An Ethnographic Exploration of Participant and Practitioner Perceptions of a Shakespeare-focussed Prison Education Programme

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Abstract

For over two decades, there has been a progressive emergence of Shakespeare-focussed programmes for use with prisoners in the USA. Prison-based criminal retribution, though controversial, remains prevalent. Despite this, evidence demonstrates that educational sentences have greater impact on reducing recidivism. This research considers a multi-sited Shakespeare-focussed rehabilitation programme deemed successful enough to practise for over two decades.

Current UK statistics show that 45% of adults reoffend within five years of release and over 30% reoffend within six months (Ministry of Justice, 2015). In the USA, probability of reoffending is higher, at 70% (US National Institute of Justice, 2017). Yet there are Shakespeare-focussed education programmes that are a supplement to incarceration, that maintain a falling reoffending rate. Though this is an important measure of the success of these programmes, my research draws on the experiences of those engaging in a long-serving multi-sited Shakespeare programme, exploring the specifics of this programme, including practices, intentions and functions.

This multi-sited ethnographically informed research asks:

1) What were the specific programme practices and how were they delivered?

2) What were practitioner and participant perceptions of the specific use of Shakespeare?

3) What were the perceived and intended programme outcomes reported by and for practitioners and participants?

This research considers practices undertaken, identifying intended and experienced outcomes from the perspectives of participants, practitioners and the researcher's experiences. Key findings identify individualised impacts that have been drawn from participation surrounding personal and community development and, crucially, the rehumanisation of prisoners through engagement in this programme. This includes outcomes relating to the impact of specifically using, reading, performing and interpreting Shakespeare, individual learning, skills-acquisition, development and expression. Further it considers the wider impact that participation has had on individuals and communities, behind and beyond prison bars, particularly surrounding rehumanisation of prisoners to their communities, wider society and themselves.

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Authors Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, university. All sources consulted are acknowledged as references.

Publications from this Research Project

Nicklin, L. L. (2019). Shakespeare in Prisons: Working as a Privileged Outsider. In L. Atkins, & V. Duckworth, Research Methods for Social Justice and Equity in Education. London: Bloomsbury.

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1.0 Introduction

"Condemn the fault and not the actor of it?"
William Shakespeare
(Measure for Measure, II. ii)

It is a fact well known in research, yet rarely acknowledged in policy and practice, that prison alone is unsuccessful if the intention of incarceration is in fact to reduce criminal behaviour (see 2.0). Though re-contextualized here, the words proposed by Shakespeare himself in his play, Measure for Measure, "Condemn the fault and not the actor of it?" (Shakespeare II, ii. pp. 123) is the perfect opening to introduce this research project, as the question scrutinises what specifically the justice system seeks to achieve. This quotation raises the question of what we are condemning with our current prison system; is it the crime, the criminal, both or even neither? This question opens doors through which the existing UK and US criminal justice systems can be scrutinised and, to me, highlights a crucial question to ask of prisons, relating to the intention of incarceration and what a criminal sentence should focus on; the offender as a person, the action they are guilty of, or both.

If the intention of the criminal justice system is presumed to be criminal rehabilitation, as is the claim of many justice systems internationally including those of the UK and US, then educational programming, combined with any custodial sentence, produces far greater success. Rehabilitative outcomes are enhanced with this educational element, rather than custodial sentences independent of additional rehabilitative teaching. At present however, it seems neither the individual nor their criminal action is being consistently tackled by prisons. The responsibility, therefore, falls to charities and external sources, such as Clean Break, Tipp and Jude Theatre, to seek limited funding, to justify the value and to compete to bring this dimension to rehabilitative practice.

Current prison education provision is variable and patchy in both quality and quantity and recidivism rates are up to 70% (Ministry of Justice, 2015). There is a plethora of organisations that work in the prison education field, but it is a minority of offenders who are reached by this provision and the value of such interventions is

frequently questioned or devalued by society at large. Though the intention of this thesis is not to investigate the failings of prison systems, there is an existing library in both academic research and statistical data, that makes the use of prison as a punishment without an educational component difficult to justify, as is explored in the next chapter. This thesis instead investigates one unconventional approach to criminal rehabilitation that has been integrated as a supplement, and in some cases an alternative, to traditional incarceration in the United States of America for over twenty years. The approach offers a Shakespeare-focussed, theatre-based educational intervention for adult prisoners of all ages and criminal classification, and recidivism statistics suggest the approach holds great potential to elicit change amongst its participants.

Shakespeare-focussed programmes used for this purpose appear to produce greater impacts on recidivism and appear to reach out to diverse groups of participants, regardless of their crime, race, background or faith. At the commencement of this thesis, the programme organisers claimed the programme under consideration to be highly successful, but this was rarely qualified with participant voices. Though practitioner voices are important, to get to the heart of what makes the Shakespeare programme considered here successful, it was essential to ask those it directly impacts, that is the participants. It is also essential to let them tell the story from their perspectives, as participants are the recipients of the intervention, and as such they may be considered best placed to evaluate its effectiveness.

1.1 Prisoners as "People" – Situating myself within the research population

Prisoners cannot be defined by the single characteristic of "prisoner"; they are human beings incarcerated into the prison system as a result of their behaviours. Though grouped under the collective "prisoner" classification, it is a principle of this study that this does not supersede their individual characteristics, personality traits and histories, which all make it essential to treat every voice as independent.

Rowe (2014) considers the role of the researcher and the value of including or situating the self within prison based ethnographic research. Rowe states:

> "Despite the central importance of ethnographic methods to sociological understandings of imprisonment, ethnographies of prison life have tended to evade ideas of "connectedness" between researcher and participant."
>
> (Rowe, 2014. p.1)

In order to avoid the situation noted by Jewkes (2012) and Rowe (2014) where "…in written ethnographies of prison life, the researcher often all but disappears" (Rowe, 2014. p.1.) I here reflect somewhat on the personal history that has led to the stance of inclusion which informs this thesis. As both Jewkes and Rowe suggest, the absence of the researcher may be at a detriment to the research itself, losing insight through overlooking the value of having the ethnographer in situ in the research, by not acknowledging or considering the connectedness of the researcher to their experiences and findings. Therefore, in line with such researchers I believe it is important here to situate myself as honestly as I can as I engage with this research.

Foremost, I must be clear that this thesis does not originate from a position of total prison abolition, although I do see significant issues in the existing use of prison as discussed in chapter 1. I do agree that criminality needs just consequences, but the behaviours also need to be addressed if rehabilitation is expected to occur. I argue that the impact of prison on changing behaviours is limited, and though it serves as a punishment, it is not enough as an approach if rehabilitation is expected from the imprisoned population. In the words of one of my participants, Seb:

Figure 1: Prisoner Writing: The Incarceration System

The fact of the matter is, locking people up and locking people down punishes them, yes, but it clearly doesn't "correct" them; and the "system" that thinks otherwise is wrong!

(Seb, Participant)

Throughout this thesis, my conclusions call for differentiation, humanity and, to some extent, empathy in rehabilitative practice, rather than blanket dismissal and unsuccessful punishment-only responses to criminal conviction. This thesis particularly calls for a degree of understanding and focussed work considering more than an individual's crime, but also incorporating theory, history and life nuances in order to

implement appropriate and useful rehabilitative practice. This is where I feel I must be honest about my own history, which I recognised as relevant throughout the data collection phase of the project.

To give a little of my background, and that which influences my lens of perception on this issue, growing up I would have undoubtedly been classified as "working class". During discussion with participants, there are aspects of my life that I discovered were recurrently present in the stories and histories they shared. They articulated such aspects as driving forces towards their behaviours or actions and I cannot ignore how easily my story could have ended in a similar way. In acknowledging this, I must also say that I have remained aware of my sympathies throughout the research process and have maintained a watchfulness against bias as far as I was able.

I am the first in my extended family (of over 130 individuals) to attend university, or even seek higher education. Many of my relatives have lived in social housing, and several still do. My childhood and secondary school years were turbulent, with familial discord, multiple relocations, significant disruption and emotional conflict. Many of my participants report such disruptions as triggering their initial engagement in negative behaviours, feeling unstable at home, seeking friends for support, finding less than supportive environments, and placing school as a low priority. These stories of less than ideal housing situations, family and emotional disruption in childhood, and struggling parents with particular values and expectations were associated with a trajectory that did not include social mobility, education, or qualifications. The background stories shared with me by many participants in this research study were not dissimilar from my own, right to the point where our stories diverged into criminality. Their reasons vary from the normalisation of criminality in their home or community lives, desperation and disillusionment with the idea of another option, and indeed structural inequalities that may have had influence on their eventual situation (see 2.1.2).

Every individual has their story, their background and their influences that impact their lens of perception on acceptable behaviours, their lens on the world and society and their thoughts surrounding the actions they commit. In addition, these factors also influence the lens through which society perceives an individual. Literature, theatre and writing have been my personal drivers to express my thoughts and consider my options in ways I had never been able to articulate previously. This has inspired my interest in the impact that engagement in education and literature can have in widening

perceptions and allowing individuals to consider their behaviours and make better informed life choices.

On paper, my characteristics make me an unlikely candidate for a university education. As a working-class female student from a "poorer" background, society makes assumptions and attaches lower expectations and stereotypes to *people like me* (Nieto, 2004; Sorhagen, 2013). This is further exacerbated for people of certain races, with BAME people at higher risk of stereotype, incarceration and negative assumption, particularly in relation to criminality (see 2.1.2). By treating the prison population with the blanket term "criminal", it suggests that the individual prisoners are only seen as their criminal classification and the associated stereotypical expectation. Additionally, their prison sentence defines them as criminals far beyond the completion of that sentence. It implies that they cannot achieve more than society's low expectations of them. Low expectations expressed by my participants appeared to influence their trajectories, both prior to incarceration and at present. Participants knowing this articulated exactly how this made them feel; ostracised and rejected by a society that labelled them (see 1.1; 5.0).

Every group of prisoners I worked with reminded me how flawed this stereotypical perception can be. The individual personalities of prisoners were most startling to me the moment I entered my final research site, a small prison chapel. I knew I was yet again in a very different prison, with a very different group of people to the last, regardless of the fact they were all prisoners, dressed in their same prison uniforms. Society makes the mistaken assumption that the term, 'prisoner', serves to label, group and determine the character of all those housed in the prison environment; however, as with any community this is flawed, limited and dehumanising. In that very same prison chapel, as a visitor I was made to feel welcome, not just by the institution or supporting staff, but by the prisoners themselves, several of whom had been and would be imprisoned for a lifetime. One line of dialogue made all the difference in breaking the tension and opening this connection:

> "Hi there, is this your first time in prison? Mine too! [Laughter]"
>
> (Gio, Long-serving participant)

Even in a seemingly dark and isolating situation, a human gesture of comedy, irony, but above all, kindness, demonstrated the seemingly obvious yet too often overlooked fact

that prisoners are human beings, just as any other person in society. The lessons I drew from this motivated me to understand more about how prisoners may be re-humanised, rehabilitated and reintegrated into a society that, at present, largely rejects them, placing them out of sight and out of mind, but does little to foster successful reintegration.

1.2 People as "Prisoners"- Situating the prison population within the stigma of society

Reintegration is a professed aim of many prison rehabilitation programmes, but there is also an assumption here that prisoners had ever been integrated in society in the first place. Pensalfini (2017) explained that to rehabilitate means to fit in again. Rehabilitation is therefore questionable for many prisoners where they have never fitted into the dominant model of society (see 2.1.2). Many of the participants within the prison context perceive themselves to have been 'othered' by society (see 2.0; Elliott and Dingwall, 2017; Western and Petit, 2010), and there is a significant stigma arbitrarily attached to prisoners even before imprisonment, for many at the point of accusation (Drake, 2012). Upon committing a crime, an individual is suddenly a "thug", "punk", "scumbag", or other derogation heard throughout the process of this research study.

Embedded in global culture and reinforced by popular tabloid media are the notions of so-called "good guys" and "bad guys" as a binary social division. From literature to litigation, there are continual assumptions about the so called "bad guy" as a person, based on the action they have committed. Nobody ever tends to ask what happens after Scooby Doo's meddling kids (Hanna-Barbera, 1969) have successfully sent their latest costumed ghost to the police station, or Gotham police take Batman's (DC Comics, 1939) latest capture away. I do not mean to sound flippant in this as this thesis does not seek to belittle criminal behaviour, but it is a crucial consideration to make when looking at the whole picture for offender rehabilitation and reintegration.

