can often be highly critical and the most resistant to change) and on audience perceptions; both external audiences and those connected to the performers, through familial bonds or working relationships. Analysis of these, revealed small but significant shifts in perceptions. Those marginalised seemed less ostracised as a result of the performative work; with improved confidence, enhanced interpersonal relationships, a sense of pride and deepening bonds within the companies.

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<sup>13</sup> Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', p.5-6.

<sup>14</sup> Matthew Reason, 'Ways of Watching: Five Aesthetics of Learning Disability Theatre', in *The Routledge Handbook of Disability Arts, Culture and Media*, ed. by Bree Hadley and Donna McDonald (London: Taylor and Francis Group, 2018), pp. 163-75 (p.163).

<sup>15</sup> Reason, 'Ways of Watching', p. 173.

<sup>16</sup> Daniels in *Shakespeare Comes to Broadmoor*, p. 89; Wayne, The Gallowfield Players, *Thinking About Creative Space* (unpublished, August 2020).

This was demonstrated through the passion and commitment of performing in front of a public audience, however small or large.

Chapter 3 considered the ways in which Shakespeare offers a reflective lens through which individuals can consider themselves and their own experiences during periods of isolation or dislocation from the community. Drawing on evidence spanning eight decades, there are notable instances of using Shakespeare for cultural sustenance during difficult times, invoking a sense of habitus; social belonging, connection to something more durable than their present isolation and a place in the wider history which Shakespeare's work represents. Dutlinger's explanation of the transformative power of performance and the way it enables at least temporary reclamation of 'individual identity' was proven.<sup>17</sup>

Deleuze's theory that difference was an essential part of individuation provided the context against which I was able to assess the way in which people used Shakespeare's language and characters to both identify themselves with the long tradition of his work but also create critical distance from the challenges they were facing during isolation. This critical distancing allowed them to reassess their situation through the characters of the plays in an almost analytical way; not objectively because it related to their subjective experience, but using dramatic distancing which allowed for a greater variety of viewpoints for exploration of their problems and potential ways of dealing with those problems. For Karolina Lanckorońska, whose memoirs describe her survival in the internment camps of World War Two, it was apparent that continued engagement with the arts and learning provided her with a coping strategy for the horrors she witnessed. These allowed her to continue with

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<sup>17</sup>Anne Dutlinger, *Art, Music and Education as a Strategy for Survival: 1941-1945* (New York: Herodias: 2001), p. 5.

the connection to her former life and to sustain hope of returning to it in the future, a hope which was realised. Whilst the centrality of Sonny Venkatrathnam's Shakespeare text to life as a political prisoner on Robben Island is arguably less than many would claim (which itself brings to the fore issues of the appropriation of the cultural capital of Shakespeare), again it was clear that for some of the political prisoners it was an important link to the external world.

The outbreak of COVID-19 provided the opportunity to explore Shakespeare as a source of reflection and resilience with the theatre companies formed as part of my practice-based research and also the wider prison population. The extraordinary regime implemented across the estate to contain the risk of infection meant that those incarcerated in the UK have been kept in virtual isolation since March 2020. For some, the Activity Packs I provided would have been their first exploration of Shakespeare and offered them an opportunity to creatively engage with themes and stories outside of their own restricted existence, allowing them to discuss topics with their cell-mates or families and encouraging them to consider educational opportunities for the future. For those within the theatre companies the pre-existing interconnections blurred the lines between Shakespeare and the support network of the group and myself, with Brody writing 'the return to Shakespeare Sundays can't come soon enough, I'm looking forward to that more than I am the prospect of a new job (hopefully!) or the return of my course'.<sup>18</sup> Dean is a relatively new member of The Gallowfield Players, with a significant resistance to any form of authority and discipline, so the arrival of correspondence from him contemplating his view of

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<sup>18</sup> Brody, Emergency Shakespeare, letter to author (30 July 2020).

reflection as ‘taking the time to ponder the task and how it can be improved, understanding characters and researching previous productions is vital in building a worthy product’ was unexpected and poignant.<sup>19</sup> He has spoken to Michael about the depth of connection he feels with the group and that although he struggles to have the confidence to verbalise this vulnerability to the wider group his attitude has altered in the year we have known each other. Consistency of connectivity has been important to the theatre companies throughout the lockdown period and this epitomised the need for trauma-informed work to be ongoing and collaborative. My research findings evidenced that trust, peer support and empowerment were all important in allowing those involved to develop resilience during difficult periods.

[Chapter 4](#) examined media portrayals of Shakespeare with marginalised communities, considering the way in which media *presents* in the context of providing visibility but also a sense of immediacy and contemporary relevance for a wider audience. It’s important to heed Barnes’ warnings about the perils of intrusion and seemingly charitable efforts which patronise rather than support those with whom the work is facilitated.<sup>20</sup> In modern society media is central to communication, meaning that it often forms the basis of peoples’ perceptions of the truth and with this level of influence comes both benefits and potential concerns. Neuman and Guggenheim’s six-stage model of media effects theory, specifically the active audience and interpretive effects theories, provided a useful foundation upon which to assess the way in which influence exists in both directions within modern media. There is no longer (if indeed there ever was) a top down dissemination of information;

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<sup>19</sup> Dean, The Gallowfield Players, *Reflections* (July 2020).

<sup>20</sup> Barnes, *Shakespearean Charity*.

instead influence flows in both directions and whilst difficult to capture, especially given the ever-changing nature and exponential growth of social media, this is the reality into which narratives of Shakespeare with marginalised people is released.

Regardless of the form and content of the media there are no unmediated stories; every narrative shared takes a particular perspective, whether conscious or not, shaping the way in which messages are conveyed and received. Accepting this enables us to focus on who is shaping the narrative and whose voice is really being heard. Often the voice being heard is not the one speaking, particularly with marginalised people; it may be the facilitator, the funding body or someone else entirely who is articulating the way in which the reality should be mediated for public consumption. Ironically, one of the significant benefits of Shakespeare, as explored in Chapter 1, is the opportunity for enhanced communication, yet when the story is being shared often this is subsumed by other competing voices. This chapter examined a spectrum of media, organised according to the closeness of the narrator to the actual work. My own practice was informed by the existing body of media pieces; the intention was that The Gallowfield Players' and Emergency Shakespeare's media would offer centrality of voice to those involved, not modulated by my own thoughts and perceptions. The actors in those particular companies are the ones best placed to articulate their own reality and the work we have done using Shakespeare's texts has given them the vocabulary and the confidence with which to speak directly to society, asking them 'to look beyond the labels, see behind the stigma and see something more'.<sup>21</sup> Michael's aspiration that we 'hope to be seen as torchbearers for another viewpoint, the

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<sup>21</sup> Keith, The Gallowfield Players, Rehearsal Diary for *Julius Caesar* (unpublished, June 2019).



group who made people think differently about the humans behind the label of criminal’ both evidences his pride in his achievements so far and his plans to continue building a future legacy.<sup>22</sup>

### In conclusion

Across each of these spaces it was evident that Shakespeare’s characters and narratives did not *give* people the methods of communication they needed – to do so would have been a passive act, such as Lefebvre describes and which I have contested throughout.<sup>23</sup> What Shakespeare’s characters and narratives did was to inspire and to enable people to develop their own methods of communication, allowing them to create the mental and physical space and capacity to do so. So, for people often pushed to the side-lines of society, Shakespeare can be used as a lens to reflect on their own underlying humanity and to see their differences not as a negative but as an intrinsic part of their individuation. Whilst other playwrights have created characters which can be used similarly, the inherent cultural capital and sense of achievement from appropriating Shakespeare for oneself cannot be underestimated.

Navigating a pathway through being an advocate of using Shakespeare in this way and extolling the benefits of this for people, both marginalised and otherwise, is complex. It requires avoidance of being patronising or inflicting value judgements which are inappropriate or prejudiced. This research and my own practice brought this question to the

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<sup>22</sup> Michael, *The Gallowfield Players, Reflections on Media Spaces* (unpublished, August 2020).

<sup>23</sup> Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p.43.

forefront of my consciousness and there is no singular right way to facilitate Shakespeare or any creativity but there are a number of ways which, in my view, should be avoided. The social conventions of encouraging anyone who is different in society to conform to social norms and a missionary-like zealotry to impose culture as a panacea are damaging. As Liz Atkins and Vicky Duckworth write

Social justice researchers are transparent about the values that researchers should adhere to, most notably, democratic values: concern for marginalised and minority rights and dignity, commitment to the common good, conviction in the power of individuals to have agency, belief in the importance of dialogic engagement and the transparent stream of ideas, reflexivity and the central premise of individual and collective responsibility for others.<sup>24</sup>

This serves as an accurate summation of the way I have attempted to structure my own work in this field, being respectful of those I worked with and openly acknowledging that learning and enrichment flows in both directions.

The impact of trauma on those dislocated from a sense of social connectedness is significant and trauma-informed methodologies are becoming more prevalent across pedagogical, therapeutic and carceral settings as this knowledge becomes more widely embedded and the implications of underlying trauma are becoming better understood. From my own research, those interventions which use these principles as their core

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<sup>24</sup> Liz Atkins and Vicky Duckworth, *Research Methods for Social Justice and Equity in Education* (London: Bloomsbury Research Methods for Education, 2019), p. 119.

operating structure demonstrate a more collaborative approach to Shakespeare, to creativity and to those marginalised than those which seek to impose a concept of Shakespeare as a 'treatment' which in some way will cure our differences.<sup>25</sup> Those differences are what makes each person unique and, whilst enabling people to find their voice and the confidence to use that voice is important, we need to move towards a society which does not seek to normalise every individual, instead celebrating those differences and the richness they can bring. The power of Shakespeare can be double-edged; for many marginalised people (including a high proportion of inmates and people who have experienced homelessness) it may have been used to highlight their academic failings during formal education or denied them due to them being neuro-divergent. This same power can be realised positively if people are able to then access Shakespeare, not to learn his work in some purely academic sense but to interweave Shakespeare and their own reality. For in the telling of those tales we may see more revealed about Shakespeare and about their own lives than we know today, indeed if we choose to look into the mirror of these tales we may see more of our own personal reality reflected too.

Funding for the arts has been put under continual pressure for decades and against the economic impact of COVID-19 the situation looks even more bleak than before, with many institutions announcing redundancies to reduce costs.<sup>26</sup> In contrast to this, the costs

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<sup>25</sup> Sonya Freeman Loftis, 'Autistic Culture, Shakespeare Therapy and the Hunter Heartbeat Method' in *Shakespeare Survey*, 72, ed. by Emma Smith (2019), 256-67 (p. 265).

<sup>26</sup> BBC News, 'Royal Shakespeare Company: 158 jobs at risk' (6 October 2020), <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-coventry-warwickshire-54437700#:~:text=The%20RSC%20said%20it%20hoped,upon%2DAvon%2C%20in%20December.&text=Howev%2C%20the%20Swan%20Theatre%20and,until%202022%2C%20the%20company%20said>, [accessed 14 October 2020]; Manchester Royal Exchange Theatre forecast redundancies for up to 65% of staff - Tim Rhys, 'Theatres are already closing: the UK Government needs to act now' *The Conversation* (3 July 2020), <https://theconversation.com/coronavirus-theatres-are-already-closing-the-uk-government-needs-to-act-now-141796>, [accessed 14 October 2020].

of the criminal justice system, mental health services, special educational facilities and work with those experiencing homelessness continue to escalate. The 2018/19 cost per annum for prisons in England and Wales was £3.4 billion (an increase of £22 million from the previous year).<sup>27</sup> In 2007 the NHS, social and informal care costs of mental ill-health were £22.5 billion and wider costs to society were £77 billion; these costs are estimated to increase by 45% by 2026.<sup>28</sup> Attributing a figure to the costs of SEN schooling is difficult as funding in this area is complex and disparate, split into differing 'blocks'. SEN children account for 14.6% of school populations in England and there is an estimated shortfall of SEN funding in 2021 of £1.2-£1.6 billion and this figure was before the impact of COVID-19 on teaching.<sup>29</sup> Councils are reported to spend over £1.1 billion per annum in temporary accommodation for those experiencing homelessness, without factoring in the costs of trying to permanently alleviate the homelessness.<sup>30</sup> The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) estimated in June 2020 that a further 1,100,000 people in the UK would face poverty this year as a result of COVID-19 and that those worst affected are from ethnic minorities.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Ministry of Justice, *Costs per place and costs per prisoner by individual prison, HM Prison and Probation Service Annual Report and Accounts 2018-19 Management Information Addendum* (31 October 2019), [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/841948/costs-per-place-costs-per-prisoner-2018-2019.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/841948/costs-per-place-costs-per-prisoner-2018-2019.pdf), [accessed 14 October 2020].

<sup>28</sup> National Mental Health Development Unit, *Factfile 3: The Costs of Mental Ill Health*, (2009), <https://www.networks.nhs.uk/nhs-networks/regional-mental-health-workshop-mids-east/documents/supporting-materials/nmhdu-factfile-3.pdf>, [accessed 14 October 2020].