It is not unknown that prisoners are more likely to come from marginalised communities; rather it appears to be blatant, commonly accepted and normalised. In preparing to undertake the data collection for this study, I had to buy appropriate clothing for the prison setting and when discussing what was appropriate to wear in prison with those I was shopping with, I witnessed other shoppers backing away and talking in hushed whispers. For me this experience was uncomfortable and played on my mind, but it is the smallest personal experience of attitudes prisoners, and indeed ex-offenders, face from both societies at large and in many cases, the people closest to them.

The United States of America has the highest incarceration rate of any country holding over two million adults in prison, with 724 people in every 100,000 of the population incarcerated, rendering the development of successful criminal rehabilitation imperative (BBC, 2017; McDowell, 2011; Public Safety Performance Project, 2010; Yates, 2009). The average daily-incarcerated number for Great Britain is currently almost one hundred thousand adults (Allen & Dempsey, 2016), which in proportion to population is 145 people per 100,000 of the population (BBC, 2017). Recidivism rates are also incredibly high in both locations, as explored in the following chapter, averaging at between 45% and 70% repeat offending within the first five years of release (Ministry of Justice, 2015; McDowell, 2011; Prison Reform Trust, 2015). Returning to Shakespeare's question regarding the condemnation of the fault as opposed to the perpetrator, the intentions of the criminal justice system heavily influence the need for this research study, as the current system condemns the actor of the fault but has minimal impact on the fault itself.

The intention of the British criminal justice system as claimed by the current British Government is to:

> "Keep those sentenced to prison in custody, helping them lead law-abiding and useful lives, both while they are in prison and after they are released."
>
> (HM Prisons, 2019)

The claimed intention is far from present outcomes as, if the aim is to rehabilitate and therefore reduce recidivism, the current system is simply not working for the majority of prisoners. Life beyond prison appears to be riddled with limited employment, financial and housing prospects (Pettit and Western, 2004; Western, Kling and Weiman, 2000; Prison Reform Trust, 2018; Western & Pettit, 2010). Prior to release, provision of education, training and ways to live a "useful" life is patchy in both quality and quantity across the prison system in the United Kingdom, as explored to an extent within chapter 2.

In the United States of America, where I conducted the fieldwork for this research, The Department of Corrections mission statements differ between states, in line with significant variation in provisions and approaches to criminal justice. Such examples of mission statements include:

a) Kentucky: "To protect the citizens of the Commonwealth and to provide a safe, secure and humane environment for staff and offenders in carrying out the mandates of the legislative and judicial processes; and, to provide opportunities for offenders to acquire skills which facilitate non-criminal behaviour."

(KDOC, 2017)

b) Michigan: "We create a safer Michigan by holding offenders accountable while promoting their success"

(MDOC, 2017)

In addition, there is an all-encompassing federal level mission statement:

> "We protect public safety by ensuring that federal offenders serve their sentences of imprisonment in facilities that are safe, humane, cost-efficient, and appropriately secure, and provide re-entry programming to ensure their successful return to the community."
>
> (BOP, 2017)

There are significant claims made in these statements which are interrogated in chapter two of this thesis, but the crucial element to consider here is whether the intention of prison is indeed to punish or "hold prisoners accountable" (MDOC, 2017), or alternatively to rehabilitate by "providing care and appropriate programming for successful re-entry" (Mass DOC, 2017). A balance is necessary to both address the crime and prevent recurrence by ensuring changes in individual actions. Some US prisons are leading the way with this work, including some that I visited, where none of the institutions were pleasant places one would choose to be, but fostered positive cultures grounded in educational and moral development. If practice truly aligns with any of the above mission statements, it must be questioned why these goals are not being adhered to across the entire prison system, when there are areas of good practice that could be replicated.

Though many offenders still face incarceration, there is considerable statistical evidence, grounded in academic, economic and governmental research, that alternative sentences can yield greater reductions in recidivism. Considering recent UK statistics, community-service sentences, for example, are at least 10% more effective (Wilberforce Society, 2010). For over, a decade, an increase in alternative methods of rehabilitation

for offenders has begun to emerge through education and training. Though recidivism is a common measure of success, this research project looked beyond statistics into experiences of those specifically engaging in arts-based programmes, considering both the intended and perceived intentions and outcomes of Shakespeare-focussed rehabilitative programming from the perspectives of practitioners, participants, and the criminal justice sector.

1.3 Research setting and institutional context

All data for this thesis was collected from men's prisons across two states in the USA. Prisons in the USA are graded levels I through to V, with V being considered the maximum level of security overall; my research sites spanned levels I through to IV (See Appendix A). In addition to this, some data was collected from my engagement with a juvenile programme, and although this does not feature in the final thesis, it was published in 2017 (Nicklin, 2017). Each programme group reported in this thesis was physically located within the prisons, however, they operated differently according to the type of group. For some, the programme consisted of one group of participants located in formal spaces assigned for educational purposes, such as classrooms, libraries or, in one case, the prison chapel. Smaller programme groups were located within recreation rooms in individual residential blocks or units across the prisons for resident members. All adult participants were males over the age of 21.

There has been significant public controversy surrounding the introduction of such programmes with mixed local and national media coverage and a divided public response. This highlights a split in perceptions whereby the initiatives are either perceived to be undeserved treats and rewards or the vital treatment and solution they are intended to be (Nicklin, 2014). In the states where the programme operates, recidivism rates are at more than 60%, and participants in the programme boast a <6% reoffending rate, that the programme considered here has maintained for over 20 years (Redacted, 2017). Therefore, although initial public acceptance was low, the overall difference demonstrated by the programme presents a more compelling argument for its use. The importance of society recognising the validity and impact these programmes can have is reiterated throughout this thesis as a contributor to the vital rehumanisation of prisoners.

Rehumanisation of prisoners is a key core concept throughout the argument of this thesis. Prisoners report being rehumanised in three broad ways;

1. Changing how they are perceived, both internally and externally

2. Exploring human emotion; encouraging and raising aspirations and achievement,

3. Empowering them to want to be positive role models or figures, thereby leaving a legacy to humanity that has greater positive impact than their existing criminal record.

Each participant reported this process differently, from specific programme practices to Shakespeare specific elements of the programme.

1.4 Chapters Structure

The following section offers brief summaries of each chapter contained within this thesis.

1.4.1 Chapter Two: Shakespeare, Society and Systems of Criminal Justice

This literature review chapter outlines existing and proposed approaches to criminal rehabilitation in both the UK and USA contexts. It interrogates their potential for recidivism, examining statistical outcomes from adult and juvenile prison, community and education-based sentencing, considering policy developments and proposals to improve a currently failing system for rehabilitation in criminal justice. I also consider the potential for theatre-based rehabilitative programming, outlining existing provision and current arguments in favour of this approach.

1.4.2 Chapter Three: Theorising Theatre, Prisons and Practice

This chapter is a theoretical one which forms the conceptual framework of the research study. I introduce theoretical approaches in the field including Foucauldian theory, applied theatre and the public definition of prisoners in the field of criminal rehabilitation, and connect these provisions with the drama therapeutic, psycho-dramatic and applied theatre-based principles that underpin a broad range of work in the field of prison theatre. I consider here also the public perception of, and attitudes to, offenders, setting up my overall argument that the best rehabilitative programmes are successful because they work to rehumanise prisoners to themselves and to society at large.

1.4.3 Chapter Four: Research Methods and Methodology

This thesis specifically explores the practices involved in these courses, as well as the intended and perceived outcomes from stakeholder perspectives, exploring the selection of Shakespeare as the medium for this work. To address these research questions, considering a lack of programme-specific literature at the time of this study, this enquiry was conducted through a multi-sited ethnographically informed process, utilising first-hand participation in pioneering Shakespeare-specific programme groups in the United States of America, together with input from leading practitioners in the conception and undertaking of this work. This chapter outlines the methodological approach undertaken in this research, including connecting the conceptual framework, research aims, research philosophy, study design, methods of data collection and methods of data analysis.

1.4.4 Chapter Five: Shakespeare Programme Practices and Delivery

This chapter focuses on the specific practices undertaken by the programme groups considered. Here I report my findings relevant to the research question considering “what were the specific programme practices and how were they delivered?” which explores the specific activities and practices involved in the programme and methods of delivery. Within this chapter I consider the programme practices undertaken as drawn from my own research experience, practitioners and participants. As is the case in most teaching spaces, intended teacher outcomes cannot be automatically assumed to have translated into learning by the students, so there is no guarantee that what the practitioners here intended the men to learn, was in fact what they reported learning. In relation to the findings therefore, it is paramount to hear the perceived learning outcomes from the perspective of the prisoners. This chapter does not consider the specific use of Shakespeare in detail but rather the structures and specific activity involved in the programme, as the volume of material and diversity in the way such material was used across programme groups has meant that a separate chapter has been formed to consider data specifically connected to Shakespeare. This chapter outlines group practices, their intentions, and perceived impacts. This chapter offers insight into programme activity and delivery, with potential examples for the replication of similar practices. Each practice discussed is defined and contextualised, then the intended outcomes of practitioners and the perceived outcomes of participants are explored.

1.4.5 Chapter Six: Shakespeare as a vehicle for education, exploration and expression

Where a major intention of this thesis was to explore the outcomes of the Shakespeare-specific programme investigated from the perspectives of participants, practitioners and stakeholders, several subcategories surrounding the specific use of Shakespeare emerged and are explored throughout this chapter.

Section one, "Shakespeare's People," considers Shakespeare's characters as a teaching force, developed upon by section two which examines "Shakespeare as a voice" and considers the value of Shakespeare's writing and language in offering participants' voices and language through which to express their own ideas. Sections three and four consider "Shakespeare as validation" on an internal and external level. There is a powerful intellectual and cultural value placed on Shakespeare that has a direct impact both on the prisoner's perceptions of themselves, and the way wider society perceives them, explored in the fourth and fifth sections of this chapter. Finally, this chapter considers Shakespeare as a re-humaniser. Outcomes of the Shakespeare programme practices continually relate to humanity, and the internal and external perceptions of prisoners as human beings. Humanity is at the core of the findings of this research study, and said humanity emerges through three levels; dehumanisation, identification as human and re-humanisation, the latter two elements facilitated via the activities of the Shakespeare programme.

1.4.6 Chapter Seven: Programme Impact and Defining Success

This chapter outlines the significant, broader outcomes shared by the participants that were not specifically related to Shakespeare's texts, but rather the activities undertaken and the approach to practice delivered within the groups. In fact, for the majority of participants, the work of Shakespeare was not necessarily the most impactful element reported, as opposed to the ethos and approaches undertaken. This chapter therefore considers the overall outcomes of the combined elements of the process as reported by practitioners and participants alike. This is considered through six key outcomes that were drawn from the dataset.

The first, acknowledging participants as human, considers how participants perceive themselves to be re-humanised through practitioner and community acknowledgment techniques. The second considers communication, interaction and trust skills and practises development. The third considers how the programme permits prisoners autonomy in their learning, behaviour and progress, a rare phenomenon within the prison institution. The fourth considers how the participants are enabled to

reflect through self-exploration, self-expression and self-reflective activities. Section five considers the role of progression and milestone completion, reported as critical by participants as being new, emancipatory and foreign to them. Finally, there is some final consideration of the reading and performing of Shakespeare, though the bulk of this practice has been covered in chapter two.

1.4.7 Chapter Eight: From Dehumanisation to Rehumanisation

This chapter forms a final discussion consolidating the major arguments of this thesis, with the overarching outcome being the importance of rehumanising prisoners in rehabilitation and reintegration. Re-humanisation is developed by these programme groups by combining a non-hierarchical and inclusive practical approach using Shakespeare, in order to provide Shakespeare-focussed educational and skills development opportunities that extend beyond the formal classroom. This chapter emerges from an overwhelming connection, grounded in the concept of "humanity" or "being human", underpinning the individual practices and outcomes discovered in these programme groups. It explains how, through engagement in the programme, prisoners navigate dehumanisation and rehumanisation before, during and after incarceration.