<sup>29</sup> House of Commons Education Committee, *A ten-year plan for school and college funding* (16 July 2019), p. 33 and p. 37, <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmeduc/969/969.pdf>, [accessed 14 October 2020].

<sup>30</sup> Shelter, 'Homeless crisis costs councils over £1bn in just one year (November 2019)', [https://england.shelter.org.uk/media/press\\_releases/articles/homelessness\\_crisis\\_costs\\_councils\\_over\\_1bn\\_in\\_just\\_one\\_year](https://england.shelter.org.uk/media/press_releases/articles/homelessness_crisis_costs_councils_over_1bn_in_just_one_year), [accessed 14 October 2020].

<sup>31</sup> Clare McNeil, Henry Parkes, David Wastell and Robin Harvey, '1.1 million more people face poverty at the end of 2020 as a result of coronavirus pandemic, finds IPPR' (London: IPPR The Progressive Policy Think Tank, June 2020), <https://www.ippr.org/news-and-media/press-releases/1-1-million-more-people-face-poverty-at-end-of-2020-as-a-result-of-coronavirus-pandemic-finds-ippr>, [accessed 3 November 2020]; Parth Patel, Alba Kapoor and Nick Treloar, 'Ethnic inequalities in COVID-19 are playing out again – how can we stop them?' (London: IPPR The Progressive Policy Think Tank and The Runnymede Trust, October 2020), <https://www.ippr.org/blog/ethnic-inequalities-in-COVID-19-are-playing-out-again-how-can-we-stop-them>, [accessed 3 November 2020].

None of these costs quoted remain static; they rise exponentially each year. These costs relate to those marginalised, causing a continual resentment from many about where money from taxes is spent. Perhaps in order to alleviate some of the root causes of this marginalisation and effect a more integrated society for the future, creative alternatives need to become more than “nice to haves” as they are often seen today.

Quantifying individual change is difficult and this thesis cannot possibly encompass all of the ways in which Shakespeare can be used with those marginalised. It was necessary to limit the scope to a number of broad categories of people and then within those to a number of projects to enable it to be a defined and achievable piece of research. However, the intention is that this thesis lays the foundations for further explorations both nationally and internationally and opens up dialogue between practitioners, academics and people with lived experience of marginalisation. Some policy changes have begun to be effected as a result of my practice-based research (HMPPS funding of permanent theatre companies in some prisons, the agreement of HMPPS to two-way correspondence with individual inmates during COVID-19) and the aspiration is that this thesis and the work which will follow will continue to influence policy, to deliver changes at individual and group levels and to encourage academic enquiry into this powerful method of communication for those whose voice has often not been previously heard. Whilst this thesis has been structured around the differing types of space in which Shakespeare’s work can be used by those imprisoned physically or metaphorically by marginalisation, Dean’s assessment is a very valid one within the context of long-term collaborative companies, of which I hope to develop more as a result of this work:

Any space can be used to facilitate our work as it is the willingness and support of the group that makes the foundation the end result is built on.<sup>32</sup>



62. The Gallowfield Players, crown from *Macbeth*, created from cardboard and silver paper by an inmate who is cell-bound due to age and ill-health. This has become symbolic of the work of The Gallowfield Players (October 2018), Photo: Rowan Mackenzie.

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<sup>32</sup> Dean, The Gallowfield Players, *Creative Spaces* (unpublished, August 2020).

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As far as possible I have attempted to separate my sources of information according to the sections below but I am mindful that there will naturally be some element of cross-over between some sections. With a thesis which draws so heavily on practice-based research there are many sources which are unpublished, unrecorded or not within the public domain. There are also sources such as performance publicity which would in some ways usually fit within secondary sources but when they are created by the marginalised people themselves it feels more appropriate to categorise them as primary.

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## Appendix 1 - Samples of self-analysis questions for participants in HMP programmes

HMP Leicester (8 participants).

Confident or very confident in	Pre-intervention	Post intervention
Public speaking/ reading aloud	62%	87%
Communicating through speech	75%	87%
Communicating through written words	62%	87%
Empathy with other people	75%	100%

HMP Gartree (16 participants)

Confident or very confident in	Pre-intervention	Post intervention
Public speaking/ reading aloud	50%	86%
Communicating through speech	62%	72%
Communicating through written words	86%	86%
Empathy with other people	75%	86%

HMP Stafford (20 participants)

Confident or very confident in	Pre-intervention	Post intervention
Public speaking/ reading aloud	70%	90%
Communicating through speech	85%	95%
Communicating through written words	75%	85%
Empathy with other people	85%	95%



## Appendix 2 - Creative Responses from HMP Leicester Workshops

### Talent Unlocked (*Othello* speech) (October 2017)

Shakespeare

OTHELLO

Excellent wretch! Perdition catch my soul  
But I do love thee! And when I love thee  
not

Chaos is come again.

IAGO

My noble lord –

OTHELLO

What dost thou say Iago?

IAGO

Did Michael Cassio, when you wooed my  
lady,

Know of your love?

OTHELLO

He did, from first to last.

Why dost thou ask?

Is he not honest?

IAGO

Honest, my lord?

OTHELLO

Honest? Aye, honest.

IAGO

My lord, for aught I know.

OTHELLO

Though dost mean something,  
I heard thee say even now thou lik'st not  
that

When Cassio left my wife: what didst not  
like?

If thou dost love me show me thy thought.

IAGO

I dare be sworn, I think, that he is honest.

OTHELLO

Nay, yet there's more in this:

I prithee speak to me, as to thy thinkings,  
As thou dost ruminate, and give thy worst  
of thoughts

The worst of words.

IAGO

I do beseech you,

HMP Leicester

OTHELLO

She's a good woman. She caught my soul,  
and I do love her. When I am not with her  
my life is in chaos.

IAGO

Hmmm?

OTHELLO

Why are you saying that?

IAGO

When you were chatting up your lady, did  
Michael Cassio know of your love?

OTHELLO

Yes, he did completely.

Why do you ask?

IAGO

Am I supposed to know?

OTHELLO

Why do you ask? Why, is he lying?

IAGO

Am I supposed to know?

OTHELLO

What does it mean; it does mean  
something.

IAGO

Don't make me swear on it, but I think he is  
honest.

OTHELLO

What are you saying? You seen them  
talking, So what don't you like about that?  
If you're my friend tell me what you're  
thinking.

IAGO

It were not for your quiet nor your good  
Nor for my manhood, honesty and wisdom.

OTHELLO

By heavens I'll know thy thoughts!

IAGO

Oh beware, my lord, of jealousy!  
It is the green-eyed monster, which doth  
mock  
The meat it feeds on. That cuckold lives in  
bliss  
Who, certain of his fate, loves not his  
wronger,  
But O, what damned minutes tells he o'er  
Who dotes yet doubts, suspects yet  
strongly loves!

OTHELLO

Oh misery!

Tis not to make me jealous  
To say my wife is fair, feeds well, loves  
company,  
Is free of speech, sings, plays and dances  
well.  
I'll see before I doubt, when I doubt, prove,  
And on the proof there is no more but this:  
Away at once with love or jealousy!

IAGO

Look to your wife, observe her well with  
Cassio.  
Wear your eyes thus, not jealous nor  
secure.  
I hope you will consider what is spoke  
Comes from my love. But I do see you're  
moved;  
I am to pray you not to strain my speech  
To grosser issues nor to larger reach  
Than to suspicion.

OTHELLO

I do not think but Desdemona's honest.

IAGO

Long live she so; and long live you to think  
so.

OTHELLO

Honestly mate, if it weren't for the fact that  
you are a nice bloke, I wouldn't tell you my  
thoughts. And, because it would bring into  
question my manhood, honesty and  
wisdom to let you know my thoughts.

OTHELLO

So, there is more to it. Please tell me what  
you're thinking. Don't hold back, tell me.

IAGO

Beware of jealousy, it eats you alive. If you  
don't love her it doesn't really matter but if  
you love her and still doubt her it will do  
your head in.

OTHELLO

What the fuck man, are you sure?

Well I am not jealous, I trust my wife, she  
speaks her mind. We have a good life  
together and I am not going to doubt her  
until there is proof. There really is none at  
the moment so for now I am not going to  
be jealous.

IAGO

Watch your wife when she is with Cassio,  
and go with what you see and not what you  
are already thinking. Bear in mind my  
words to you are from a loving place. I can  
see you're affected so please don't read  
too much into my words.

OTHELLO

I do not think so, I do believe my wife is  
honest.

IAGO

I hope she stays honest.....and I hope you  
keep thinking it.

OTHELLO



And yet how nature, erring from itself –  
 If more thou dost perceive, let me know  
 more:  
 Set on thy wife to observe. Leave me Iago.

IAGO

My lord, I take my leave.

OTHELLO

Why did I marry?

This honest creature doubtless  
 Sees and knows more – much more – than  
 he unfolds.  
 This fellow's of exceeding honesty  
 And knows all qualities, with a learned  
 spirit,  
 Of human dealings. If I do prove her  
 haggard,  
 Thou that her jesses were my dear heart-  
 strings,  
 I'd whistle her off and let her down the  
 wind  
 To prey at fortune.  
 She's gone, I am abused, and my relief  
 Must be to loathe her. O curse of marriage  
 That we can call these delicate creatures  
 ours  
 And not their appetites! I had rather be a  
 toad  
 And live upon the vapour of a dungeon  
 Than keep a corner in the thing I love  
 For other's uses. Look where she comes:  
 If she be false, O then heaven mocks itself,  
 I'll not believe't.

Ok, maybe life is like that at times, nature  
 does do crazy things from time to time. If  
 you think there is more to it ask your wife  
 to keep an eye on her. Go now, leave me  
 be.

IAGO

Alright, I'm leaving

OTHELLO

Why did I marry?

This honest friend of mine knows more  
 than what he is telling me. I do believe he is  
 looking out for me as a true friend would.  
 He's very honest, he knows about life, he  
 knows the score.  
 If I do prove her wrong and find out she has  
 been cheating I will let go of her and throw  
 her to the wolves, to hell with her.  
 It's over, she's burnt my head out, I now  
 hate her, why did I marry her? She is a  
 lovely girl but why did I not see her lust? To  
 be cheated on is as low as can be when  
 ones in love. I'd rather be single knowing  
 I've had a piece of her.  
 Look where she is now. HA!

Responding to Brutus' speech in *Julius Caesar* HMP Leicester (April 2018)

1. I don't think we should do that

3. Why then?

1. Because.. the empire wouldn't be like it is now without him so maybe he deserves his position. It would be a mistake

3. He's a strong guy right enough

2. Now's our time, we should kill him mate. take his head off with an axe we should round up all the men that agree, weigh up our odds.... Oh dear

1. Look what he's done, look what he's done for our families, he's looked after our families, he's spared us. May a times he's ...taken over our colonies, he's actually part of our, colony

3. But if we were to try to kill him and failed we'd all risk our lives

1. What is life, with such a leader,

2. What is life with a temporary leader, living like peasants,

2. we're starving

1. What of the army kills us after we kill him, cos everyone loves him?

2. We're fighting s losing battle anyway but if we kill him we'll lead a better life.

1. Why do we want to kill him anyway?

3. He's just overdone it, crossed line

2. Totally agree with you, he's been in power for too long

He's crossed the line, he thinks he's a god

2. and he's not

3. He's not

2 I'm more godly than him

1. Well you might try to persuade the population but what happens if someone gets up and goes against you and you know, get's up and goes up to Caesar

3. That's why I need you guys with me

1. This sounds like too much of a risk

2. You go then, go then

3. We have to do this without the population knowing. If he's with his army we wouldn't stand a chance. There's only 6 of us.

1. Is it even safe to talk about this here and now? How do we know that someone's not going to run back to him from this group, and tell him of our plans?

2. They're probably recording it

1. We'd need to assassinate them along with Caesar

2. There might be a scribe writing down the words

1. I think this is something that you guys who are against him really need to reconsider.

Look, how does this elevate my position?

3. That's a good point. I'll give you a top job

1. You obviously want to be the new leader. How are you going to be any better

I'm going to be fair, give you all good jobs

1. I've got a good job now, I'm part of the senate
3. I'll give you a better one
1. Let, me explain this to you. He pays me at least 2 million, a month, yeah? I should be killing you right now.
3. I've seen your payslip and, anyway, now we have move away to talk about what matters
2. We'll deal with the aftermath afterwards
1. How will you guarantee that my family are safe after this?
3. Because you are a soldier and the safety of your family is paramount to me
1. What about His family, you are going to have to kill his family too. Are you happy about that?
3. We will exile them
1. They could go somewhere else and they are Caesar's bloodline. They are going to build up some big massive army and some big empire themselves and they'll be holding that grudge and coming and killing us all... what about that?
- We will kill Caesar and we will get the army to kill the family
- If we do this we will have to do it together
2. Who's gonna be the first to, take everyone out then?
1. Are you for or against?
2. I'm just asking like who's doing what like, I mean I'm not sayin' I'm gonna kill him it first
1. I'm against it. I feel like, this is not gonna end very nicely for any of us
3. The situation is desperate
2. You're either with us or against us
1. Hold on, how are people gonna see us, when we've liked, stabbed him in the back
3. As heroes, David and Goliath
1. That was a one on one
1. Have you seen what he has done to people who, like, gone against him, like thrown them to the lions, turned them into gladiators,
3. Well, let's just hope that doesn't happen
3. I, Brutus, say we must do this for the sake of democracy

The Wretched Rat-Catcher (inspired by *Romeo and Juliet*) HMP Leicester (September 2018)

*Enter Romeo and Mercutio, returning home from a party – they spot Tybalt a little way off, walking along the street.*

*Romeo*

Don't take no notice, lets avoid him.

*Mercutio*

I just wanna have some drink.

*Tybalt approaches them*

*Tybalt (to Romeo)*

What you doing with this guy?

*Romeo*

Just chill man, he's my friend.

*Mercutio glares at Tybalt*

*Romeo (to Tybalt)*

Go and get some cigarettes man.

*Tybalt*

Go on your errand, boy.

*Exit Mercutio to side*

*Romeo*

Listen, calm down, just do it for me T, just do it for me mate.

*Re-enter Mercutio*

*Mercutio (to Romeo, glaring at Tybalt)*

Hey, cousin, I've got the cigarettes.

*Romeo has his arm on Tybalt trying to calm him down and keep him and Mercutio separate.*

*Mercutio (to Romeo)*

Have you told him about Julie?

*Romeo*

Shut up man.

*Tybalt*

What you saying about Julie?

*Romeo*

He's just chatting shit man.

*Mercutio (quietly so only heard by Romeo)*

Julie, hehe, he's bedding your cousin!

*Romeo*

Chill out Mercutio, have you seen his blade on him, he's got a big blade!

*Tybalt*

What's this about Julie? My Julie?

*Romeo*

He's just a bit drunk!

*Tybalt*

What's this about my Julie?

*Mercutio*

What are you looking at Bruv?

*Romeo*

Just chill out and go and get a bottle.

*Tybalt*

What's this?

*Romeo*

It's nothing *(turns away)*

*Tybalt*

I don't believe you. Tell me the fucking truth!

*Tybalt chases after Romeo*

*Mercutio comes up behind Tybalt*

*Mercutio*

If you're gonna have a go, have a go at me. *(stabbed by Tybalt)*

Wretched rat-catcher. *(Mercutio dies)*

*Tybalt runs off*

*Romeo*

Tybalt show yourself *(screams and runs to him)*

Tybalt, chill out man, you're not going to like it. I'm in love with Julie – she's mine!

*Romeo stabs Tybalt – he dies and Romeo runs offstage*

Family Conflicts script (inspired by *Romeo and Juliet*) HMP Leicester (October 2018)

*Reece seated in the centre of the stage, his head down and his shoulders slumped.*

*Enter Narrator*

*Narrator* Reece went into care when he was 11 because his Mum was on drugs and his older brother went to prison and his Dad had never been seen. In the last seven years he's been in two different children's homes.

*Enter Stephen (Social Worker)*

*Stephen* He's been a nightmare – he's run away so many times – he's constantly doing it and when he's there he does nothing but cause damage to property and then loses all his privileges.

*Enter Dan (Reece's friend)*

*Dan* He just wanted a bit of freedom; wanted to see a bit of life, he's just a kid. He's always been shut away – locked up in a lock-down school.

*Stephen* He never attends any of his meetings. How behaviour has gotten worse as he's got older. He's got more into crime – drug dealing, driving without a license, hanging around with the wrong people. I just don't know what's going to happen.

*Enter Emily (Reece's girlfriend)*

*Emily* He's so lovely when we are together – but my parents disapprove – they don't see him how I do. We've been together a year but they still won't accept him. He will eventually grow out of whatever he is doing wrong.

*Enter Police Officer*

*Police Officer* He's a nuisance – every time something cracks off in the area you can bet your life Reece is involved! From antisocial behaviour to driving without insurance.

*Dan* But he's been broke all these years; he's never had no money except what he got from his drugs. Did he really have a choice?

*Stephen* He's 18 now – he's becoming a man, he's out of care but he's moved back in with his mother – she's not changed a bit. Emily's got herself pregnant and moved in too.

*Emily* My parents hit the roof, my Dad is sooooo old-fashioned. He went mad so I had to leave. He's always been so strict and he hated Reece from Day 1 cos he's been in care.

*Dan* Emily's good for him, having a family could be the making – it's his chance to prove everyone wrong. He's still not grown out of it – he's still not grown out of it yet – he's still

causing trouble and got that mentality but let's hope that being a dad will sort him out? As his best friend maybe I wasn't the best influence, maybe some of it is my fault.

## Appendix 3 – Extracts from Emergency Shakespeare *Macbeth* script (performed September 2019)

### Act 1, Scene 5

#### LADY MACBETH'S FLAT

Enter lady Macbeth reading a letter and clutching a coffee cup as she reads the letter she sits on the table, cross legged and contemplating

#### LADY MACBETH

They met me in the day of success and I have learned by the perfectest report they have more in them than mortal knowledge. While I stood rapt in the wonder of it, came missives from the great, who all- hailed me " understudy of Macbeth"; by which title , before the trio of power saluted me and referred me to the coming on of time with "Hail Macbeth that shalt be!" This I have thought good to deliver you, My dearest partner of greatness, that thou might not lose the dues of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is promised. Lay it to your heart and farewell.

Loved you are understudy and shall be what you are promised. Yet I do fear your nature. It is too full of the milk of human kindness to catch the nearest way. You would be great, are not without ambition, but without the illness should attend it. You wouldn't play false and yet would wrongly win the role you want. Now, I may pour spirit in your ear and push you with the power of my words, all that impedes you from the golden round seen to fade with aid of fate and magic. Come spirits that tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here and fill me from the crown to the toe topful of direst cruelty! Make thick my blood, stop up the access and passage to remorse, that no compunctious visitings of nature shake me fell purpose nor keep peace between the effect and it. Come, thick night and hide you in the darkest smoke of hell, that my sharp knife see not the wound it makes, nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark to cry "stop, stop!"

Enter Wade, he walks towards Lady Macbeth

#### WADE

(gesturing to the letter) I see that you've got my good news. What do you think? We're on the up (hugs Lady M)

#### LADY MACBETH

(withdrawing) you're hardly playing Lear at the Globe; frankly it's downright insulting. You won't even be on stage unless



Duncan can't make it. The guys playing his guards will get more exposure. I love you and I will always support you but you're embarrassing me, you're not dreaming big.

WADE

What do you mean?

LADY MACBETH

I mean that lots of things can happen to old has-beens. They could trip treading the boards; choke and croak on their toast; have the curtain literally come down on them. All scenarios that see you step into his lime light.

WADE

You want to kill Duncan?

LADY MACBETH

Oh no, nothing quite so serious as that; but we could hurt him, just a bit, something which would put him out of action for a few nights.

WADE

Stop those thoughts. The company are going out for a few drinks at the Castle tonight, Duncan will be there but he has said he's only staying for one or two.

LADY MACBETH

Sounds perfect. O never shall sun that morrow see. Your face, my Wayne, is a book where men may read strange matters. Bear welcome in your eyes, your hand, your tongue. Look like the innocent flower but be the serpent underneath. You shall put this night's great business into my hands which shall to all our nights and days to come give us sovereign sway and masterdom.

WADE

So, you have a plan?

LADY MACBETH

Only look up clear, to alter favour is to fear. Leave all the rest to me.

ALL EXIT

## Act 1, Scene 6

The Castle pub

INSIDE THE PUB IS DUNCAN, LENOX, ANGUS, MALCOLM, BANQUO, DIRECTOR, STAGE MANAGER, PRODUCER AND LADY MACBETH AND HER FRIEND. THEY ARE TALKING ANIMATEDLY IN SEPARATE SMALL GROUPS, BUT ARE TOGETHER AS A UNIT.

Outside is Wade smoking

WADE

If it were done, when it's done, then it will be done quickly. With his sickness success, then but this blow might be the be-all and the end-all here. But here upon this bank and shoal of time we'd jump the life to come. He's here in double trust. First as I am his friend and fellow cast member. Then as his invite and host, who should against his saboteur shut the door, not bear the knife myself. This even-handed justice commends the ingredients of our poisoned chalice to our own lips. I have no spur to prick the sides of my intent, but only vaulting ambitions, which overleaps itself and falls on the others.....

[Lady Macbeth puts on her coat and walk over to Wayne, taking the cigarette from Wade's lips and smokes it.]

LADY MACBETH

How now. What do we know?

[Wade looks blankly at Lady Macbeth ]

LADY MACBETH

Duncan's almost finished his pint, you know. You're not exactly doing any good out here.

WADE

I can't do this, he's helped me so much and he's like a father to the company

LADY MACBETH

What beast was it then that made you break this enterprise to me? When you dared do it then you were a man and to be more than what you were, you would be so much more the man.

WADE

But what if we should fail?

LADY MACBETH

We fail? But screw your courage to the sticking-place and we will not fail. Pour this vial into his beer, let him drink it down and it will work its magic. Within an hour he shall fall sick and be so for days. You can then step up from understudy to main cast and you and I will be on our way to the top. He in time will be better and none will know what happened.

WADE

(takes a deep breath) Ok I am settled and bend up my internal strength to this terrible feat. You go on and mock the time with fairest show, false face must hide what the false heart does know.

[Lady Macbeth leaves and returns to the pub leaving Wade alone. He lights another cigarette)

WADE

Is this a dagger which I see before me, the handle towards my hand? Come, let me clutch you. I have you not and yet I see you still. Are you not a fatal vision, sensible to feeling as to sight? Or are you not but a dagger of the mind, a false creation, proceeding from the heart- oppressed brain? I see you yet, in form as palpable as this which now I draw, you marshal me the way I am to go, and such an instrument I cannot use. My eyes are made the focus of the other senses, or else worth all the rest. I see you still and on you blade and handles gouts of bloody business which informs this to my eyes. You sure and firm set earth hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear these very stones prate of my whereabouts and take the present horror from the time which now suits with it.

{A CLOCK STRIKES}

WADE

I go and it is done, the bell invites me. Hear it not Duncan, for it is a knell that summons you to heaven or to hell.

{Wade stubs out the cigarette and enters the pub}

## Act 4, Scene 1

Rehearsal work shop - enter Director, Producer and Stage Manager, they are the first to arrive

DIRECTOR

Ok, as the production team I feel like we ought to address the elephant in the room. With two deaths in the company what on earth is our insurance premium looking like?

PRODUCER

{groans}Urrrggghhh...don't even. I'm not sure we're going to have enough cast left to open at this rate

STAGE MANAGER

Isn't that a bit heartless?

PRODUCER

I've got all of my assets tied up in this company, macabre humor is all I've got left.

DIRECTOR

They do say *Macbeth* carries a curse

STAGE MANAGER

Well that's gone and done it . Well done!

[director winces as he's realized what he's done]

PRODUCER

Never speak the play's title aloud in the theatre you're performing!

DIRECTOR

Life is imitating art a little too closely for me at the moment

STAGE MANAGER

What would that make us then? The witches?

[Director, Producer and Stage Manager start clearing up remnants of the party, throwing them in the bin. Stage manager comes across three witches hats and passes them out]

ENTER

Wade enters as chanting starts

DIRECTOR

Round about the cauldron go

PRODUCER

In the poisoned entrails throw

STAGE MANAGER

Eye of newt and toe of frog

DIRECTOR

Wool of bat and tongue of dog

PRODUCER

Adders fork and blind-worm sting

STAGE MANAGER

Lizards leg and howlets wing

DIRECTOR

For a charm of powerful trouble

PRODUCER

Like a hell-broth boil and bubble

STAGE MANAGER

Double, double toil and trouble

ALL

Fire burn and cauldron bubble

STAGE MANAGER

By the pricking of my thumbs, something wicked this way comes

PRODUCER

In all seriousness though everything's been going off since we hired Wade

DIRECTOR

It would appear that he missed the joke in the way we told him he got the understudy role.

STAGE MANAGER

He is taking the Stanislavski method to a whole other level

PRODUCER

If Wade is becoming such a problem perhaps we ought to start looking at casting again?

DIRECTOR

Macduff approached me a few days ago to see if he could audition for the lead in our next production, but perhaps his ambition could be rewarded and solve our issue at the same time?

STAGE MANAGER

Maybe we should get both Wade and Macduff to audition to play Macbeth? Better that than Wade think it is his god-given right.

PRODUCER

Come on now, in the words of the bard himself; Macbeth shall never vanquished be until Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill shall come against him.

WADE

[Aside] That will never be! Who can impress the forest, bid the tree unfix his earth-bound root? From this moment the very firstlings of my heart shall be the firstlings of my hand; and

even now, to crown my thoughts with acts, be thought and done.  
The castle of Macduff I will surprise! He wants to burn  
bright? Why then so he will! His home shall be set alight and  
no one will suspect foul play. The flat is old, the wiring is  
shot. No boasting like a fool, this deed I'll do before this  
purpose is cool!