1.4.8 Chapter Nine: Conclusion: Shakespeare, Rehabilitation and Rehumanisation

This chapter outlines the main conclusions from this study. The programme is not about taking an examination, achieving specific common accolades, or reaching a required grade. Rather the intention is to create a community with differentiated levels and types of engagement that such a community may offer. Programmes alone cannot achieve this, however, if the structural injustices of society are not challenged on a much wider scale, both in society at large and within prison policy.

Here I synthesise the findings from this study to address this study's original contribution to knowledge and demonstrate that Shakespeare-focussed prison education programmes can open doors for improved personal futures, reduced recidivism and positive developments working towards a successfully reintegrated society beyond bars. Future directions for research in the field are offered, particularly in relation to this work, as an early intervention before the point of imprisonment is reached, and the application of such programmes as the one considered here to the UK context, particularly in relation to the Coates review of prison education, an extensive review commissioned by the UK government in 2016 (Coates, 2016) and current proposals for policy changes relating to prison.

2.0: Shakespeare, Society and Systems of Criminal Justice

"Knowledge is the wing wherewith we fly"

William Shakespeare

(Henry VI Part II, V. iii.)

Whilst research and statistics demonstrate that educational and community-focussed sentencing has a greater impact on recidivism than prison alone, as will be shown in this chapter, public and institutional debate allows prison to maintain its status as the major punishment used in UK and USA criminal justice systems. However, the use of Shakespeare in criminal rehabilitation holds a rich history with key examples including: UK work with Cicely Berry and the Royal Shakespeare Company (Berry, 1991); Shakespeare in adult and juvenile prisons (Trounstine, 1991; Tofteland, 2014; Wallace, 2014; Coleman, 2013; and Pensalfini, 2017) and juvenile projects devoted solely to Shakespeare as an "…educational, transformative, and restorative" approach to criminal justice (Coleman, 2014; Nicklin, 2017).

This chapter outlines existing and proposed approaches to criminal rehabilitation in both the UK and USA contexts. It interrogates their potential impact on offenders, examining statistical outcomes from incarceration, community and education-based sentencing. Finally, it considers the potential for theatre-based rehabilitative programming, outlining key drama-therapeutic and applied theatre-based principles that underpin a broad range of offender-focussed work in this field. Though this thesis considers Shakespeare-focussed criminal rehabilitation, it is also important to consider the characteristics of those participating within it, particularly the additional features, stories and influences that make up the individual beyond merely 'prisoner'. Therefore, literature on indicators and contributing factors to criminal behaviour, in addition to that which considers the perception of prisoners as 'othered' from society or 'less than human' is also considered throughout. Overall it demonstrates the processes, practices and perceptions that encapsulate the process of becoming and experience of being a prisoner, including the societal dehumanisation of prisoners and potential methods through which rehumanisation may be fostered.

2.1 Prison: development, structural inequality and cycles of recidivism

2.1.1 The Purpose of Criminal Justice

Whilst there are many approaches to criminal justice, there is a split between two main models: punitive and rehabilitative. According to Van Ginneken & Hayes (2017), 'punishment' is never explicitly defined in English criminal law, which is problematic when it comes to clearly defining what constitutes effective punishment as part of a criminal justice response (Criminal Justice Act, 2003; Von Hirsch and Roberts, 2004). Punitive models of criminal justice are also referred to as "retributive" responses to the actions of an individual. According to Carlsmith & Darley (2008), punitive or retributive models of criminal justice are defined as systems:

> "by which offenders are punished in proportion to the moral magnitude of their intentionally committed harms." (p.193)

This definition focuses on the enactment of a punishment on an offender, with key examples being incarceration, solitary confinement and globally, capital punishment. In these cases, those who have been deemed to have caused harm to their society are punished by fellow human beings for that harm. Alternatively, rehabilitative models focus on practices administered in order to actively foster and facilitate change via restorative or educational initiatives whereby humans, again in response to behaviours deemed harmful, place requirements on others in order to make recompense, reconnect them or bring them to a behaviour which is the standardly accepted societal norm. Rehabilitative approaches are models which involve actively supplementing the prison sentence with proactive initiatives to foster change. According to Roberts and Stalans (2004), restorative justice stresses reconciliation between the offender, the victim, and the community, and focuses less on a punitive response for the crime committed.

There is significant emphasis throughout history on the purpose of prison being to administer punishment, enact control and inflict discipline on prisoners (Foucault, 1977), moving towards the concept of simultaneously working towards the rehabilitation of offenders, and educating them in order to prevent future reoffending post-incarceration (Behan, 2014). Prison as a consequence for criminal activity emerged as a shift from the public spectacle of punishments as deterrents, to spaces where behavioural change could be enacted on offenders out of view from society at large during the 18th century (Foucault, 1975). Prison as a tool of punishment however

emerged much earlier, as a holding pre-sentencing space before the sentence itself was administered in a not dissimilar way to the modern use of prison as 'remand' whereby if you are arrested you may "go to prison until your hearing at a magistrates' court" (Gov.Uk, 2019). Post-sentencing prisoners were held until such time as something physical was enacted upon the body that was deemed proportional to the offence committed (Foucault, 1975; Danaher et al., 2000).

This history is useful when considering the modern usage of prison as a punishment. In the modern context, prisons hold several roles depending on the lens of perception. Even in the most up-to-date considerations definitions vary, including, but not exclusive to:

1. Holding or isolation spaces to facilitate the separation of offenders from society at large (Drake, 2012; Blecker, 1990);
2. Institutions for rehabilitation, holding offenders as punishment for their crimes, experiencing the loss of personal liberty and freedom for a period proportional to the offence committed, within which rehabilitation is facilitated. (Cameron, 2015; Behan & Gaston, 2015; Prison Reform Trust, 2015; Behan, 2014);
3. Institutions where punishment is administered for offenders' crimes. The institution is the place where the punishment occurs and is enacted on the body of individuals to discipline and mould them into accepted behavioural activity, implying further punishment than incarceration alone (O'Brien, 2014; Blecker, 1990; Drake, 2012; Foucault, 1977; Danaher et al, 2000).

Conflicting perceptions spark considerable debate in the field of criminal rehabilitation between punitive and rehabilitative models, and conceptions of justice. Coates' (2016) review of prison education in the UK also highlighted differences between the perception of prison *as* punishment and prison *for* punishment, highlighting the investment return value for societal investment in education. The mission statement of Her Majesty's Prison Service is:

> "Her Majesty's Prison Service serves the public by keeping in custody those committed by the courts. Our duty is to look after them with humanity and help them lead law-abiding and useful lives in custody and after release."
>
> (Spur, 2007)

This statement alone identifies a responsibility on the prison system, in order to achieve its mission statement, to provide support and education, both during their incarceration and to support their progression post-release. As a student writing in a UK higher education institution and living in the UK it is important to consider both the criminal justice climate in the UK by comparison to the US as my research site, and to make links in line with the potential impact this research may have in contributing to thinking about education policy and practice in the UK prison system.

2.1.2 Prison demographics and structural inequalities

It is noteworthy to consider prison demographics in this research, particularly as it was conducted in the US context, since the makeup of the prison population is related to structural injustices and other social justice issues, as will now be discussed (Cole, 1999; NAACP, 2019; Pettit & Western, 2004; Western & Pettit, 2010). In particular the importance of demographics in relation to this study lies in a consideration of the way's prisoners are considered, identified and treated by society at large through to the point of othering and dehumanisation.

Social inequalities and prejudices feed into several further issues explored within this thesis, such as poor educational histories, socio-economic status and criminal activity. In what is argued to be the seminal work on race, inequality and criminal justice in the USA, David Cole (1999) argues that those who make up the majority of the "criminal" demographic cannot be expected to respect a criminal justice system and, indeed, a society that does not respect them. His argument continued to resonate in 2017:

> "Despite a veneer of neutrality, race-based and class-based double standards operate in virtually every criminal justice setting, including police behaviour, jury selection, and sentencing."
>
> ([US]National Criminal Justice Research Service, 2017).

In both the UK and the USA there is an undeniable race, ethnicity and class imbalance within the prison populations. At present just over a quarter of the British prison population are from a minority ethnic group (Prison Reform Trust, 2019); the non-white population in prisons is therefore overrepresented relative to the general population (14%) (UK Government, 2019). In the research location, the USA, this over

representation is even more pronounced. The U.S. incarceration rate of minority ethnic groups is 56% relative to the overall population proportion of 32% (NAACP, 2019). Further, in state prisons, African-Americans are incarcerated at 5.1 times the rate of white Americans (1,408 per 100,000 as opposed to 275 per 100,000) and in 12 states in 2016 prison populations were more than half black (Sentencing Project, 2016).

Participants of colour in this research shared some of their experiences of structural injustice leading to their incarceration. Though their race was not a definitive guarantee of their criminal future, a "disturbing set of processes" including the racially-influenced school to prison pipeline (see 2.2.2), appears to impact the way individuals were handled and dealt with. This often seemed to be based on their race, a perception existing literature reinforces. There has been a rise in the profile of racial police conflict cases whereby unarmed black men have been shot by US police including cases such as Michael Brown and Eric Garner (De Pinto et al., 2014). According to Sam Sinyangwe, founder of the Mapping Police Violence project, black people are more likely to be killed by police in the United States than white people (Sinyangwe, 2015). For example, in 2015 police departments disproportionately killed black people, who were 41% of victims despite being only 20% of the population living in these cities (Mapping Police Violence, 2017). I cite these cases to highlight the presence of imbalances and suggest it is the responsibility of the criminal justice system to challenge them and to challenge the othering of these communities in the context of these dynamics of power.

Low socio-economic status has also been recurrently connected to incarceration. Research has demonstrated close connections between low income, unemployment, and family instability (Pettit and Western, 2004; Western, Kling and Weiman, 2000). Western and Pettit (2010) describe a new social group, formed out of the prison demographic patterns, where a group excluded from society become a community built on the foundations of the shared experience of incarceration and crime. This new social group forms the demographic of my research study whereby the prison is a catalyst for fostering such communities under the conditions of a literally captive demographic.

Serving a prison sentence or engaging in criminal activity becomes "normal" or "standard" within these communities where marginalisation has led to such inequalities, and fraternity is developed over negative foundations, such as shared involvement in criminal behaviour (Western & Petit, 2010; Beckitt & Western, 2001). Further than this, the structural disadvantage created by being born in one of these communities is heavily under-recognised and though the profile of these discrepancies has risen in recent years,

this is a very real social injustice, impacting the prevalence of criminality in such communities. As explained by Western and Pettit (2010):

> "The influence of the penal system on social and economic disadvantage can be seen in the economic and family lives of the formerly incarcerated. The social inequality produced by mass incarceration is sizeable and enduring for three main reasons: It is invisible, it is cumulative, and it is intergenerational … As a result, the full extent of the disadvantage of groups with high incarceration rates is underestimated."
>
> (Weston & Pettit, 2010, p.8).

Criminality is influenced by the othering and marginalisation of people, who then commit offences. In turn, these people serve their sentence, attempt to re-join society and are othered further, based on their criminal history. Either way, they are othered by society without significant opportunity for positive change. This raises significant questions surrounding not only contributing factors to criminality, but also the treatment of prisoners and the function of prison in rehabilitation, if all prison serves to do is further isolate people from the society within which they live.

2.1.3 Cycles of recidivism

45% of UK adult prisoners released in 2010 reoffended by 2015, a third of them within the first six months (Ministry of Justice, 2015). Current statistics show that within a year of release over 50% of UK prisoners reoffend (Prison Reform trust, 2018; Keaney, 2019; Channel 4, 2019). The USA national rate of recidivism is significantly higher, averaging 70% and over (US National Institute of Justice, 2017). Considering these statistics, it would appear that prison utilised simply as a punishment does not motivate or lead offenders to change (Hollin, 2007). The UK Government's own recent evaluation of prisons stated that "…it fails to rehabilitate or make sure criminals are prevented from offending again" (UK Government, 2016). Furthermore, 48% of 2018 UK prison entrants received short sentences (Ministry of Justice, 2018), even though statistics demonstrate short-term sentences to be largely unsuccessful. This approach is consistently associated with higher rates of proven re-offending than community orders and suspended sentence orders (UK Government, 2015), although this may also reflect the kinds of offenders or crimes that are punished with short sentences rather than community orders or suspended sentences. The purpose of short sentences is to be a shock tactic to

deter offenders from future engagement in crime that would lead to longer-termed sentences (Scottish Government, 2003). It is often argued that the use of short-term sentencing is unsuccessful, costly and disconnected from any genuine impact on the crimes it is used to challenge (Cullen et al, 2011; Ministry of Justice, 2014; Halliday et al, 2001).

In fact, one recurrent feature of the treat-versus-treatment debate questions the economic value of positive programming over imprisonment, even though the UK Government spend over £247 million on youth detention per year (Grayling et al, 2013) and over £3500 per prisoner on adult incarceration yearly (Ministry of Justice, 2016). This is an interesting objection when pitched against the cost of courses that may have the effect of reducing the need for future incarceration. Where reoffending costs between £9 billion and £11 billion per year (Coates, 2016), associated reductions in re-offending rates may mean that educational and vocational programmes have the potential to save society over £50,000 per prisoner (Marsh 2008).

As with my own research, prisoner voice and perspective are important in identifying prisoner perceptions of different criminal sentences, their value and impact. Research demonstrates that prisoners report little value in multiple sentences in prison beyond temporary incapacitation and inconvenient segregation before release and re-offence (Armstrong and Weaver, 2013). The reason for this, potentially, is that these sentences are not combined with any specific compulsory educational or reflective element. Education and training have, however, been identified as critical factors in successful criminal rehabilitation (Behan, 2014; Hayes and Blunt 2011; Halliday et al, 2001; Batiuk et al, 1997).

As the cited statistics demonstrate prison alone rarely works. However, there is an expanding field of alternatives to imprisonment; since the 1960s there has been a proliferation of alternatives to imprisonment in criminal sentencing practice (Bottoms et al, 2004). Broadly, alternatives to incarceration focus on electronic monitoring, community services, education interventions and restorative justice programmes (Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, 2008). Statistically, community-based sentences, for example, are more effective in reducing reoffending than short sentences which carry high recidivism rates (Ministry of Justice, 2013; Halliday et al, 2001). However, these alternatives are underutilised for UK and US offenders, (Halliday et al, 2001).

Research into criminal justice practices reinforces the need for variation over the blanket approaches applied, yet individual characteristics are often overlooked in sentencing (Miller et al, 2014; Fox et al, 2014; Wong, Fox & Albertson, 2014; Andrews et al, 2011.) By undertaking non-personalised approaches, as is common with the UK and US criminal justice system, there is a continued negative cycle of recidivism (as discussed in the next section). When compared to the improved reoffending rates demonstrated by sentences accounting for individual differences, for example, in the Shakespeare programme considered in this research, the existing rate of recidivism appears excessive and unjustifiable.

2.1.4 Alternatives to imprisonment

There is considerable evidence that whichever definition of prison one subscribes to, be it punishment, deterrence, protection or rehabilitation, prison is considerably less statistically effective than education in reducing offending (Bromley Briefings, 2015). From the introduction of basic community service orders to educational initiatives, there is a vast array of potential sentencing options available, with volumes of sub-programmes and groups within each of these broad brackets of practice.

Educational alternatives have been proposed, and in many cases utilised well across the globe. In Sally Coates aforementioned prison education review, she recommended education-focussed approaches, focussing on accountability, education and empathy with the intention of an overhaul of not only prisons themselves, but also attitudes held by and towards offenders (Coates, 2016). At the time of writing, however, these recommendations are yet to be implemented.

Since 2013, UK public debate has surrounded government proposals to introduce new education-based interventions into criminal rehabilitation. There is a considerable divide in public perception between those who consider education programmes to be 'treats' rather than the 'treatments' that they are intended to be. This conclusion is here drawn from online commentary surrounding the introduction of such initiatives as the 'Earned Release Scheme' (UK Government, 2015; Gove, 2015). Public support is arguably essential for alternative sentencing ideas to become a reality, due to active political agendas surrounding the issue (Roberts, 2011; Rossi et al, 1997). Economic arguments are recurrently linked with thinking that offenders are unworthy of investment; however, in the US context, introducing community sentences from the

1970s onwards was grounded in cost effective and rehabilitative motivations (Wood, 2011).

2.2 Education and offenders

Recognition of the importance of education in prisons is seemingly abundant in research but lost in practice. There are pockets of good practice, with examples of 'OFSTED outstanding' education provision in the UK and several strong examples in the USA, but these are isolated and underreported (Coates, 2016; Prison Policy Initiative, 2017).

2.2.1 Poor educational history and prisoner illiteracy

The risks of incarceration are highly stratified by education, with prisoners having predominately low educational attainment levels. For example, in the UK 47% of prisoners in 2012 held no formal qualifications and 42% had been excluded from formal schooling earlier in life (Ministry of Justice, 2012). More recently the situation had worsened: 85% of male prisoners had been previously excluded from school (HM Chief Inspectorate of Prisons, 2015), 73% of all prisoners had truanted and 41% were younger than 14 when they most recently attended formal education (Gove, 2015; Bacon, 2015) indicating at the very least a correlation between educational disengagement and future criminal trajectory. In the USA the future outlook for those who did not complete school is no better, with dropouts comprising 82% of the adult prison population (Christie et al, 2005; Coalition for Juvenile Justice, 2001).

Schooling serves many functions, but one of these is to disseminate a shared set of ideals, behaviours and values to young people, preparing them for adulthood as part of society at large, external to that which is learned in the home (Kains & Aiken, 2007). Exclusion, therefore, may isolate young people from developing these skills, knowledge and, most importantly, a connection to the wider world beyond. This is particularly true for those deemed to have social, emotional or behavioural difficulties. In relation to prisoners, the figures from the USA are stark. In 1994, it was predicted that 31% of adolescents with learning disabilities would be arrested 3-5 years out of high school and 50% of juvenile delinquents tested were found to have undetected learning disabilities (Fells, 1994). In 2000, Snowling et al (2000) conducted more recent research with 91 young offenders and the majority of the sample had poor literacy skills. Rack (2005) explored hidden disabilities in prisons reporting that the planning of education in prisons must recognise that approximately 50% of offenders will need literacy and

numeracy key skills support. Such studies are insightful, but modern statistics are difficult to source in a nationally representative way.

Exceptionally, Gonzalez et al. (2015) conducted a nationally representative study within which 41% of prisoners reported a disability, most commonly, learning disabilities. Prisoners with disabilities are recurrently identified as a group that is at a higher risk of recidivism. These findings are reinforced by Bronson et al. (2015) who also found that 32%-40% of US prisoners reported at least one disability and that cognitive disabilities were the most common type of reported disability across the prison population explored. By the time they are participating in such studies, prisoners are already adults and have entered a system that will have a lifelong impact on them, long beyond their sentence. A problem for both the school and prison systems is a one-size-fits-all model which is applied, taking little account of individual differences and needs. Rather than inviting and enveloping individuals facing difficulties into society, supported by its structures, the individuals become othered from it, even at this early stage. Thompson and Tawell (2017) consider this, writing:

> "Young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) often struggle within the performative expectations and cultures of traditional schooling, leaving them at risk of marginalisation and/or social exclusion with long-term negative future consequences for their social engagement in the wider world"
>
> (p.18)

Even if individuals do complete some of their high school or secondary school education, problems remain. The legitimate labour market opportunities for men with no more than a high school education have deteriorated as the prison population has grown, and prisoners themselves are drawn overwhelmingly from the least educationally qualified within society: all US state prisoners average just a tenth-grade education (equivalent to 15-16 years of age), and about 70 percent have no high school diploma (Western & Pettit 2010; Western, 2006; Harlow, 2003). Returning to racial structural inequalities, among US black men born between 1965 and 1969, 30 percent of those without college education and nearly 60 percent of high school dropouts went to prison by 1999 (Pettit & Western, 2004) and by 2002, around 12 percent of US black men in their twenties were incarcerated (Harrison and Karberg, 2003).

Disrupted access to and engagement with education has fostered high levels of illiteracy amongst the prison population. According to the Coates review, over 50% of UK prisoners assessed on prison entry had English and Maths abilities only at entry level 1-3 which is the expected level of primary school children (Coates, 2016). Improving literacy by encouraging participants to read and write is a vital part of many practitioners' work in the field of prison education (Geese Theatre, 2016; Shannon Trust, 2016; Clark & Dugdale, 2008). In the UK, The Offenders Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) is the current body for educational provision for UK prisoners established in 2012. OLASS is required to provide a core education offering four elements:

> "A mandatory assessment of maths and English attainment on reception to custody; basic skills: English, maths and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL); vocational qualifications; employability skills, which include a wide range of team working, personal, social, and other skills"
>
> (Coates, 2016)

The Coates Review also proposed strict controls mandating regulated educational provisions, to be combined with incarceration and heavily monitored, regulated, and standardised across the prison system (Coates, 2016). Learning is hailed as the core intention, for the development of practical, emotional, and academic skills to rehabilitate prisoners and deter them from recidivism. In 2015, out of 101,600 learners under the present OLASS contracts for prison education, only 100 prisoners participated in a full Level 3 course (i.e. A level equivalent) (Coates, 2016). These participation numbers are incredibly low when taking into consideration the poor pre-existing levels of educational attainment within the UK and US prison populations. The reason for these low numbers may be because the provision is considered both patchy and optional. If a compulsory standardised educational element was introduced to sentences, based on existing examples of good practice, there could be potential for significant change.

Elliott and Dingwall (2017) explain that as a result of social disengagement, young people may be less likely to acquire and develop skills needed for participation in society, including empathy, cooperation, communication, groupwork, emotional and behavioural control, in turn becoming more likely to become marginalised from wider society in adult life, like the participants in this research. They consider role playing and the outcomes of engagement in this from the perspectives of at-risk young people. They identify that playing and exploring role was reported to enable the participants to

> "engage with those around them in a positive way … allowing them to escape from the negative connotations of the labels with which they have found themselves…. 'being Other' to discover that the roles they have been assigned are not the only roles which they can fulfil successfully."
>
> (p. 75)

Arts education has been used to combat and explore this othering, and as Martin, Anderson and Adams (2012) argue, participation in arts-focussed activity can contribute to an important foundation for positive adolescent development. Further, investigating the use of an arts-based youth intervention project for young people at-risk of school exclusion, Thompson & Tawell (2017) find that through engagement with arts work, juvenile participants were "provided alternatives to their personal, cultural and historical ways of experiencing the world" (p.18). For example, they argue that by "experimenting with different art media and trying out creative ideas within a safe environment, the young people chose to try out becoming a different version of themselves" (pp,18). This is one example among several claimed outcomes surrounding arts-based intervention, that can be explored empirically, and supported through specific case research as conducted here by Thompson & Tawell (2017), and this research project.

Further, engagement in creative arts can be used for integrational and educational purposes to help those at risk of disconnection and disaffection by equipping them with tools to explore their issues, imagine situations and, in turn, re-engage, or if the intervention is early enough, engage with schooling (Thompson & Tawell, 2017; Elliott & Dingwall, 2017; Brown & Nicklin, 2019). In the situation of prisoners, this kind of intervention may be considered applicable at a later stage in life, post-incarceration, in order to encourage and foster successful reintegration into society at large. It is crucial to note that such engagement must be examined on a case by case basis: neither this thesis nor the work of the researchers cited here make any claim that the arts is a one size fits all cure for othering, educational disengagement and criminality.

2.2.2 The School to Prison Pipeline (STPP)

The "School to Prison Pipeline" (STPP) is the common term used to denote the criminalisation of US young people in school environments, said to directly or partially correlate with their likelihood of incarceration in later life (Deferse & Fund, 2013; Christie et al, 2005; Wald & Losen, 2003). As a complex topic of debate, the School to

Prison Pipeline is used as a metaphor for the direct impact of policies and practices introduced into the US school system, theoretically intended to protect some pupils, which has led to the early criminalisation of others, in turn supposedly triggering patterns of criminal behaviour, incarceration, and recidivism (Kim et al, 2010, Archer, 2009).