## Act 5, Scene 2

[The following scene takes place as a transition between Scene 1 and scene 3 to demonstrate a passage of time - Scene 3 should be set up during the following dialogue]

DISPATCHER

Calling all units, calling all units. We need a response team on route to an urgent call out in Dunsinane Hill. Reported sighting of a suspect.

DS BIRNAM

Dispatcher this is DS Birnam and PC Wood, we are able to attend.

DISPATCHER

Received. The report was made by a concerned neighbor who claims to have seen someone, fitting the description of an arson suspect, entering a flat above the Pret a manager on Dunsinane Hill. The suspect is considered dangerous so handle with care.

## Appendix 4 - Extracts from The Gallowfield Players scripts

### *The Merchant* (performed January 2020)

<u>Prologue</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Stage Directions</u>
<i>Narrator:</i> We begin this tale as a man is being escorted to the gates of a prison for the final time.		<i>Enter 2 guards stage left.</i>
<i>Guard 1:</i> Come on Shylock, Get a move on!		
<i>Shylock:</i> Sure thing Guv' Don't want to be here a second longer than I have to.		<i>Enter Shylock stage left</i>
Ahh can you smell the air?		
<i>Guard 1:</i> Eh?		<i>Guards stand</i>
<i>Shylock:</i> Its fresh, not like that stale stink back there.	5	
<i>Guard 2:</i> It's more than just the atmosphere that is stale. The managers into this coffin have hammered the final nail.		
<i>Guard 1:</i> I wonder who will run your shop now you're gone. Likely there'll be trouble before too long.		
<i>Shylock:</i> Oh you knew about that Thought I did well keeping it under wraps.	10	
<i>Guard 2:</i> Yeah we knew, you were like the local Spar. You've proven yourself resourceful, you'll go far.		
<i>Guard 1:</i> Don't go screwing things up, we don't want to see you again.		
<i>Shylock:</i> No worries Guv' 've no intention of coming back to prison.	15	<i>Exit Guards stage left Shylock moves forward</i>
Too many years have passed me by. Too many losses made me wonder why? To reflect on my actions and their cost. Photos on a wall reminders of all I'd lost, The price to pay far too high.	20	
Yet I pay only the least part of it. Those left outside take the biggest hit They suffer the most, they pay the real cost. Children's tears as they sit on visits, Each one a sad memory elicits.	25	
<i>Continues:</i> Scarring my heart, searing my soul,		

The Gallowfield Players: The Merchant.

<u>Prologue</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Stage Directions</u>
<i>Shylock:</i> A souvenir of my part in the sorrow I have caused A painful reminder to be a better man, a better dad.		
A new start? I doubt it, the baggage I carry sits heavy on my shoulders, An invisible label more apparent as I get older. Becoming seen by all and set apart, I am now an ex-con. A man with no future, simply abandoned by the institutions that placed this lodestone around my neck.	30	
But for the sake of redemption I must. I must resist the temptation to seek revenge, Or to walk the same path as I once did. Instead I need to bask in the love a child bears for their father.	35	
Try harder, do better, go farther than who goes furthest to prove I deserve such a love. I must move forward no matter what the load, No matter what burden is laid or title bestowed, I shall begin anew.	40	<i>Exeunt. centre.</i>



The Gallowfield Players: The Merchant.

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**Act 2 Scene 1**

		<b><u>Line</u></b>	<b><u>Stage Directions</u></b>
<i>Narrator:</i>	A despondent Portia sits at a bar in the Belmont Hotel feeling a little sorry for herself because her big night is not going quite as she had planned.		<i>Barmen, Portia enter stage left.</i>
<i>Manager:</i>	May I join you?		<i>Manager enter stage right.</i>
<i>Portia:</i>	If you like but I must forewarn you that I am not the best company right now.		
<i>Manager:</i>	That is more than fine. My day is not working out either. Wait a second, you are the organiser of this gala. Why are you hiding away in here?	5	
<i>Portia:</i>	Yeah, I'm behind this sorry mess. Hopefully it'll get going later.		<i>Extras polishing glasses</i>
<i>Manager:</i>	Oh it is definitely going to get going, Maybe not for an hour or so. There is a massive pile up on the main road The streets are a nightmare and of course everyone will be fashionably late. If for no other reason than to be seen making an entrance.	10	
<i>Portia:</i>	How did you get here on time then?		
<i>Manager:</i>	I was already here, I'm staying in the hotel.	15	
<i>Portia:</i>	Very good of you, but I don't recall seeing your picture on the invite list.		
<i>Manager:</i>	You wouldn't have, I would be an automatic invite I own The Belmont.		
<i>Portia:</i>	Even so I thought I knew everyone invited just so I wouldn't get caught out like this.		<i>Gestures for the Bartender who brings over a bottle.</i>
<i>Manager:</i>	You know how it is with shell companies and the like, Bartender, just leave the bottle here, we'll serve ourselves. You can take that away though.	20	
<i>Bartender:</i>	Why does everyone seem to hate the juice?		
<i>Portia:</i>	I'm only on water, got to keep my wits about me tonight.		<i>Bartenders exit to edge of stage left.</i>
<i>Manager:</i>	Not just fair of features but there is wisdom inside.	25	

The Gallowfield Players: The Merchant.

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**Act 2 Scene 1**

		<b><u>Line</u></b>	<b><u>Stage Directions</u></b>
<i>Portia:</i>	So what is troubling you this evening?		
<i>Manager:</i>	People and the ill manners they possess.		
<i>Portia:</i>	I thought you would be used to that in your business.		
<i>Manager:</i>	You would think so but on occasion even I get wound up I work hard, in fact I am all self made. So what should it matter that my skin is a different shade? Too dark for those who patronise this abode, Too light to fit in back home. I spend more time in boardrooms than on the beach Causing my pallor to appear almost bleached. What should it matter the colour of my skin? Surely it matters more what lies within?	30	
	In here (pointing to heart) not all this (gesturing to skin) I am always other. Something amiss. People see me and recoil in fear, Judging me purely on the clothes I wear. And the shade of my skin.	35	
	Why should I be judged by a different set of standards, Even when I prove them wrong and screw the bastards. As I succeed they recoil more Fearing a man like me who manages power. All because of the shade of my skin.	40	
	So I succeed more still, blaze a trail of hope In my wake provide thousands of jobs . Why then do I receive such scorn When in this world I have done no harm? The shade of my skin.	45	
	I have built hospitals and schools, Yet I'm treated always like a fool. Those around me blinded by the media propaganda. Expecting anyone of this colour to have some dangerous agenda. Seeing only the shade of my skin.	50	
		55	

**Act 2 Scene 1**

		<b><u>Line</u></b>	<b><u>Stage Directions</u></b>
<i>Portia:</i>	I too have seen such behaviour. I, as a woman, must be a failure. 'Men will do it better than I ever could' But they don't do they or else they surely would. Stereotypes thrown at us because of race and gender Only serve to push us forward in our endeavours. What a merry pair of misfits we truly make, Me a lowly woman, you an Arab fake.	60       65	
<i>Manager:</i>	I am no sheik but am indeed self made. Never have I thought how gender is just a different shade Misfits indeed we together are.  I should get back to business, its been a pleasure indeed And let me know if there is anything that you may need. I shall see you later, in the main hall And I wish you the very best of luck with it all.	70	<i>Manager stands up.</i>         <i>Manager exits stage right.</i>
<i>Portia:</i>	A sheik, perhaps not, but a prince amongst men. Goodbye for now, 'til later then.		<i>Portia exits stage left.</i> <i>Bartenders grab table and chairs</i> <i>then exit stage left.</i>

**Act 3 Scene 1**

		<b><u>Line</u></b>	<b><u>Stage Directions</u></b>
<b>Narrator:</b>	In the streets, Sol and Sal are discussing unfortunate news that may have serious consequences for all those involved.		<i>Sol and Sal walk in from centre but remain at edge of audience.</i>
<b>Sol:</b>	Well met brother, What news have you gathered?		
<b>Sal:</b>	Nothing as yet written firmly in stone, Although rumours say one shipment is now gone. To my dismay, high will be the cost, It seems that customs may have been tipped off.	5	
<b>Sol:</b>	If intelligence was not freely given they would be bereft. Picking their noses or scratching their arses they would be left. But this indicates a problem within. We need to find who passed information.	10	
<b>Sal:</b>	Who indeed? Such a snake should instead Be shot down, be cut dead.		
<b>Sol:</b>	I would that these rumours were false. There is old Shylock, hear him, he calls to us.		<i>Enter Shylock and Tubbs stage left. Shylock waves at Sol and Sal.</i>
<b>Sal:</b>	What does that old con now want? No doubt for us to fuss and fawn. Over his long deceased reputation. Thinking we should bow to his station. His speeches are dull, always reigniting the past. Doesn't he realise the shadow he casts is somewhat shorter and less dark? Perhaps some fun at him we should poke, Make him the mark of our jokes.	15       20	
<b>Sol:</b>	He is not the man he was for sure But around him we should still take care. Not necessarily poke that vipers nest. Let us see what he wants, what is his behest.	25	<i>Sol and Sal come on to stage properly.</i>
<b>Shylock:</b>	So boys, are the rumours true? From the tone in your voices and this atmosphere blue It would appear so, alas business is not going so good. So tell me, what of this news?	30	

**Act 3 Scene 1**

		<b><u>Line</u></b>	<b><u>Stage Directions</u></b>
<b>Sol:</b>	Indeed, doubly so the rumours are black With Jessica robbing your fortune, currency you lack. This predicament will be difficult to fix, It would appear that Karma is quite the bitch And you are most definitely not her master.	35	
<b>Sal:</b>	Nor Jessica's for that matter.		
<b>Shylock:</b>	Mark your words carefully, though I am bound by licence I will not stand to be the object of your misfeance.		
<b>Sol:</b>	I am sure you will have enough put by for such a rainy day. The taxman and POCA couldn't have taken it all away?	40	
<b>Shylock:</b>	I will get by that is for sure, But such losses are hard to endure. The cost is not alone in simple sterling But also in the damage to my reputation.		
<b>Sol:</b>	I wouldn't worry about that; your standing, I mean Your once plump rep is now a little lean. Even on your person, the meat has left your bones. The greater part of both you and your credibility are now gone.	45	
<b>Shylock:</b>	Does your friend Tony think this too? Is my name so poor? What must I do? I am trying to be the better man, yet Such matters cause me greatly to fret. Tony shall be made to bear the full cost of his debt. Both he and his friends their mockery will regret.	50	
<b>Sal:</b>	So you mean to take his flesh? A poor meal that would make at best.	55	
<b>Shylock:</b>	I care not for the flesh of men, So what indeed should I use it for then. It can be fed to the sharks or to the swine, I care not as long as I get what is mine. You all mocked me behind my back Instead of facing me, the stones you lack. I could have much lessened my sentence	60	
<b>Continues:</b>			

### Act 3 Scene 1

<u>Act 3 Scene 1</u>		<u>Line</u>	<u>Stage Directions</u>
<i>Shylock:</i>	By talking aloud of all your offences, But a grass I am not and will never be, Yet instead of respect your scorn I receive. There is not so much difference between myself and you; Indeed do we not eat the very same food? Breathe the same air?	65	
	Feel the same breeze that blows through our hair? If you prick me do I not bleed? If you tickle me do I not laugh? If you poisoned me would I not die? Well then tell me, pray tell me why You think that the revenge you would surely seek If you were wronged should not the same be for me? I should learn vengeance from you and your brother, Famed for your wickedness in both humour and action.	70	
	Therefore I shall take the flesh that was promised me That is mine by right and by bond.	75	
<i>Servant:</i>	I've been looking all over for you two, Tony needs a chat with you.	80	<i>Enter Servant with urgency from centre.</i>
<i>Sol:</i>	Surely he could have just phoned?		
<i>Servant:</i>	Security wouldn't let us have any techs, So we are left with glaring plot holes in the text. That aside you should come now, before He loses his rag and chides you more.	85	
<i>Tubbs:</i>	Such was the task you set me, but with sorrow I did what you asked and duly followed Jessica and Tony's man.	90	<i>Exit Sol, Sal and Servant centre.</i>
	She seems determined to waste all your money, Even sold this ring for a mere monkey.		
<i>Shylock:</i>	500 quid you must be wrong, This is no mere trinket, it once belonged To her dear departed mother. What an ungrateful wretch, Acting like a little spoilt witch.	95	
<i>Continues:</i>	Tubbs I must entreat you to another task.		