In relation to the "School to Prison Pipeline" (STPP) there are suggested styles of practice that are argued to be contributors placing young people on the School to Prison Pipeline (Wald & Losen, 2003). Such examples include disciplinary tactics such as zero tolerance policies utilised with no consideration of individual situations, poor GED (School leaver qualification) and school completion rates and enhanced segregation due to inequalities in educational provision dependant on race or background. During the last two decades almost all US states have passed laws making it easier to treat juvenile offenders as adults, which opens opportunities for young people, who for a variety of reasons fall into the bracket of at risk of criminality, to fall into the statistics of STPP.

With regard to disciplinary policies claimed to sustain the STPP, where an action or behaviour is deemed against the rules, harsh and inflexible punishments serve to be the immediate “sentence” regardless of situational nuances. For example, one of the largest predictors for ending up in the STPP is having been suspended or excluded from school (Christle, Jolivette and Nelson, 2005) and applying such harsh and segregating practices under the auspices of zero-tolerance disciplinary policy can, in effect, reduce an individual’s educational opportunities (Casella 2003; Martinez 2009). To miss school when one is already falling behind in education can only further inhibit progress. Most arguments surrounding this approach suggest that schools introducing police and criminalisation into their disciplinary environment only enhance existing difficult or disrupted learner situations, without tackling the root behaviours at any point (Theriot, 2009).

The STPP has been identified and explored most heavily in the US context (Pane & Rocco, 2014; Christle, Jolivette and Nelson, 2005; Robinson, 2012; Schiff, 2018), however, it has been considered in more recent years in the UK context also (Cole et al, 2009; Graham 2016; Walker, 2018; Berridge et al, 2001). Writing in the UK context Cole et al (2009) explore the factors associated with high and low levels of school exclusions in the UK, particularly England, context, citing the following to introduce the need for research in this area:

> "Exclusion from school has devastating long-term consequences for many of the young people affected and is associated with wider social problems particularly youth offending"
>
> (p.2)

Cole et al (2009) acknowledge a need to critically consider the negative impact of exclusionary schooling practice, and particularly the factors causing, or indeed impacting the high exclusionary rates currently occurring. Further, according to McCluskie et al (2019), "97.4% of all children permanently excluded in the UK in 2016/17 were from schools in England" (p.1), where this researcher is based, therefore highlighting a need to explore the area in the context of the implications of the research findings presented here.

Graham (2016) also examined the STPP in the UK context. Graham argues that, just as Foucault (1991) claimed:

> "The Carceral…allows the recruitment of major 'delinquents.' It organises what may be called 'disciplinary careers' in which, through various exclusions and rejections, a whole process is set in motion"
>
> (p.300)

UK "Schools are the key contributors to this network" (Graham, 2016, p.139). Black Caribbean boys were found to be most likely to "fall into this category" (p.139) due to the "disturbing set of processes" put in place by the school system, and structural inequalities and injustices perpetuated within them therefore facilitating the STPP.

Where schools pursue behavioural consequences under an increasingly punitive and isolating approach, some scholars argue that these young people become both physically and mentally disconnected from the mainstream of society at large, placing them in a dangerous position of marginalisation that later pushes them into formulating or joining non-mainstream communities of shared negative behavioural ideals, such as gang cultures and other antisocial behaviours (Heitzeg, 2009). This is, in effect, an example of condemning the individual whilst not only not addressing but also exacerbating their behaviours. From temporary school segregation to incarceration, the STPP results in many young people whose trajectory could have been changed, being

literally segregated from a society whose education system and practices directly rejected them.

Restorative justice approaches seek to reverse the segregating impact of such practices, with a critical focus on community, inclusion, vocational or practical enhancement, reconnection and, crucially, rehumanisation (Feasey & Willliams, 2009; Workman, 1983; Parker, 2016). As explored later in this chapter, these practices encourage cohesion between communities and offenders, and in looking at the STPP, could support the reintegration of students into the very community their behaviour is affecting. The STPP has been identified and recognised officially in research for over twenty years, meaning that there are now adult prisoners who found themselves on this life trajectory. The STPP is also frequently heavily associated with racism and racial inequality (Heitzeg, 2009; Boyd, 2009) and low socio-economic status (Christie et al, 2005). These are not factors heavily addressed within this thesis, but these associations relate to the treatment and classification of persons, based on assumptions made on the basis of one shared characteristic. The STPP is reported to most powerfully impact people of colour, most often young men, and most often from a low socio-economic background, as judgments and assumptions are passed about them at school, in some cases as young as five years old (Heitzeg, 2005, Christie et al 2005). With this in mind, the education system could have a shared responsibility with the prison system to counteract such trends with alternative styles of intervention, given the potential of heavily punitive policies to lead to further isolations.

2.2.3 Isolation, low self-efficacy and lacking success

Feeling proud, successful and intelligent has internal and external potential for personal and educational development (Brown, 2014; Burnett, 2002; Boler, 1999; Cain & Dweck, 1995). There is a school of thought aligning self-esteem and self-belief with educational achievement and attainment, and low self-esteem is recurrently connected with motivations for criminal behaviour (Brown, 2014). Families, friends, and associated communities alike consistently report low expectations of offenders and negative assumptions about them, and in turn prisoners report feeling isolated, rejected or disowned (Codd, 2013; Naser & La Vigne, 2006; Harvey, 2005).

Prisoners report that long periods of isolation with little mental stimulus contributed to poor mental health and led to intense feelings of anger, frustration, and anxiety, alienating them from society at large (Lerman, 2009; Bernard, 1990). Prisoners

also report turning to substance abuse to relieve the long hours of tedium and disconnect mentally from their “real world” situation (Nurse & Woodcock, 2003). All prisoners are subjected to isolation in some form, even those in simple prison cells are withdrawn from humanity at large, with a physical barrier in place. For most, this means isolation from their families and communities due to the nature of incarceration-based sentencing. For some, this can mean experiencing separation from all human contact through isolation and segregation practices.

Evidence has emerged in recent years that such isolating practices as Secure Housing Units (SHU) and solitary confinement can be used on an individual for several years. Secure housing units are “…correctional entities allow for the isolation of convicts under conditions that offer little sensory stimulation and minimal opportunities for interaction with other people” (Arrigo & Bullock, 2007, p.622). This kind of isolation can have serious implications for mental health, and the conditions of solitary confinement can exacerbate existing symptoms or provoke the development of new ones. Mental health problems are the most significant cause of morbidity in prisons and the prison environment; rules and regimes governing ordinary daily life inside prison can be seriously detrimental to mental health (Birmingham et al, 2010). Prison rules for isolated prisoners, however, greatly restrict the nature and quantity of mental health services that they can receive (Metzner & Fellner, 2010).

These practices, I argue, serve no rehabilitative function; they provide no opportunity for learning, development and change, as an individual only has their existing attitude and perceptions to draw on. The prison isolates the offender for a temporary period of time and if no intervention is administered prior to release, the literature reviewed above suggests not only does this do nothing to elicit change, but it also causes or exacerbates mental health and wellbeing issues.

Not only do the difficulties associated with exclusion closely affect prisoners themselves but the knock-on effect of these can filter into the lives of prisoner’s families, in particular the future prospects and opportunities for their children. Murray (2007) states:

> “prisoners and their children are vulnerable to multiple types of social exclusion, including pre-existing deprivation; loss of material and social capital following imprisonment; stigma; ‘linguistic exclusion’; political exclusion; poor future prospects; and administrative invisibility.”
>
> (Murray, 2007, p. 55)

There is significant research to reinforce this notion (e.g. Murray, 2007; Farrington and Murray, 2005; Boswell and Wedge, 2002; Duff, 2001), including Murray and Farrington (2005) who discovered that imprisonment was a predictive factor for future engagement in delinquent behaviour, social exclusion and future mental health problems in males beyond their childhood, up until at least the age of 48 (the scope of this study). These issues, as explored throughout this thesis, highlight the failings of the prison system beyond recidivism rates alone, highlighting key barriers and cyclical issues separating prisoners and those associated with them from their own communities and pockets of society that, in theory, on release from prison they should re-enter and become a part of, having served out the sentence for their crime.

2.2.4 Typical classroom structure disengagement

The structure of standard education spaces is highlighted in this research as potentially detrimental to educational inclusion, and relevant to educational interventions for current prisoners and is therefore considered briefly here. A standard set-up of desks in rows, with the teacher in a position indicating authority is common in classroom environments. However, there is a wealth of research identifying a plethora of problems with this structure, as this creates opportunities for students to disconnect easily (Hannah, 2013; Grubaugh & Houston, 1990). It is argued that the positioning of desks alone can have an initial impact on participants entering the space, that could directly "set the tone" for the type of class or space they pre-emptively identify it to be (Guardino & Fullerton, 2010). Modern research suggests that best organised classrooms or teaching spaces are those that permit the maximum opportunity for interaction between students, their peers, and teachers, thus decreasing opportunity for distraction and disengagement (Clifford, 2013; Martella et al, 2003; Conroy et al, 2002).

The circular classroom layout is one alternative posited, through which such openness of interaction, deterrence from distraction, and environment for inclusion may be constructed. This notion is not new, where researchers such as Rosenfield et al. (1985) proposed that more on-task behaviour was exhibited by learners sitting in a circle formation than those working in rows. Often closely associated with the Native American tradition of talking circles (Pranis, 2005), this set up is designed and focussed on enabling separate individuals to come together in a comfortable format as equals, in physical position and held authority. Native American circle practices hold five structural requirements for successful use as talking or peace-making spaces, and such

circles are directly drawn upon by some practitioners in the design of their Shakespeare programme. The five structural requirements identified by Pranis, (2005) are;

1. Opening closing rituals identifying space as unique
2. Agreed rules/guidelines
3. Talking or focus piece
4. Facilitator to maintain space as directed
5. Consensus or decision making ensuring all individuals in the circle have had the opportunity to share if desired.

(Pranis, 2005)

These practices integrate closely with circles used in the Shakespeare programme groups (see 5.0).

2.3 Introducing Shakespeare

Whereas Shakespeare has been present in English teaching for decades, both as a compulsory curricular element and as selected subject, moving into a mandatory position on the English curriculum in England over thirty years ago (Cox, 1988), it is important to consider the reasons for this determined inclusion and particularly how this relates to prisoner rehabilitation. In 1989, the Cox report distinguished good, or the right sort of literature, which is good for people to read and learn from, and the wrong sort of literature to which we should not be exposing people (Cox, 1989). Shakespeare's work was identified as the right kind of literature to be taught or read in UK schools. Whilst the premise that Shakespeare should be mandated because it is the right kind of literature is disputed, it does carry such reputation globally with education systems ensuring the implementation of Shakespeare as a symbol of necessary cultural education (Ward & Connolly, 2008; Gove, 2013; Cox, 1989; Coles, 2013). With this in mind, there is prestige attached to the study of, or engagement with, Shakespeare whose work is held in higher esteem than simply reading or engaging with literature more broadly.

The popularity of Shakespeare as a literary icon is no less prevalent in the United States of America than it is in the UK, where even though individual states maintain control over their own school curricula, many US high schools do voluntarily include Shakespeare in their literature teaching programme (Burton, 2013). Yet, whilst there is considerable research surrounding the selection of Shakespeare in educational establishments at all levels, there is little research surrounding why Shakespeare is

perceived to be an appropriate and impactful choice for successful criminal rehabilitation. Indeed, whilst theatre is a common tool in criminal rehabilitation (Shailor, 2011), Shakespeare-exclusive courses are less common and have a heavily under-reported history.

Shakespeare is considered a literary pioneer and reasons for this popularity are abundant in literature, including his literary craftsmanship (Muir, 2013; Bradbrook, 1979), his educational potential and impact (Stredder, 2010; Olive, 2015; Gibson, 1998; Neelands & O'Hanlon, 2011), his value as cultural capital (Shellard et al, 2016; Lanier, 2010) and his continued and lasting societal relevance (Grady & Hawkes, 2006; Dobson, 2005; Lehmann, 2002). Of relevance to this research are the notions of education, relevance, perceived value and reliability, often attached to Shakespeare's works throughout literary considerations.

For the sake of this research, four key interpretations or uses of Shakespeare have been identified from the data as being most significant to practitioners and participants:

1) Shakespeare reflects humanity, and serves as a medium for individuals to reflect upon themselves,
2) Shakespeare is viewed as being for intelligent or clever people and knowledge of this can impact on participants own perceptions of their personal capabilities and how they are seen by others in terms of cultural capital,
3) Shakespeare's language and written expression as a tool that may be equipped and applied for the purposes of self-expression,
4) Shakespeare as a teacher or person of authority that teaches life-lessons deemed worth listening to or believing.

These characteristics, as they appear in the literature, are examined below.

2.3.1 Shakespeare reflecting humanity

In the context of the somewhat dehumanised prison population, it is important to consider how Shakespeare could aid in rehumanisation. Shakespeare is hailed as the master of capturing the human condition (Bate, 1998; Bloom, 1998; Berner, 1987; Heffernan, 2015), thus offering significant material for self-reflection. Bloom (1998) considers such notions in his chapter, "Shakespeare's Universalism", explaining that Shakespeare's canon presents so many highly developed, deeply different personalities,

supporting Johnsonian claims that "…no-one, before or since Shakespeare, made so many different selves" (Johnson in Bloom, 1998. p.5).

In terms of character, this depth and range of personalities across the canon is undeniable, with diversity ranging from the deeply complex and emotionally challenging character of Hamlet in *Hamlet* to the ever comical, equally complex rogue that is Sir John Falstaff, a recurring character throughout four of Shakespeare's plays; *Henry V, Henry IV 1, Henry IV 2, The Merry Wives of Windsor.* Bloom considers the reasons behind the popularity of characters as diverse as these two, concluding that it is most prevalently the depth of recognition between audience and Shakespeare's personalities. McLuskie (2009) also highlights his creations in this way as representative of human values.

It is arguably unsurprising, therefore, that Shakespeare has become a resource for moral development and teaching, not only in English teaching in schools, but on a cross curricular level and, indeed, in prison education (Jaime, 2010; Bates, 2015; Herold, 2016). These are ideas that were central to the vision of Cox (1988, 1991) when developing the UK National Curriculum in 1988, advocating Shakespeare for "personal growth" (p.21), "cross curricular" benefit (p.21) and "cultural heritage" (p.22). Though moral development is not identified as an independent subject in either the American or UK education systems, it features in a range of subjects. As identified by Davies, Gorard & McGuinn (2005) for example, Shakespeare has been used by citizenship teachers as one teaching tool to help develop skills and understand key ideas about society.

Character or self are historically philosophical concepts but personality, Bloom (1998) argues, is an invention, and one that Shakespeare encapsulates. Claiming that what Shakespeare represents in terms of personality are "ways of representing human changes" (p.3), Bloom highlights the parity between what can be seen through Shakespeare's works and what can be reflected in the everyday lives of humanity. The provision of other selves and the creation of realistic, persuasive personalities is, of course, not a skill exclusive to Shakespeare, where every literary text must contain a degree of believable character creations; however, there is a wealth of writing that presents Shakespeare to be the most successful playwright in this, both in the volume and depth of the characters he provides and the fertile ground he offers for self-reflection (Bloom, 1998; Bate, 2008; Jacobs, 2018; Desmet; 1992; Kiefer, 2003; Greenblatt, 2012).

2.3.2 *Shakespeare as validation*

Shakespeare's enhanced cultural status places knowledge of or about him as difficult to study and as being a higher class of enlightening knowledge, a fact reflected in the names of study guides such as *No Fear Shakespeare*. To study his works, understand them, or discuss them is sometimes perceived to be a difficult task associated with those who are intelligent or clever. Writing about working with silenced prisoners, maintained in solitary confinement for most of their time and having very limited opportunity for human interaction, Bates writes:

> "I had assumed that we would have to read each scene aloud as a group, and that I would have to translate the language for them. I quickly learned however that a university education is not a prerequisite to reading Shakespeare."
>
> (Bates, 2013, p.42)

This false assumption is evident throughout society. Stereotypical as it may be, Shakespeare is often assumed to be boring or difficult (Winston & Tandy, 2012), and knowledge that is taught for the sake of fulfilling a cultural tick box decided on by a political or cultural elite. When Cox implemented Shakespeare for the UK national curriculum, Shakespeare was the only compulsory author, quantified in later editions of the curriculum calling for at least two Shakespeare plays to be studied by all children (Cox, 1989; DFE, 1995; DFEE, 1999). Current UK English national curriculum requirements relating to Shakespeare state that two plays must be studied at Key Stage Three and at least one play for Key Stage Four (UK Government, 2016). Shakespeare remains a steadfast subject in curricula today, even with greater autonomy in the UK school system at least via academisation and free school systems which are not mandated to teach the national curriculum (Gov.uk, 2019b).

Shakespeare is perceived to be a gold standard, and all children are to be taught about his work (Swift, 2016). In the USA, typically curricula are devised by states, with variation between different school districts creating the potential for huge variation, but there are state and country-wide standards that state a requirement for Shakespeare in English teaching (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2017). Shakespeare at this depth of compulsory inclusion would imply that all children therefore have access to Shakespeare, but this implies successful engagement with the school system, which, as statistics show, such engagement is not always the case for prisoners.

There are culturally ingrained presumptions about Shakespeare's texts based on an assumed difficulty in understanding, accessible only to those who can get beyond his language, effectively equating Shakespeare's plays to a foreign language. Many scholars and practitioners have argued that this misconception may be borne out of flawed teaching practices (Bates, 2006; RSC, 2012, Neelands & O'Hanlon, 2011), calling for the plays to be treated as active plays rather than texts for reading (Bates, 2006; Stredder, 2009; Gibson, 1998; RSC, 2012; Neelands & O'Hanlon, 2011).

However, editions of the play texts intended for children, for example, have often been translated into readable stories altering or censoring the content so that what is left is a simplified basic plot description rather than anything of the Shakespearean language itself. Popular school editions intended for teaching purposes also recurrently provide translations to simplify or clarify what is being said in the text script provided, implying that there will be an automatic difficulty in understanding the original. When combined with Shakespeare's maintained position as important higher cultural knowledge, as most recently espoused by the UK government in their review of cultural education in England and Wales, this makes Shakespeare appear to be for intelligent or clever people (UK Government, 2015). The implication of this is that people are, in turn, surprised when prisoners can work with, understand and explore Shakespeare's texts. This includes prisoners and ex-prisoners who are able to articulately talk and write about their preconceptions when undertaking Shakespeare study. Yet prisoners continue to demonstrate their capabilities and further argue that the prison is the ideal space to overcome these barriers, articulating their ability to engage with Shakespeare's texts away from social assumptions and academic debate.

An early participant in one of the first US Shakespeare programmes, Hal Cobb, published his initial experiences of prison Shakespeare programming. When considering the lack of previous engagement or exposure to Shakespeare prisoners have had, he writes:

> "The gift of having so many participants in [His Shakespeare Programme] without prior theatrical or Shakespeare exposure is that they come to the experience clean. They have no preconceived notions of what it should or should not be. They don't get caught up in iambic pentameter or academic debate."
>
> (Cobb, 2005)

Although many argue that the unfamiliarity of the text or language forms a barrier, Cobb argues that it offers an opportunity, whereby the text is not treated as a selective higher cultural speciality, but rather something for all participants to interpret, engage with and react to the text as they see fit.

Though not without critique, world-renowned Shakespeare education departments and scholars have supported movements that promote young people taking ownership of Shakespeare, including the RSC who, through their 'Stand Up for Shakespeare' movement (The Royal Shakespeare Company 2008), encourage participants to 'make their own connections, discoveries and journeys' and 'to make social and personal sense of the language' (Neelands and O'Hanlon 2011, Nicklin, 2017). The literal translation word for word of Shakespeare's works, or the specific context in this format becomes far less important than the meaning and usage attached to Shakespeare's language by the participants themselves.

There is also a reintegration element to be explored. As Shakespeare serves as a symbol in some ways for intelligence, knowledge or ability, there is also the potential that people outside of prison may be able to alter their pre-conceived ideas of prisoner capabilities, by seeing people they perceived to be incapable demonstrate such a highly regarded ability. There is also an assumption in society that prisoners are not academically capable, that they are stupid, unintelligent or incapable of contributing to society. This message is perpetuated throughout the media, popular culture and stereotypes. There is evidence that, in many cases, such assumptions about the incarcerated individuals may have existed long before their incarceration, due to stereotypical perceptions and structural inequalities, assumptions and stereotypes surrounding background characteristics of individuals such as socio-economic status, race and familial background (Heitzeg, 2009; Boyd, 2009; Christie et al, 2005; Ellis et al, 2016). However, there is the claimed potential that engaging in this work may allow prisoners to demonstrate otherwise (Bates, 2013; Tofteland, 2010; Wall, 2017). This will be an avenue for exploration when considering the specific impact of selecting Shakespeare.

2.3.3 Shakespeare as voice – collecting language for expression

As considered above, Shakespeare's language is often talked about in relation to necessary translation or simplification, supposedly required in order to teach or engage people unfamiliar with it. However, beyond this, vocabulary expansion and language appropriation and use, in comprehension and expression must be considered in the

context of emotional development and articulation. It is recommended by Hughes (2005), researching on behalf of The Unit for the Arts and Offenders Centre for Applied Theatre Research, that prisoners engage in work surrounding emotional management, literacy development and personal expression. There is potential that engaging with and acquiring Shakespeare's language and expression may equip participants with literacy skills to develop their self-expression. In gaining this language they may be enabled to share their stories, express themselves and communicate with themselves, their communities and society at large.

Pensalfini (2017) argues that Shakespeare's language provides prisoners with a voice through which they can articulate their experiences. This connects closely to work in solitary confinement using Shakespeare conducted by Laura Bates (2013), a pioneer of this work, who ran the "Shakespeare in Shackles" programme which she later described in her semi-ethnographic text, *Shakespeare Saved My Life* (2013). In her text, Bates considers Larry, a prisoner housed in solitary confinement, who, through Shakespeare, discovered a means of communication. Deemed too violent to be housed amongst the wider prison community, Larry was confined to solitary housing 23 hours a day and commenced his lessons through the hatch in his confinement door, at least for most of the early stages of his Shakespeare-focussed work with Bates. On Shakespeare for voice and expression of prisoners, Laura Bates asks the question about participants in her Shakespeare in solitary confinement group:

> "Were they all insane? Or were they silenced voices that needed to be heard?"
>
> (Bates, 2013)

Prisoners are not necessarily the stereotypical figures portrayed as subhuman figures often labelled by society, yet prisoners do not have the opportunity to have a voice and express or explain themselves, and perhaps show the contrary once incarcerated. There is significant potential to consider if participants report that gaining a voice or finding ways to express themselves significantly assists in ultimately becoming significantly rehabilitated. Bates was motivated in her work by the potential for her work to "…provide a voice for my voiceless prisoners" (p.141) where she was very aware that beyond their inter-cell Shakespeare conversations isolated prisoners had minimal opportunity for self-expression. I too work in this tradition of emancipatory research, providing a medium for voices ordinarily hidden to be heard, particularly surrounding issues that impact them.

Further, there is a capital attached to Shakespeare's language that may enable these voices not only to be heard, but to be listened to. Shakespeare's cultural capital has been cited throughout academic literature (Guillory, 2013; Shellard & Keenan, 2016; Swift, 2016; Hopkins, 2016 and others). In what Guillory (1994) terms 'Linguistic Capital' (p.63), using Shakespeare's language brings authority to voices across a range of contexts due to the perceived 'unimpeachable source of cultural capital' (Hopkins, 2016, p. 8) in his works (Guillory, 2013; Sanders, 2015; Elliott, 2019). Such capital brings with it an attached authority to Shakespeare, an authority that has been adapted and appropriated by voices in lots of avenues including crime fiction (Baker, 1995; Hopkins, 2006) and other literary genres (Sanders, 2015). This authority in adapted and appropriated language is an interesting avenue for consideration when examining prisoner writings and articulations throughout this research data.