**Act 5 Scene 1**

		<b><u>Line</u></b>	<b><u>Stage Directions</u></b>
<b>Narrator:</b>	The events that have conspired against Shylock have led his mental health to spiral into an abyss of depression. He falters and begins to exhibit suicidal tendencies. We find him contemplating the writing of a final note to his daughter Jessica.		<i>Shylock enters stage left and sits at table begins writing.</i>
<b>Shylock:</b> (Can be read 'til L82)	To be so hated, so despised, If this be life's truth, please tell me gentle lies. My time inside no harsher than any other's, The daily trials tempered by love for my daughter. Her love returned kept me sane. An opportunity to start anew, to begin again. To bridge this gap caused by those years away, But so many cruel tricks does fate play And havoc disrupts the plans of both mice and men. My story seems to have reached its end. Barring a few final strokes of this dullard's pen In some forlorn hope to make amends.	5	
	"Jessica, my daughter, my true love's child, my sole heir, You have run from me, run far from here, To a happier place on the promise of a happier life. One with less trouble and much less strife. I cannot blame one so headstrong, none the less, I am left in isolation, am left depressed, Crushed by this world I once did own. Now there seems no point in carrying on. I want you to know that I am so sorry For the pain, the grief and all the worry. For leaving you alone all those years, For being unable to calm your childhood fears. All I had, you already have, My money, my jewels and my heart Of which precious little remains Breaking further every day. There is another side of this tale to tell But no excuses or platitudes will Ever put right the wrongs I've done. So goodbye sweet Jessica, as time moves on Hatred may subside and your memories of me may become gentler, softer and even tinged with love."	10  15  20	
		25	
		30	
			<i>Door knocks. Shylock looks up. Enter Portia stage right.</i>
<b>Continues:</b>	And here is Portia, whose twisted words	35	

The Gallowfield Players: The Merchant.

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**Act 5 Scene 1**

		<b><u>Line</u></b>	<b><u>Stage Directions</u></b>
<b>Shylock:</b>	And more twisted deeds Left me broken, on my knees; as a beggar. My hatred of her blossoms and blooms Just as the loss of my daughter to her groom Gnaws at my heart.	40	
<b>Portia:</b>	You bitter, sad fool, Left alone without a soul to care for you. Profit you could have made and handsomely too But for your damned pride, your hubris. So instead you lost it all, acted so foolish. Now you lament your actions cost, Pine over all that you have lost. You should man up and learn the lesson That upon the crooked foundations of hatred Nothing good can ever be built.	45  50	
	That bitterness you hold inside Should be tempered, should subside In the knowledge that your daughter found love. She no longer hides away, and is burdened no more by the name, Shylock.	55	
<b>Shylock:</b>	So you have come to gloat, To rub salt in my open wounds? The honourable Portia, that silver spoon You were born with should choke you And prevent me hearing your words again.	60	
<b>Portia:</b>	In fact, I do not come to crow, Instead I am here to offer you this simple note And to talk to you as a man Not some poor tempered dog. Antonio deserved the price you wished to extract And probably even more than that. He seems to have a knack of escaping justice.	65	
	But what of you and what of your daughter? Who would have suffered more than Antonio, much more Had you returned to prison.	70	
<b>Continues:</b>			

		<u>Line</u>	<u>Stage Directions</u>
	<b><u>Act 5 Scene 1</u></b>		
<i>Portia:</i>	I hope that you will come to see All this pain, this misery Was not laid purposefully at your door But instead to protect your child. Please understand I thought to save her more pain by your hand. All she hath felt is a lonely sorrow. Surely you'd give her a happier tomorrow?	75	
	But the quality of mercy is not strained. It droppeth as the gentle rain from the heavens Upon what lies beneath. It is twice blessed, blessing both her that gives and he who receives.	80	
<i>Shylock:</i> <i>(Not read)</i>	Now you simply mock me. Mercy indeed, where was your mercy When you circled me as if I was prey For your ghoulish words? Where was the 'good' judge's mercy when his gavel fell Sending me to the depths of hell? Where was mercy from Antonio When everything I ever worked for he stole? This mercy of which you speak is but a fanciful dream Lost in Morpheus' realm or so it seems To be used by any in order to justify Some small acts of pointless charity.	85	
	Mercy? Where was the mercy from my daughter As she ran off with her secret lover? Taking with them all I had put by and saved All of it I would gladly have gave to her if she had but asked. And you still stand there and bask in this haughty manner.	95	
<i>Portia:</i>	Hush your mouth, cease your words, Before you cause more regret and more hurt to yourself. Jessica bid me find you, her anger now abated Entreated me to seek you, the pain that weighted her spirit so now easing through love. No promise does she make to what the future holds For she is not so bold as to play soothsayer or seer. In her heart she still holds you dear. To mend fences and reconcile, see mercy doth live.	100	
<i>Continues:</i>		105	

		<u>Line</u>	<u>Stage Directions</u>
	<b><u>Act 5 Scene 1</u></b>		
<i>Portia:</i>	So while you may be, to mercy, blind with a heart of stone Your daughters love has not yet gone Her heart is still pure and true, Willing to give far more than you may be due.	110	
<i>Shylock:</i>	What to say, can this be? I was resigned to misery. Instead of turning from me as so many have done She still professes to love her old man?		
<i>Portia:</i>	You, Bassanio's man, you were once Jessica's friend? Go quickly and tell her here to come, So that this twisted knot can be undone.	115	<i>Enter Lancelot stage right. Portia Gestures to Lancelot.</i>
<i>Lancelot:</i>	Of course, of course, it will be my pleasure. I shall gladly go and relay your message.		<i>Enter Jessica at edge of stage right.</i>
<i>Portia:</i>	Oh you are dull, Lancelot, Its not like she is miles away, She's standing there at the edge of the stage.	120	<i>Exit Lancelot stage right. Jessica comes on stage properly.</i>
<i>Jessica:</i>	I cant forget the tears, the hurt, But will try to forgive my broken heart. Every memory I have from when you were away Is only half complete. I could not share The laughs, the sorrow, the ups the downs With my father, that someone who should always be around.	125	
	It is time for me to let go, Release this pain, and this sorrow. To begin anew and start afresh, Cease looking back and now gaze ahead. Between love and hate is such a fine line But no longer will I spend my time Cursing the name that was your gift. Instead I'll move forward and gently lift This burden we both have borne for so long.	130	
<i>Shylock:</i>	Oh daughter, I shed now these tears When I thought I'd lost you, all my darkest fears came true	135	
<i>Continues:</i>	First your mother and then you.	140	

**Act 5 Scene 1***Shylock:*

My heart did harden, it turned to stone  
 But with your words this is undone.  
 I never meant to cause you such hurt  
 And with this chance I'll do all I can to make amends.

**Line      Stage Directions***Jessica and Shylock Hug*

*Stay on stage and prepare to  
 take a bow.  
 Rest of cast enters during the  
 narrators epilogue.*

**Epilogue:***Narrator:*

While we hope that you enjoyed this play, there are, despite the comedy, some serious issues within. Prisons are dark, lonely places that have suffered at the hands of austerity. Lack of resources as well as a well publicised lack of staff have left the whole prison estate in crisis. Inmates in prison are now more likely than ever before liable to experience depression and as a result despair and self harm. The statistics for this situation are astounding and are ever increasing. If you do have the misfortune to have served a long sentence and make it through in one piece then upon release there is little or not support structures in place to help ex-offenders flourish within what can often be a hostile society.

Indications of the way the society treats offenders can be seen in the sentencing figures; the average minimum term for lifers rose from 12.5 years in 2003 to 21.3 years in 2016.

This was despite only 4.3% of lifers being convicted of any further offence within 12 months of release compared to 48.3% of the overall prison population reoffending.

In 2018 (the latest figures we can gain access to) 514 self harm incidents were recorded per 1000 prisoners. Extrapolated to the entire lifer population this would equate to over 3600 incidents for the lifer population within the prison system.

If adequate support was in place and more meaningful activity was provided there would be a much better chance to reduce these appalling numbers.

**Line      Stage Directions**

*Everyone lines up and takes a  
 bow upon completion of the  
 statistics.*

*Sycorax's Storm* (written 2020, not yet performed)

Prologue

Narrator:

There are very few actual beginnings. The stories we know are only chapters within much larger tales, wheels within wheels, part of something more or indeed something less. What we think we know is often shrouded by a cloak of disinformation and half-truths, recorded by those with an agenda. The subtext to a larger story or a completely different narrative. A sequel to what we believe to be written in stone or the prequel to an established tale.

The malicious intent visited upon the wretched Caliban, itself, is only one chapter of his story. Prospera would have us believe his servitude is justified but if we draw back from the tale of Prospera's deliverance a more complex, broader narrative can be seen. Ages old perspectives then questioned when a hero can be seen as a villain and a villain vindicated.

Join us as we open a different set of pages in the twisted tale of Prospera and Caliban.



## Act 1 Scene 2

Narrator:

Prospera begins to tell the tale to Miranda of times past and the woeful narrative of her exile by the King of Naples.

Prospera:

Daughter, you were but a babe in arms  
When upon this strange shore we landed  
Too young to remember all the trials  
And the tribulations we were handed  
This black place stole so much of who we once were,  
And its more than a blessing that you cannot  
Recall the desperate hunger we endured.

The painful desolation that we suffered  
Dignity was not all that we buried  
In the fight to construct this paltry life  
While we scavenged this cruel land to ease our strife  
And find any morsel to sustain us.

Such pains sank deep roots in the caverns of my mind  
Not easily forgotten nor forgiven  
Are those who orchestrated our agonies  
Despite the unmarked seasons marching relentlessly  
Despite praying to deaf Gods for mercy  
All we received was further torment  
No matter which Devil I had to extract  
You will never again go hungry,  
Never again shall we struggle to eat.

I played by their rules, I played their games  
Followed all the customs in old Milan  
But for no reason than perfidious greed  
We were exiled, cast into the sea.  
A pair of ruthless and wicked siblings  
Who undermined my standing with the King  
Whispered wounding worms in Alonso's ear  
The rightful ruler who once held me dear.

In response to the accusations of witchcraft made by her treacherous brother Antonio  
Prospera defends her innocence.

Prospera:

Of course this indictment is not true  
That laid before you is not even proof  
Those books are beyond my understanding

But my liege they were gifts from you given  
 Your honour to save I will not fight this case.  
 Remember how on this day you were played  
 What can I say, but that which I must  
 Contradicts this accusation and  
 The testimony which I would give would  
 Scarce back to me to say I'm not guilty  
 Counted as falsehood my integrity  
 And as I express it the powers divine  
 Keep us within the aspect of this gaze  
 And behold these, our human actions  
 Innocence, my innocence still make  
 False accusations blush and tyranny tremble  
 My life as I prize it, I would spare it  
 And in doing so spare you all the grief  
 Of such injustice for honour  
 Tis a derivative from me to mine  
 And only that I stand for. I appeal  
 To your conscience my Lord  
 If one jot beyond the bounds of honour  
 Or in act or will those are inclined  
 Hardened be the hearts of all who hear  
 Let my nearest kin cry fie upon my grave.  
 I have been but your loyal servant  
 And now my life in unsafe balance hangs  
 Such threats of death I fear them not  
 For if you are to steal my honour then  
 My life already as good as forfeit be  
 What blessing do I have here alive  
 That I should fear to die, therefore proceed.

It's gender and not law that condemns me  
 Your honour – refer me to the oracle  
 And then let Apollo be my judge.  
 As for you my beloved brother  
 Shacked by ghosts of memories unremembered  
 Our futures were set in stone, predetermined  
 Destiny has now let you write your own story  
 But when others read of your treachery  
 You will be judged, judged most poorly.  
 You shall be forever destined surely  
 To repeat your cycles of destruction  
 Destined to always feel the same frustrations.  
 Hope that our paths do not cross again  
 Before my final breath is taken.

My lord, my King do as you will

Despite the twisted motives of those two I bear you no ill  
 The punishment for those guilty of witchcraft  
 Is to be burnt but I would ask  
 That you consider my loyalty, my service  
 And perhaps give me a kinder death.

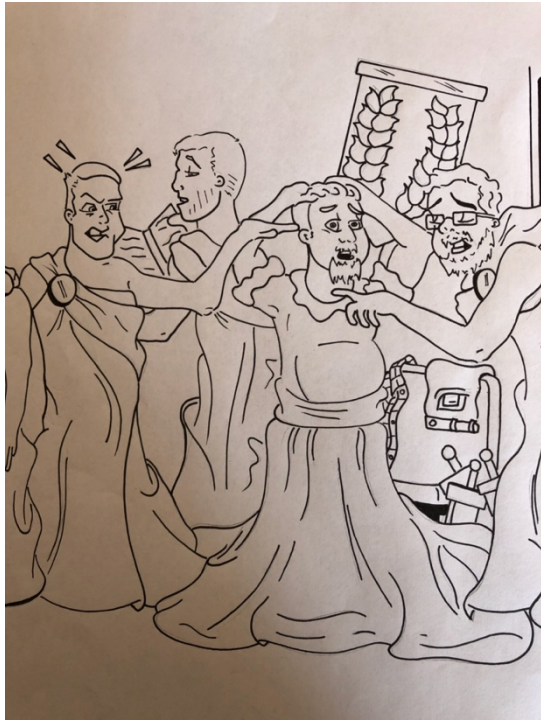
Lucilius (Prospera's husband) pleads to King Alonso on her behalf, having her sentence commuted from death to banishment.

Lucilius:

Sire, if you would be so kind  
 To hear my honest words, not be inclined  
 To dismiss them easily then perhaps you  
 Might truly see the full picture.  
 Prospera my love, my heart, my whole life  
 Does not meddle with Hecates dark knife  
 Nor does she peddle the devils words  
 By being bookish she healed your aches, your hurts  
 Only by studying medicinal herbs and flowers  
 She has now ended up in your tower.  
 The victim of clearly villainous minds  
 Bent on thievery, she is maligned  
 By those you should definitely not trust.  
 My liege, King of these lands, she is no worse  
 Than anyone else in this palace  
 To punish her thus – this is not justice  
 It is a miscarriage of your good name  
 A blot on your throne, a darkened stain.  
 Instead of the tower, just send us away.

## Appendix 5 – Shakespeare Activity Packs (provided to all UK prisons during COVID-19)

### *Julius Caesar Pack 1*



Richard, HMP Gartree

### **Julius Caesar – Pack 1**

Caesar is the new Emperor of Rome. His friend is Mark Antony.

A bunch of other men decide to kill him (conspirators).

Others warn Caesar not to go to the Capitol but he ignores them.

He is killed by Brutus, Cassius and others.

Brutus speaks at his funeral and then lets Mark Antony speak.

Mark Antony fires up the crowd with anger at Caesar's death.

The conspirators are forced to flee Rome and to round up an army.

A huge battle happens and the conspirators are killed.

Antony and Octavius return to Rome.

### ACTIVITIES –

What sort of person do you think Caesar is at the start of the play?

How would you describe him if you were Mark Antony?

How would you describe him if you were Brutus or Cassius?

--

A soothsayer warns Caesar to 'Beware the Ides of March' (March 15<sup>th</sup>, which is the day he is killed). Caesar doesn't listen and dismisses it as superstition. Can you think of other superstitions that are common today? Such as avoiding a black cat crossing your path....

Cassius and the other conspirators get Brutus to agree to join them in their plan to kill Caesar and they say he is too arrogant/big for his boots as their reason. How do you think the conversation might go if they were having it now?

Cassius	
Brutus	
Cassius	
Brutus	
Cassius	
Brutus	

They plot to kill him and say it is for the good of Rome, more a war against ambition than a murder. They make plans about what is to happen, they will kill him at the Capitol. There are six of them in the conspirators and they need to make sure they are all in the right place. Can you draw out a map of how the Capitol of Rome might be and where each of them is to come from, to hide, to move to and where they will kill him?

Caesar's wife tells him she had bad dreams and that he should not go to the Capitol, but he doesn't listen and says he is not afraid. Why would he say he is not scared? Do you think he is really? What might he be thinking?

Why would he be scared?

Why would he not be scared?

Why would he go if he is scared?

What does he think others would think if he doesn't go?

Mark Antony speaks at the funeral and tells them all the good things about his friend, Caesar. What kind of things would you look for in a friend?

The crowd are angered by hearing how good Caesar was and that he was killed. Can you think of examples when you've changed your mind based on what someone else has said? It could be family, friend, news reader, TV person, anyone.....

The death of Caesar makes the front-page news. What does the article say? Whose side do they write the story from? Who do they get a quote from?



<b>ROMAN TRIBUNE</b> <b>The best news reports in the Capitol!</b>	
COLUMN ONE	PICTURE
	COLUMN TWO

## Julius Caesar Pack 2



Brody, HMP Stafford

### Julius Caesar – Pack 2

Caesar is the new Emperor of Rome and loved by the crowds. His closest friend is Mark Antony.

Cassius and others want to kill him as they say he is getting too powerful and they convince Brutus to join them in their plan.

Caesar is warned by a soothsayer and by his own wife not to go to the Capitol but he ignores them.

He is killed by Brutus, Cassius and the other conspirators.

Brutus speaks at his funeral and then Brutus leaves and lets Mark Antony speak to the crowd.

Mark Antony fires up the crowd with anger at Caesar's death, mocking Brutus by calling him 'honourable' until the crowd are angry and want revenge.

The conspirators are forced to flee Rome and to round up an army.

The night before the battle Brutus and Cassius argue (they make friends again afterwards) and then Brutus sees the ghost of Caesar.

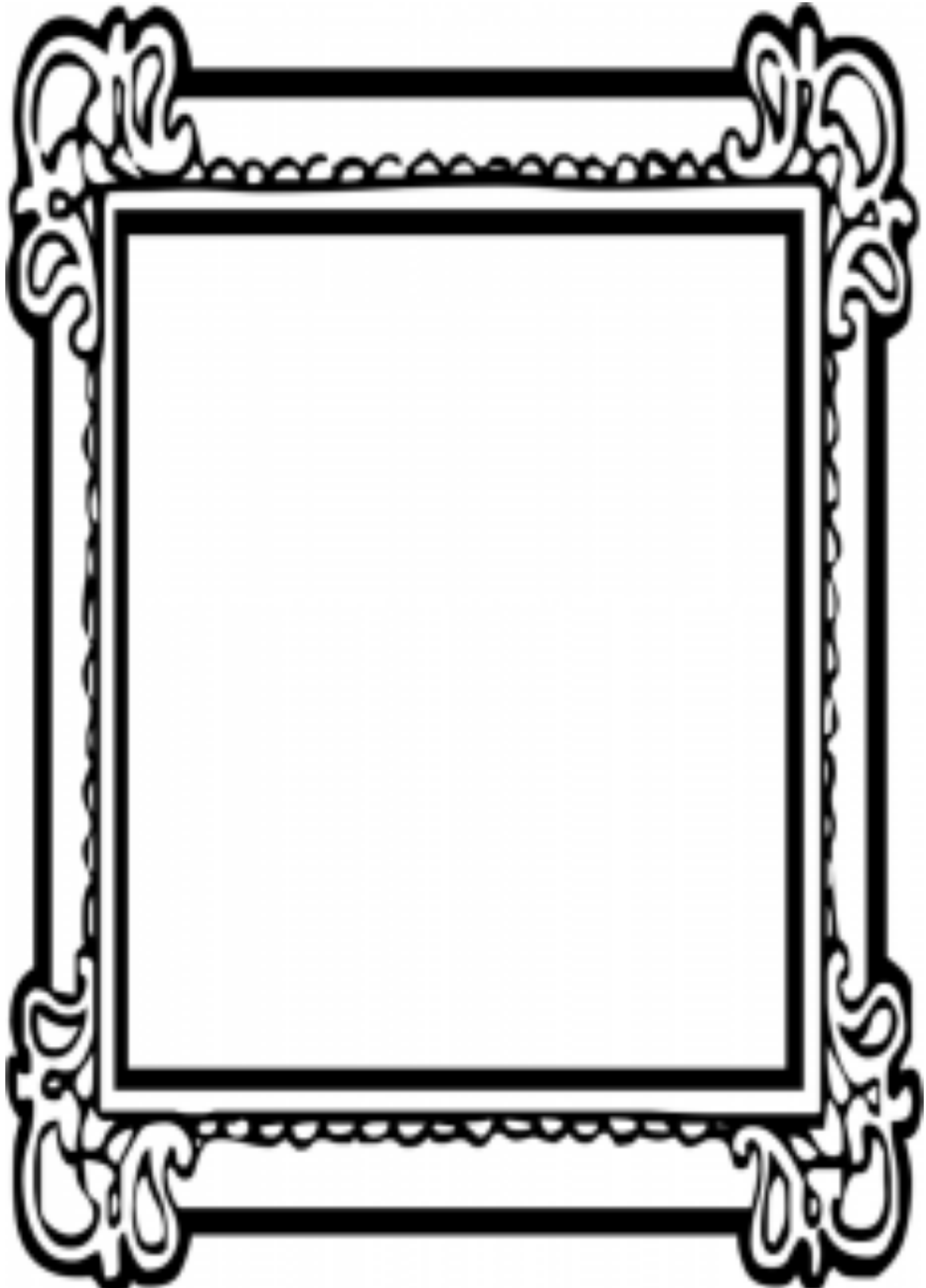
A huge battle happens and the conspirators think they are losing. Cassius runs onto his own sword. Brutus finds Cassius dead and does the same.

Antony orders a proper burial for Brutus before he and Octavius return to Rome.

### ACTIVITIES –

A soothsayer warns Caesar to 'Beware the Ides of March' (March 15<sup>th</sup>, which is the day he is killed). Caesar doesn't listen and dismisses it as superstition. His wife then tells him she had terrible dreams of his death at the capital. Caesar doesn't listen and dismisses it as superstition. They send to the Oracle for guidance and the response is that he should not go. Caesar doesn't listen and dismisses it as superstition. Why does Caesar refuse to heed these warnings? What is going through his mind each time he is warned?

When Caesar is crowned Emperor there was much celebrating and it would have been quite normal that he would have had a portrait professionally done to immortalize him forever. Give it go to draw his portrait – you can either draw just his head and shoulders, full body, in a scene with things happening. It can be a serious portrait, a caricature, a cartoon.....



Emojis have become a common way of people communicating on messages – texts, WhatsApp, emails and letters. Sometimes there are special ranges of them created, why not create a range for ancient Rome, with the description beneath them –


Then use them to write a couple of short messages/texts that the conspirators might send to each other when they are planning the murder of Caesar.

*Julius Caesar*, the most popular of Shakespeare's classical plays can be seen as a study of the duality of man. Even the villain Brutus is recognised for his virtues by Shakespeare, not acting out of envy or the desire for power but for a more noble, Utopian Rome. This is in contrast to Dante who consigned him to the lowest depths of hell. Yet it is Shakespeare's treatment of Brutus that remains, often played with deep introspection and elevated to the same heights as his other tragic heroes.

This theme of duality is not only anchored in Brutus but spread throughout the leading characters: Caesar a demigod, a hero but who has started to believe his own legend, acting less the statesman and more the braggart. Antony unquestionably brave, yet all the while manipulative. Even the crowd shows the vagaries of human nature: easily swayed from one side to the other.

It also explores the political turmoil of his own time and in doing so Shakespeare has allowed this to remain relevant today. The rise of the self-serving, putting self above society is prevalent and can be seen in the power grabs of Cassius and Casca and even in the general population when it comes to the increased xenophobic attitude in Britain in the run up to Brexit. *Caesar* is a play for all times and for our times, that shows that men's flaws do not necessarily mean a man is beyond redemption.

Michael, HMP Gartree

When Mark Antony speaks at the funeral he uses it as a way of firing up the anger of the crowd, telling them how much Caesar loved them and mocking Brutus subtly by constantly saying 'but Brutus is an honourable man' to undermine him. This is often how politics works – using words to shape the opinions of the public. There are loads of political broadcasts on TV at the moment in response to COVID19 – watch a few of them and note down how they use language to get their messages across and convince the public (and often to undermine other politicians).....

Now lets think about how history is recorded – it is usually told from the perspective of the winners/victors. If you were writing a history book excerpt for a children’s book (ages 8-10), how would you tell the tale of what happened to Caesar? Give it a go (make up any details you don’t have that you want to include, in keeping with the story)...

Now think of some quiz questions you could ask the children based on your book page above? Using the information you have given them and encouraging them to be interested in history and in finding out more about the world? How can you get them engaged with history and ancient Rome? Be as creative as you like .....

## Julius Caesar Pack 3

### Julius Caesar – Pack 3



Richard, HMP Gartree

Caesar is the new Emperor of Rome and loved by the crowds. His closest friend is Mark Antony.

Cassius and others want to kill him as they say he is getting too powerful and they convince Brutus to join them in their plan.

Caesar is warned by a soothsayer and by his own wife not to go to the Capitol but he ignores them.

He is killed by Brutus, Cassius and the other conspirators.

Brutus speaks at his funeral and then Brutus leaves and lets Mark Antony speak to the crowd.

Mark Antony fires up the crowd with anger at Caesar's death, mocking Brutus by calling him 'honourable' until the crowd are angry and want revenge.

The conspirators are forced to flee Rome and to round up an army. The night before the battle Brutus and Cassius argue (they make friends again afterwards) and then Brutus sees the ghost of Caesar.

A huge battle happens and the conspirators think they are losing. Cassius runs onto his own sword. Brutus finds Cassius dead and does the same.

Antony orders a proper burial for Brutus before he and Octavius return to Rome.

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Michael, HMP Gartree



## ACTIVITIES –

Cassius is the one who orchestrates the conspiracy and gets everyone else to agree to it. The first time he appears in the play he starts to pour poison into Brutus' ears about Caesar, encouraging him to be jealous of him. He says

*I know that virtue to be in you, Brutus,  
As well as I do know your outward favor.  
Well, honor is the subject of my story.  
I cannot tell what you and other men  
Think of this life; but, for my single self,  
I had as lief not be as live to be  
In awe of such a thing as I myself.  
I was born free as Caesar; so were you;  
We both have fed as well, and we can both  
Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world  
Like a Colossus, and we petty men  
Walk under his huge legs and peep about  
To find ourselves dishonorable graves.  
Men at some time are masters of their fates.  
The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,  
But in ourselves, that we are underlings.  
Endure the winter's cold as well as he.*

Can you translate that into modern English, line by line? What is he saying to Brutus? Why is he saying these things? What does he hope to achieve?  
Cassius then starts to justify his actions to himself, saying that:

*And why should Caesar be a tyrant, then?  
Poor man, I know he would not be a wolf  
But that he sees the Romans are but sheep;  
He were no lion, were not Romans hinds.  
Those that with haste will make a mighty fire  
Begin it with weak straws. What trash is Rome,  
What rubbish, and what offal when it serves  
For the base matter to illuminate  
So vile a thing as Caesar! But, O grief,  
Where hast thou led me? I perhaps speak this  
Before a willing bondman; then, I know  
My answer must be made. But I am armed,  
And dangers are to me indifferent.*

Imagine he was writing in his diary, what would he put about the plans he is developing? Would he be anxious or worried or feeling bad?