2.3.4 Shakespeare as teacher – authority and education in Shakespeare's texts

The claim that Shakespeare offers personal enlightenment has been heavily argued in academic literature. Blocksidge (2005) states that the works of Shakespeare encourage independent knowledge development, supported by Mabillard (2000) and Dalrymple (2003) who identify Shakespeare as an illuminator of human nature, to whom individuals can relate on a personal level. In terms of education, Dienstfrey (1991) suggests, supported more recently by Coons (2013), that by allowing young people to navigate complex adult worlds and concepts through Shakespeare's works, we are offering them a safe space in which the consequences of actions offer them a reference point from which young people are enabled to work on their own issues. For Neils Herold (2014), the practice of Shakespeare in Prisons connects directly to concepts of presentism. Herold particularly considers connections between Shakespeare's writing, and their use as a metaphor for modern social and political problems (Herold, 2014). The content within Shakespeare's text covers manifestations relevant to almost every criminal: negative or socially unacceptable behaviour, from murder and betrayal, through to dishonesty and bullying. Whether it is the murder of Macduff's Family or King Hamlet, the mockery and subsequent degradation of Malvolio, or the deaths of Desdemona and Ophelia because of an unrelated pursuit, there are occurrences that both explicitly and implicitly reflect modern offences.

2.4 The call for this research

The purpose of this research is to look closely at a long serving, multi-sited, strong example of a Shakespeare-focussed criminal rehabilitation programme, in order to establish the potential function, approaches and impact of this programme to criminal rehabilitation. The founding project groups of this nature have been running for over 20 years and successful programme groups now operate all over the world, including in the USA and Australia. This investigation placed the authoritative voices of those participating in, and therefore theoretically benefitting from, participation in these programme groups, witnessing first-hand the practices of these groups and exploring the intended and perceived outcomes of them beyond simply "rehabilitation."

The originality of this research is drawn most closely from the originality in the methodology undertaken to explore these issues and the vast array of data sources considered in order to draw conclusions, and the contribution this research makes to a niche and expanding field considering Shakespeare-based approaches to criminal rehabilitation, as well as the rehumanisation of prisoners within the criminal justice system. Originality also comes from my focus on the process for dehumanisation to rehumanisation of the offender, with a close focus on the programme, their participants and society both behind and beyond prison bars. Though these programmes boast longevity and success, at the commencement of this project very little was available surrounding the practice specifics, beyond Amy Scott-Douglass' (2001) *Shakespeare Inside.* Since then, two books have been released, with Robert Pensalfini *Prison Shakespeare* (2017) considering the history and claims of prison Shakespeare programmes broadly, with an Australian case study, and Neils Herold's *Shakespeare and the Purpose of Performance* (2014), considering the specific power of performance and early modern connections in these programmes.

Herold (2014) writes on the growing phenomena of prison theatre programmes, with a specific focus on the performance of Shakespearean adaptations in his book "Prison Shakespeare and the Purpose of Performance: Repentance Rituals and the Early Modern". This book places close focus on how modern prison theatre is reflective of early modern theatre practices and the reflection of real-life phenomena within these plays as a response to society of the time. Herold's text considers parity between companies of actors in the early modern period, and the modern prison theatre troupe drawing on the example of 'Shakespeare Behind Bars' a US based prison programme that works with both adult male and juvenile offenders, and the subject of a number of documentaries

and media reports. Herold examines the reflections of the early modern intention and change through Shakespearean performance, conceptualised through Shakespeare's "own cultural moment" (p.30) considering the 'transformation' and 'demonization' of the Elizabethan actor, comparing this to that of the prison-based performers in his example. Herold considers history, dramaturgy and reflections of life in specifically Shakespearean performance within the prison context, and the reported learning from this as connected between prisoners and their early-modern predecessors engaging with Shakespeare's texts. This text was published post-data collection, and therefore I was unable to draw on it in designing my own research questions however it has signposted me to useful ideas for consideration, in addition to helping support some of the claims and ideas presented within my own data set from the Shakespeare programme that I considered. Though this is not the focus of my own research, it does provide interesting and useful insights into the timeless nature of the texts, and the ways that participants as actors can learn, whether incarcerated in the modern day or on the stage in the early modern era.

In his book "For These Deep Shames and Great Indignities", Pensalfini (2017) considers the phenomena of Shakespeare in prisons programming. He explores the development of this phenomena from a historical perspective, tracing its origins from the 1980's through to modern examples of this practice. Focussing on the Australian context of a case study of the Queensland Shakespeare Ensemble's version of a Shakespeare-focussed prison-based intervention, with mentions of other similar programmes on a global scale. Pensalfini explores and interrogates the claims of prison Shakespeare in relation to prisoner health and behaviour, prison culture and society. For the bulk of this book Pensalfini examines the history of prison Shakespeare, the case of the Queensland Ensemble Shakespeare project, and the claims and justifications for prison Shakespeare as a phenomenon, noting their similarity between programs despite differing ideologies and methodologies. This was something I too found in my considerations where individual programme groups may have adopted a variation of practices, yet the claims of participants and practitioners alike regarding the impact of the programme groups remained consistent. From pages 107 – 129 in a short additional chapter, Pensalfini offers a short consideration of "The Prisoners Condition", in relation to the way they are perceived by society at large. This forms a brief exploration of that which this thesis explores in depth, highlighting the assumption of society that for prisoners to perform Shakespeare it must mean something "other than, or beyond, that which it means for non-incarcerated people" (Pensalfini, 107). This is noted by Pensalfini

as a key issue within prison Shakespeare, and his chapter details some of the assumptions attached to it.

This text was also published post-data collection and after much of the analysis phase for this research and therefore could not be drawn on within the parameters of my research design, but it does provide a useful background and insight to corroborate or align with my own deeper considerations. This is particularly true where my research draws heavily on prisoner voices that strongly concur with this practice, building on these ideas and detailing that not only is this how society perceives prisoners, but also that prisoners know that this is how they are perceived and further, how they perceive themselves relevant to their engagement with their own Shakespeare focussed prison education groups. Though useful and relevant, none of these texts serves as a practical, ethnographic collection from the position of a participant researcher, fully answering my research questions. Educationally based motivation and impact are also not the focus of these texts. In addition, these texts identify specific prisoners, their backgrounds, names, programmes and locations, which my research intentionally does not. This practice is antithetical to both my approach, and best practice regarding ethical research, established by organisations such as AERA and BERA.

This research collates both prisoner and practitioner voices, alongside researcher experiences gleaned as a participant-researcher, collected over three months across three US states. It critically explores connections between the principles of applied drama and drama therapy, and universalised practices exercised within the Shakespeare programme groups. Crucially this research offers multiple channels for contribution also, whereby anything that practitioners or programme participants claim to be relevant is considered as such. The range of data sources considered therefore include contributions expressed verbally through conversation, performance, or interview, in writing through story, poetry, or letter, and through experiences shared in the presence of the researcher.

This thesis is also an empirical research project, crafted to explore and interrogate these programme groups, to qualify the outcomes. This research takes verbatim prisoner and practitioner voices. Though its intention is not to state whether the programme is successful, the intention and need defined here is to establish why this approach seems to work so successfully with offenders from different ages, criminal histories, social backgrounds, and classification of criminality. A prisoner cannot be generically labelled any more than people of a shared race, nationality, workplace

affiliation or sexuality can; therefore a 'fix-all' model is virtually impossible as history has demonstrated. However, this approach reaches more participants yearly and continues to replicate and improve rates of recidivism, therefore it is useful to consider what it is about a specifically Shakespeare and theatre approach that holds such universal potential.

3.0 Theorising Theatre, Prisons and Practice

"And one man in his time plays many parts"

William Shakespeare

(As You Like It. II, Vii.)

The intention of this chapter is to outline and demonstrate a theoretical framework for exploring a key example of a Shakespeare-based, theatre-focussed programme of criminal rehabilitation, in order to explore the what, how and why questions surrounding this practice, identified in the introduction. I have attempted to develop a coherent framework for this research study, combining drama therapeutic principles, applied theatre practices, including prison theatre, and more critical considerations of prison systems themselves.

Dramatherapy and applied theatre are closely related to much prison theatre work. These fields are both connected with the use of theatre to explore and develop human emotion and human connections which are outcomes of the programme cited throughout the findings of this thesis. Approaches grounded in applied theatre, as the programme groups considered in this research reflect, are an internationally thriving educational intervention style used for work in marginalised communities. Though obscure in definition, 'applied theatre' is broadly understood to be an umbrella term for the range of theatre-based activities which facilitate intentional connections to social issues (Prentki & Preston, 2013). Spearheaded by Augusto Boal and grounded in the educational theories of Paulo Freire, this approach has increased in popularity since the late 20th century. This style of practice is often involved in the context of those either at-risk or involved in criminal behaviour, based on the belief that it can impact the way an individual or group interacts with the wider world (Prentki & Preston 2013, Preston, 2013; Nicholson, 2005).

Although the practitioners of the programme on which this thesis focuses make it clear that they are not therapy providers, and that the Shakespeare programme is not a dramatherapy programme, there are undeniable connections in terms of the outcomes from applied theatre techniques. Techniques themselves are not undertaken by the programme under the auspice of intentionally applied theatre or drama therapy, but it

is important to explore these concepts here as similar outcomes have emerged from practioners' intentions and participant voices.

The core processes considered in this section are synthesised from texts outlining potential methods for best practice drama therapy and/or applied theatre practice, largely drawn from the extensive work of Robert Landy (1994), Phil Jones (2006), Helen Nicholson (2009; 2005), James Thompson (1998; 2006; 2007; 2008; 2009) and Tim Prentki (2013) in this field. The key categories of relevance to this research (as explored below in section 3.2) are:

1) Drama, applied theatre and performance as a therapeutic performance process

2) Connecting real life to dramatic activity: life-drama connection

3) Undertaking roles, embodiment, personification and impersonation

4) Developing drama therapeutic empathy and distancing

5) Participating and engaging in interactive audience and witnessing

The following sections offer short introductions to terminology and theoretical content relevant to the analysis and findings of this research study.

3.1 Theatre in Prisons - Representation, perception and usage

Theatre in prisons is both a topic for popular social science books and academic articles and key texts, including critical theoretical works made central to this thesis, such as *Theatre and Prison (*McAvinchey, 2011), *Theatre in Prisons (*Balfour, 2004) *Performing New Lives* (Shailor, 2010) and the extensive work of James Thompson between 1998 and 2017 in this field. Due to the constraints of space, I have opted to include here a brief introduction to the uses in the field of prison theatre at this point, with greater specificity emerging throughout the literature review in the previous chapter.

Theatre in prisons is not a new concept and there are companies across the world that offer theatre-based provisions for prisoner rehabilitation. Key UK examples include institutions such as Geese Theatre UK (2019), Clean Break (2019), Jude Theatre (2019) and TIPP (2019) who have worked for decades to design and implement theatre-based interventions for prisoners, utilising the applied theatre pathway. There are powerful examples that have come from this work, numerous publications and a field of thought surrounding the potential benefit of theatre in prisons (McAvinchey, 2011; Thompson,

1998; Thomson, 2007; Prochaska & Levesque, 2007; McMurran, 2007); however, it is not yet a priority in prison education, regardless of the results research suggests it can produce.

Caoimhe McAvinchey (2011) introduces theatre in prison explaining that for those who have never been incarcerated or indeed visited prison, their understanding of it is "…mediated by other representations of it" (p.4). She uses her text to explain how theatre enables both those within the confines of the prison environment and those beyond it to overcome both the physical and constructed barriers between life inside the prison and society at large. Theatre, according to McAvinchey, has illustrated the ways that the physical and metaphorical prison holds rich narrative potential. Though prisons are far from the traditional cultural institution of the traditional theatre, they provide an ideal site for real engagement with genuine issues. Prison theatre as a discipline rarely prioritises the quality of any theatrical performance produced, but rather the outcomes achieved and developed from the engagement process (McAvinchey, 2011; Balfour, 2004).

James Thompson also considers theatre in prison throughout his portfolio of academic and vocational work: "both the arts and the treatment of criminals are indicators of a community or society's virtue and degree of civilisation" (1998a, p 177). Thompson explored different styles that he witnessed within the prison system, one powerful example being the common use of militaristic performed punishments that have gained popularity in the public and media eye even though there is little to no evidence they have any impact. Thompson, like many other key academics in the field of prisoner education does not diminish the value of having prison spaces, places whereby individuals and society can gain space from one another. He values the role of prisons in creating a captive audience whereby positive work can be done and can be "useful" in this process if it is seen and utilised as a time for change, rather than a time for punishment alone (Thompson, 1998b).