The conspirators are discussing what to do before the event and there is a bit of a disagreement.

**DECIUS** *Shall no man else be touched, but only Caesar?*

**CASSIUS** *Decius, well urged. I think it is not meet  
Mark Antony, so well beloved of Caesar,  
Should outlive Caesar. We shall find of him  
A shrewd contriver; and, you know, his means,  
If he improve them, may well stretch so far  
As to annoy us all; which to prevent,  
Let Antony and Caesar fall together.*

**BRUTUS** *Our course will seem too bloody, Caius Cassius,  
To cut the head off and then hack the limbs,  
Like wrath in death and envy afterwards;  
For Antony is but a limb of Caesar.  
Let's be sacrificers, but not butchers, Caius.  
We all stand up against the spirit of Caesar,  
And in the spirit of men there is no blood.  
O, that we then could come by Caesar's spirit  
And not dismember Caesar! But, alas,  
Caesar must bleed for it. And, gentle friends,  
Let's kill him boldly, but not wrathfully.  
Let's carve him as a dish fit for the gods,  
Not hew him as a carcass fit for hounds.  
And let our hearts, as subtle masters do,  
Stir up their servants to an act of rage  
And after seem to chide 'em. This shall make  
Our purpose necessary and not envious;  
Which so appearing to the common eyes,  
We shall be called purgers, not murderers.*

What is going through their minds when they are saying these things? How is each of them feeling? Who is nervous/anxious? Who does not trust Mark Antony? Who worries more about what the people of Rome think and their image? The argument continues for a while longer, can you add some more to the argument, if you want to have a go at writing in Shakespearean style language that would be great but you can do it in modern language if you prefer.

After they have killed Caesar in the Capitol Mark Antony comes forward and cries 'O mighty Caesar' at the sight of his friend on the floor before him. He goes on to outwardly make amends with the conspirators as he knows the outnumber him but what is really going through his head as he kneels by the side of his friend's body?

When he speaks at his funeral he cries out

*Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears.  
I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.  
The evil that men do lives after them;  
The good is oft interrèd with their bones.  
So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus  
Hath told you Caesar was ambitious.  
If it were so, it was a grievous fault,  
And grievously hath Caesar answered it.  
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest  
(For Brutus is an honorable man  
So are they all, all honorable men),  
Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral.  
He was my friend, faithful and just to me,  
But Brutus says he was ambitious,  
And Brutus is an honorable man.  
He hath brought many captives home to Rome,  
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill.  
Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?  
When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept;  
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff.  
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious,  
And Brutus is an honorable man.  
You all did see that on the Lupercal  
I thrice presented him a kingly crown  
Which he did thrice refuse. Was this ambition?  
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious,  
And sure he is an honorable man.  
I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,  
But here I am to speak what I do know.  
You all did love him once, not without cause.  
What cause withholds you, then, to mourn for him?—  
O judgment, thou art fled to brutish beasts,  
And men have lost their reason!—Bear with me;  
My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,  
And I must pause till it come back to me.*

He is playing the politician here – undermining Brutus by the use of words. What other examples can you think of where that happens in life? Watch some politicians speaking on TV or even some new presenters, what words do they use to say one thing and mean another? Can you think of times you have done it yourself or someone has done it to you?

Give these anagrams using lines from the speeches above a go....

UNHARMONIOUS TABLE BARNS

FUNCTIONARY NORM MENS REDS

SECURITY AM CAR OBOE

WORDLESSLY MILE BOO COO OUT RUE

SEVERAL BOA COW ELSE

OVERTAKEN IT UNITY WOO IT HUB

BRIEFCASES ARE OR A SWAN

SMOKY BELL HILT DILL

HOMESICKNESS RAPTUROUSLY HELP AREAS

UNSCHOOLED BEE ME ANT

Imagine that you are trying to explain the story above to a friend who does not speak the same language as you or who has hearing difficulties. How would you tell the story of Julius Caesar through drawings, signs and symbols?

### **ANAGRAM ANSWERS**

BRUTUS IS AN HONORABLE MAN  
FRIENDS ROMANS COUNTRYMEN  
I COME TO BURY CAESAR  
OUR COURSE WILL SEEM TOO BLOODY  
SO WELL BELOVED OF CAESAR  
I KNOW THAT VIRTURE TO BE IN YOU  
I WAS BORN FREE AS CAESAR  
LETS KILL HIM BOLDLY  
THIS SHALL MAKE OUR PURPOSE NECESSARY  
NO MAN ELSE BE TOUCHED

**MASKS- ACTIVITY PACK**

Shakespeare plays often have people in masks or in disguise and I thought this week we could have a play around with some of the ideas of masks and get a bit creative. Masks are a big thing at the moment because of COVID-19 but we are going to look at masks to hide your face.

Masks have been part of life as far back as 7000 BC (so at least 9000 years) and were first used for rituals and religious ceremonies. Now days they are often used in theatre, circus shows and children's dressing up play.

Shakespeare had lots of people who wear masks –

Romeo and Juliet meet at a masque ball (big party) where Romeo's mask hides the fact that he is from a household which hates the household where the party is.

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the magic fairies (more like sprites than fairies as we think of them today – the fairies could be quite mean) wear masks. There is a masque ball to celebrate the wedding which takes place.

In *Twelfth Night*, Viola dresses as a man so she can get a job. She only removes the disguise at the end of the play.

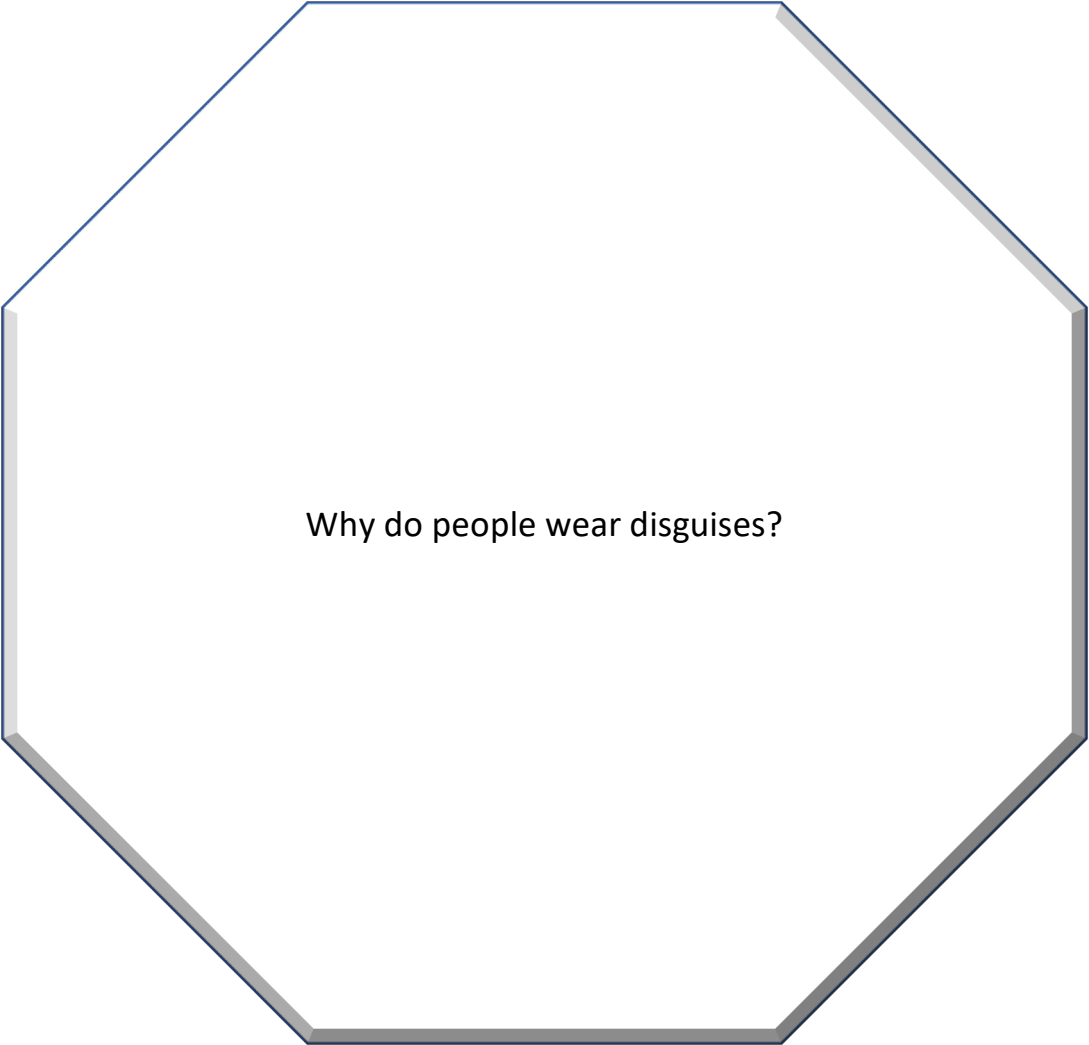
When King Lear is angry with Kent and tells him to leave Kent dresses in disguise so he can carry on working for Lear. He stays with him all the way through the play in disguise.

Portia dresses as a lawyer in *The Merchant of Venice* so she can save Antonio from Shylock taking his pound of flesh.

*The Tempest* has a masque dance where the Gods appear in a big display.

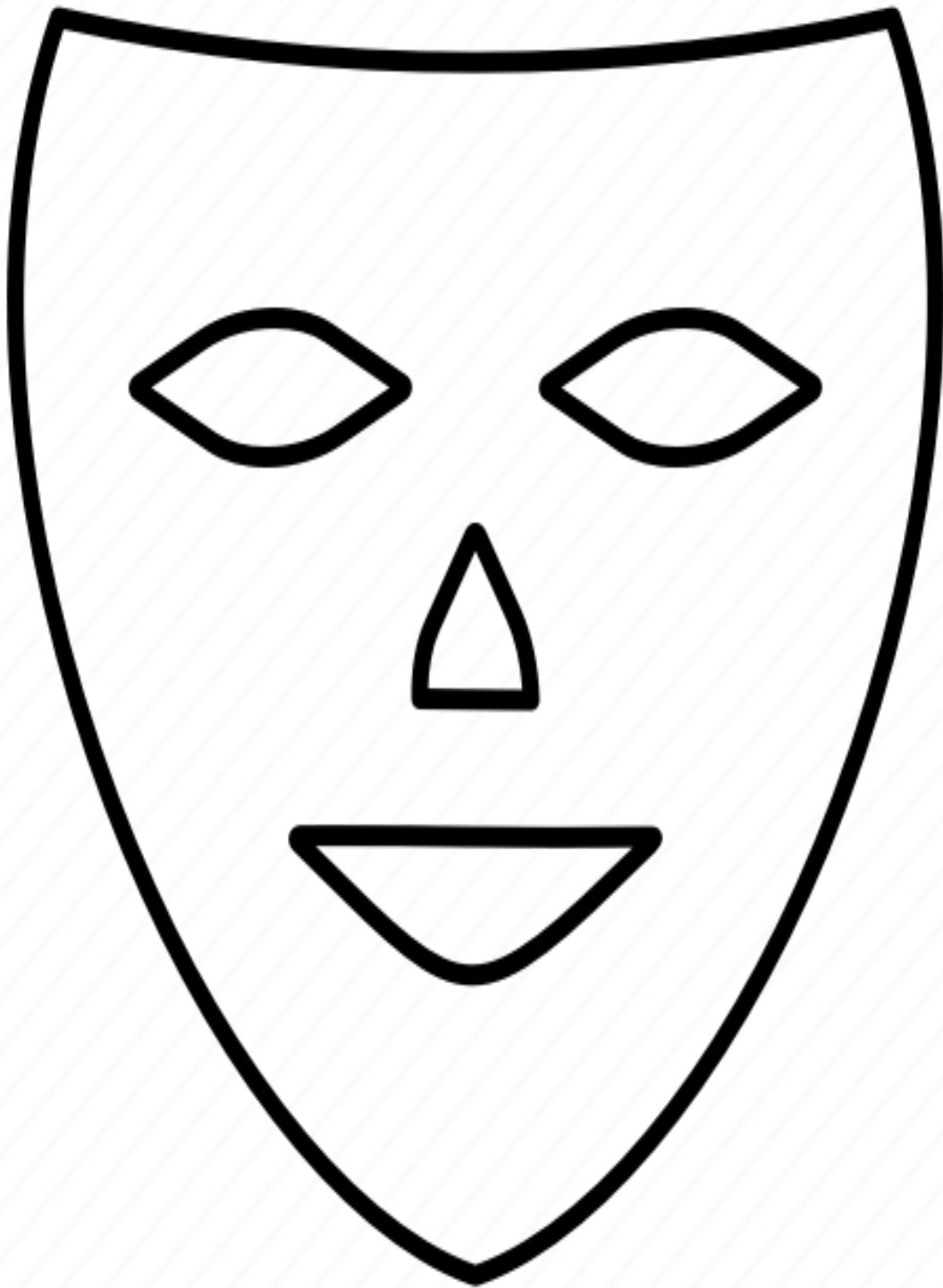
So, this week's activities are all about masks and disguise.

Think of all the kinds of masks you can.

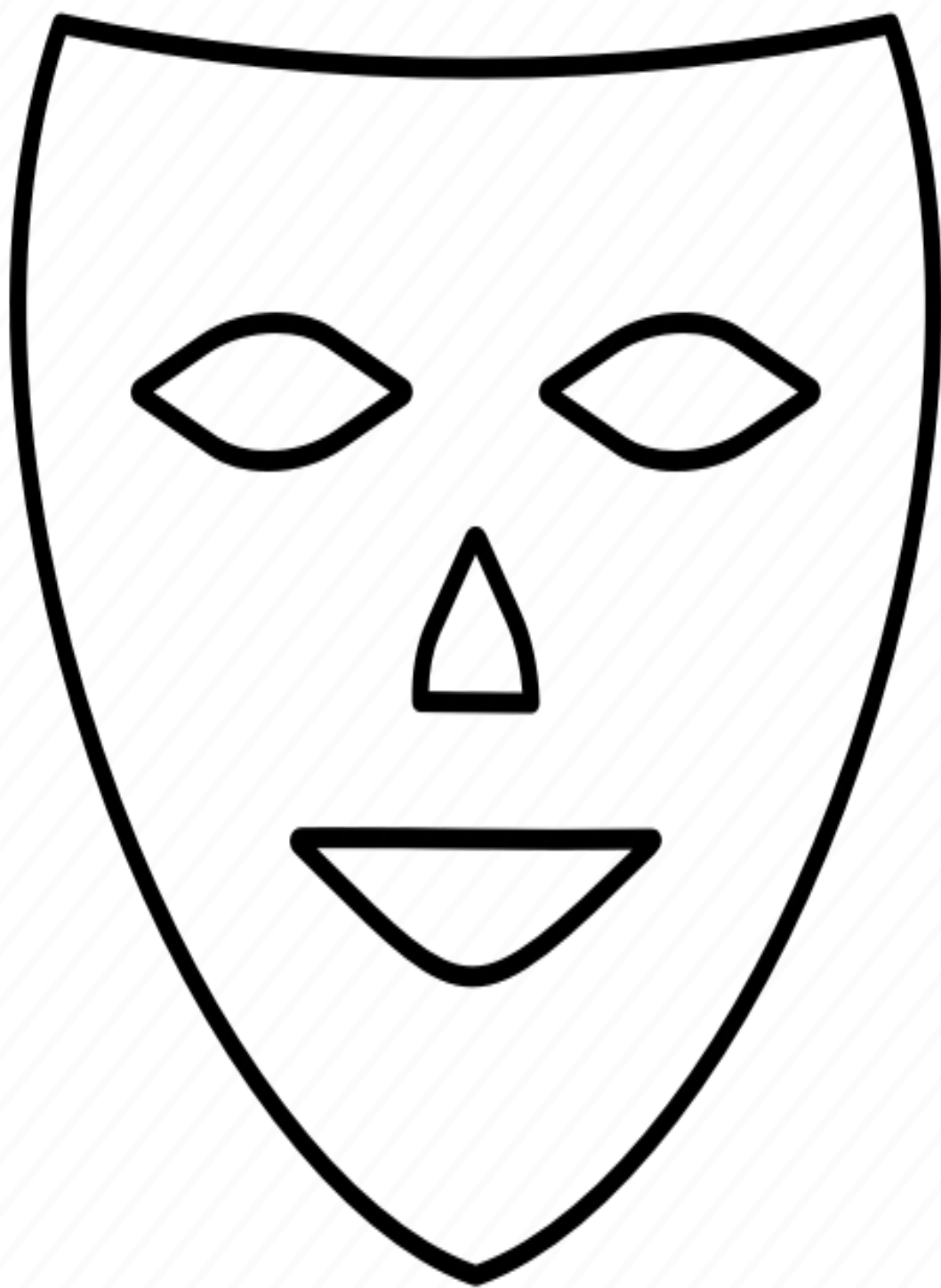


Why do people wear disguises?

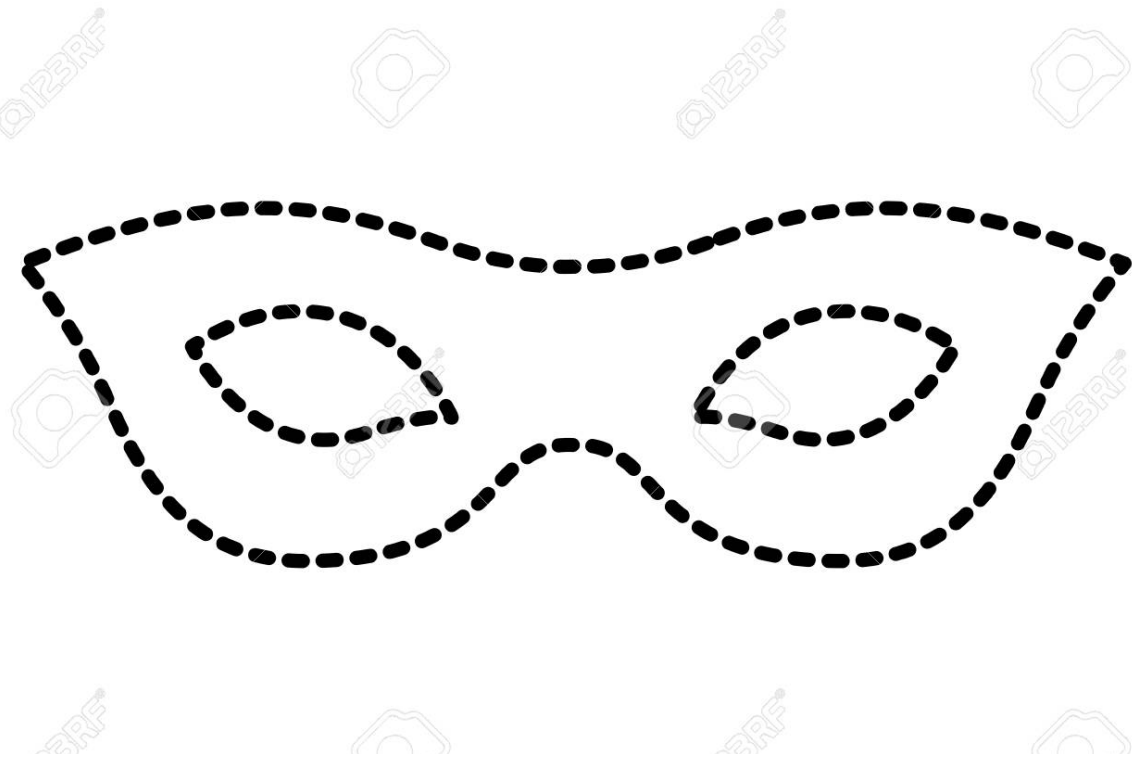
Draw your own mask – choose a theme and draw/colour in the outline below - make it as detailed or as simple as you like.







At Masque balls people often wear masks to cover their eyes only.



These always put me in mind of super-heroes like Batman and Superman.

Design your own superhero character –

- ♣ What will they be called?
- ♣ What will their superpowers be?
- ♣ What will they look like?
- ♣ What will be on their mask?

NAME –

SUPERPOWERS –

MASK –

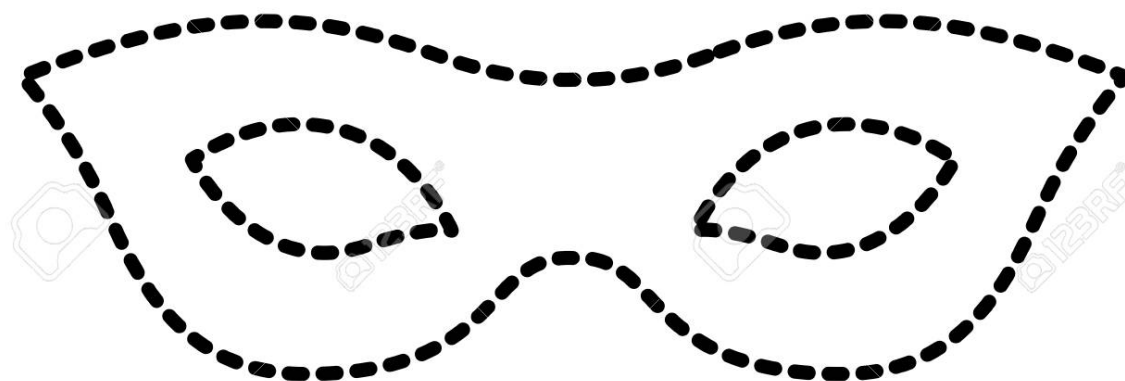
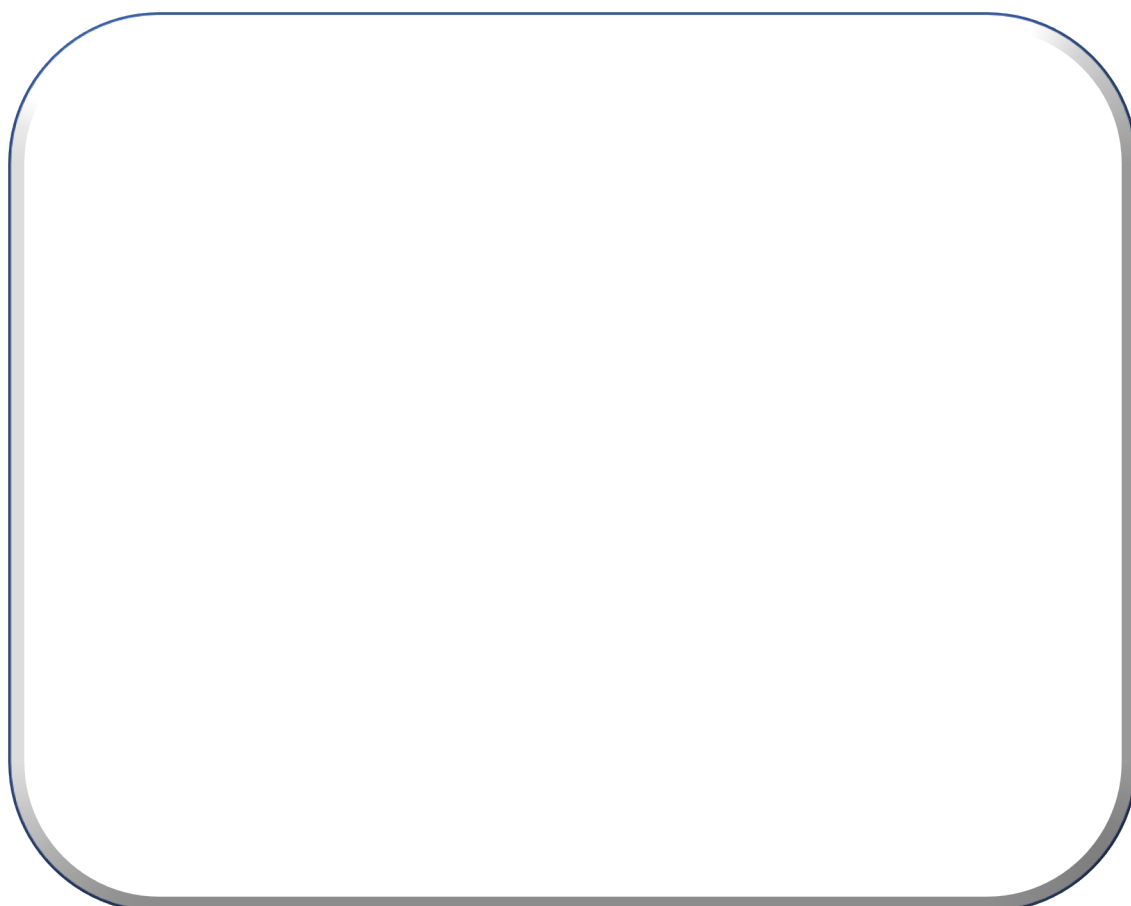


IMAGE –



Draw a comic strip of what your superhero does.


Masks are one way of disguising yourself. What other ways can someone disguise themselves?

Have a go at writing a short story about someone who disguises themselves....  
Is your person in the story a hero or a villain? Why are they dressing as  
someone else? What happens when they are in disguise? Do they reveal who  
they really are?