There has been significant debate surrounding "what works" in criminal justice, and a dialogue of "nothing works" does exist, retreating from the challenge of offending behaviour (Thompson, 1999). However, prison theatre practitioners work to shift such perceptions, bringing an approach whereby, even where almost nothing appears to work, successful change can be achieved through theatre (Thompson, 1999). Thompson argues that treating human behaviour in such a way that it can be taught or learnt in a binary sense of right and wrong is limited and denies the complexity of individual lived

experiences. However, applying theatrical elements such as character or narrative gives scope for exploration of the context of behaviours, enabling participants to explore the real-world complexities of their behaviours. A group of people who have committed the same type of crime may fall under a shared umbrella term like 'criminal' or 'thief', but the individual context of each crime is not drawn from shared motivations, therefore, individual nuances and considerations must be accounted for.

In Sally Coates' (2011) earlier discussed review of prison education, creative arts are cited as a priority, claiming that an overhaul of current educational provision in prisons should include "provision of arts, music and sport activities". In the report she writes;

> "Many prisoners will have previously had unsatisfactory experiences of the classroom. They will need encouragement and support to take their first learning steps. This should include greater provision of high-quality creative arts provision… improve self-knowledge, develop self-confidence and therefore help tackle reoffending."
>
> (Coates, 2011. P.i)

Later in the report she stated that "There should be no restriction on the use of education funding to support the creative arts" (p.27); however, at present there is limited funding available to be spent on such provisions, with individual companies and prison-based institutions seeking limited external funding to develop these programmes. As part of my pilot research for this project, I worked with directors and finance officers from one UK-based theatre-in-prisons provider. The company had previously engaged heavily in prisons, well-funded via local colleges and supportive institutions, however, at the point I joined them, their prison provision had had to stop due to a lack of funding. Their artistic director told me:

> "We are applying for new funding opportunities on a weekly basis, but it is hard to sell theatre to funding bodies that either don't understand why it is important for prisoners or only have limited funds with which to support the groups. Across the field at the moment the arts are taking hits and though we will keep trying it is always those in society who need us most that suffer in these times."

Limited funding therefore means that even where organisations are able or willing to conduct the work, the ability to do so is impinged. Thus, attitudes toward these

programmes in order for them to gain recognition for funding requires academic research and real-world examples, such as those identified within this project, to achieve this.

3.2 Applied Theatre and Drama-Therapy

3.2.1 Therapeutic Performance Process

The therapeutic performance process refers to theatre where an individual presents a need to express a problem or issue, and does so through the process (Jones, 2006). The aim of this is to explore the potential ways resolution may be reached through engaging with applied theatre (Thompson, 2007). In relation to offenders, there are innumerable issues this may be utilised to tackle; for example, this may be their personal perception of the crime that they committed, and in turn their perception of those affected by it (Baim, 2004). The physical act of performing is key at this stage as participants express issues through dramatic performance, thus externalising a previously internalised problem. The rehearsal process is identified as a vital element through which a personal repetition exploration of participant issues may occur.

Jones (1991) highlights two key necessities to be drawn from the therapeutic process: Firstly, the participant is given a means through which to express their issue, in this case through engaging with the variety of mediums and activities provided through the Shakespeare programme, explored through research questions 1 and 2. Secondly, the process itself must become that which is therapeutic, rather than the quality of any finished product. Onus must be placed on the practice of reading, writing, understanding and exploring a character play or text, as an ongoing process of thinking, learning and development.

This connects to offender motivation to change as, where the project is full of transitions and spans an indefinite period, it is reasonable therefore to consider where the programme is seen to be an ongoing process, the challenges in maintaining motivation and engagement throughout periods of time that, for many, harbor points of change. In addition, whatever motivates the offender to change may be very different from the outcome that motivates the offender to act, and such motivators can be a combination of complex cognitive, practical and personal factors (Prochaska & Levesque, 2007; McMurran, 2007; Lopez Viets et al. 2007). The way the therapeutic performance process is utilised in applied theatre initiatives enables participants to work at their own pace in the process and continually acknowledge these personal

changes and motivators, creating a dynamic and reflexive approach to engagement in a rehabilitative process, rather than a prescriptive one-size-fits-all model.

3.2.2 Dramatic Projection

Jones (2006) identifies "Dramatic Projection" as one core process within successful drama therapy modelling (Jones, 2006, p.36). This is a process by which the participant psychologically projects themselves onto a part of their theatrical experience (Thompson, 2006; Jones, 1991). This may be through active participation as an actor in terms of playing a character or enacting a storyline, or from an audience perspective, as the intention of this approach is to encourage personal identification with a character (Mann, 1996). The participant should not focus on playing the role of another but aim to view oneself or one's own situation through another individual. The aim is for participants to externalise internal issues, to draw them out of the individual and allow the participant to work through them. For participants in the prison environment, it is difficult to engage with their real-life experiences without access to real life beyond the prison confines. Projection therefore may provide a pathway through which they can explore the impact of their behaviors on others, expanding their view through performance. This provides a mid-way point between realising personal issues entirely and working towards understanding them through projection approaches.

Another crucial relevant element of dramatic projection is that the participant is encouraged to "test reality from a safe distance" (Landy, 1994, 95), with the expectation that through a personal engagement with the characters, the individual may be offered a new perspective on their own situation. Prisoners are incarcerated to be held at a safe distance from society, but this also provides a beneficial safe space for the offenders themselves to potentially explore their thoughts, feelings and behaviors. If a prisoner plays a role in a Shakespeare play that is connected to their own life actions or experiences, they may be enabled, to some extent, to re-live and explore all angles of this experience repeatedly, exploring it from different perspectives without causing negative impact on themselves or others in doing so. In terms of the research questions, significant importance is placed on exploring what the practices are and how they can facilitate change.

3.2.3 Life- Drama Connection

The life-drama connection describes drama which gives a platform to "an intimate connection between life and drama" (Jones, 2006, p. 9; see also Thompson, 2002).

Practitioners consider this relationship or connection to be essential and intentional in this type of therapeutic practice to promote a changed perception in participants. This is closely related with the practices adopted by many prestigious Shakespeare companies, with the Royal Shakespeare Company, Shakespeare's Globe and the National Theatre re-contextualising plays through dress and setting, to fit current issues. Notable examples in living memory include *Henry V* in the context of the Iraq War at the National Theatre (Hytner, 2003) and *Julius Caesar* with a representation of US President Donald Trump produced by Public Theatre's Shakespeare in the Park initiative (Eustis, 2017). These are examples of plays directly placed in the context of real-world events to explicitly fulfil a life-drama connection and convey a message to audiences.

Sue Jennings (1998) considers the role of dramatic projection in terms of a wider therapeutic process, reiterating early notions from Antonin Artaud that "theatre is the double of life and life is the double of theatre" (Artaud, 1968) and within this examines the potential for imposing elements of external sources to deepen a personal understanding (Jennings, 1998). Often reported by offender voices in existing literature is an ability to not only identify with particular characters, but also to apply their own situation or actions to the plays in which they are performing (Scott-Douglass, 2004). There are times where drama therapy work may involve a direct representation of reality either by practice or necessity (Jones, 2006). It is suggested that by this process, an individual may become more conscious about the bigger picture surrounding their experience or crime (Jones, 2006; Thompson, 1998b). A participant is required to force themselves to consciously re-live the event that brought them to the necessity for such therapy, therefore the challenge to both the therapist and the participant is to make that experience as realistic as possible.

3.2.4 Embodiment

The Embodiment process considers the relationship between the physical actions of the body and the identity of the individual. It specifically relates to the immediate nature of the dramatic process and the ways individuals can experience their actions (Jones, 2006; Thompson, 2006). The intention of this process in terms of drama therapy is that through linking practical action with psychological investment, a deeper level of involvement is achieved, going beyond the life-drama connection and not permitting an individual to disengage entirely from the activity in the room, as they are physiologically required to be active within it. This higher investment in bodily actions acts as a

developer for expression. Physical actions have been identified through kinesthetic studies to hold the ability to maintain and disrupt situations (Scheflen, 1972).

Bodily identity can also form a major part of adopting a persona (Jones, 2006), and develop the individual's understanding through perspective of the impact of their actions. There is also a physicality associated with many crimes that cannot be overlooked when examining criminal acts (LaGrange et al., 1992) and this may not be fully understood through verbal engagement alone. In relation to the Shakespeare programme, the ability to articulate emotions, experiences and behaviours is explored by participants in the findings of this study, contributing further to research question three, as Jones (2006) argues by placing consideration on the associations between movement and meaning, individuals may be able to express physically that which they may not be able to vocalize.

3.2.5 Personification and Impersonation

The process of "personification and impersonation" is more physically active in terms of the requirements of the process and the outcomes it seeks (Jones, 2006, p.107). An individual represents a person or experience related to the issue they are aiming to overcome within their dramatic framework. Playing different roles can offer opportunities for individuals to explore and "try on" different roles in both internal and external ways (Elliott & Dingwall, 2017; Landy, 1993; Landy, 1991). This can mean physical impersonation, for example an offender may be required to play those impacted by their crime, or in terms of displacement, a similarly relevant individual, or an incident relevant to their criminal actions. They do not have to personally adopt this role; a personification process using props or puppets or other people may be used so that the individual can express the necessary information, whilst shifting the voice onto such a prop and therefore the gaze away from themselves . This type of engagement is essentially a movement from the impact that playing an audience member may offer an individual, to the potential that being in the role of another individual affected by the criminal may bring (Baim, 2004). This promotes reflections of some of the more practical approaches earlier defined, with added constructs for those who may need displacement tools to access such therapy.

The motivation for enacting this process would be a need within the participant to divulge an emotional experience or element as part of their journey, even where they may not feel able to as an individual. As Fyodor Dostoevsky wrote in his 1866, *Crime and Punishment*,

"Nothing in this world is harder than speaking the truth" (2010, p.320).

In a prison situation, considering the range of potential criminal acts that may have been committed, the truth behind this statement is only amplified further. Adopting the perspective of another affected individual who also knows the truth or speaking the truth through a prop, such as puppet or doll, enables a physical detachment from the prisoner admitting truths personally. A key purpose of this process is to, in effect, clearly identify the intention of the exercise for the individual, therefore allowing the expression of the participant's issues and the need to pursue them through the imagined creation of the individual. This means the need for an identifiable and, to some extent, felt relationship between the individual receiving therapy and that which they are trying to portray. Emotional investment is always a necessity, even in terms of more displaced drama therapies.

The individuals reporting such experiences as successful do so on reflection, which Jones identifies as a vital element of the key processes where the active representation is completed and left, followed by a reflective process for the individual, leading into further explorations of their actions. This process in undertaken in the hope that the participants then leave these situations with a better understanding of their own actions; a grounding principle promoted for the Shakespeare-focussed rehabilitation programme.

3.2.6 Drama therapeutic empathy and distancing

In contradiction to the previous practical processes is the identified process of drama-therapeutic empathy and distancing which calls participants to step back from their own action within an activity and make consideration of other individuals (Jones, 1991; 2006). This process moves between the emotional resonances of empathy and emotional investment to a more reflective perspective-based understanding of a situation. In exploring research question three, the aim of activities grounded in this practice is to encourage participants to experience an emotional connection or response from an external perspective. This offers individuals the opportunity to understand the dynamics of their specific situation from a physically separated position of safety, navigating perspectives different from their own and reflecting on the impact of their responses in others. This practice is related to Brechtian thought where the individual becomes a reader of the story beyond a participant within it (Brecht, 1964).

Specifically considering distancing, Landy (1994) suggests that this process requires "over-distancing" on the part of the participant, stepping so far back from the original context as to be able to gain an emotional clarity. There is no necessity for the restoration of any perfect state, but more for an acceptance of the situation the participant is placed within. Sue Jennings talks of the potential importance that a theatrical experience that is distanced just enough from participants' personal lives may hold. A participant is perceived to need to face an issue or situation, however, the only perspective they initially hold is their own, calling for them to step back and distance themselves from this perspective to receive, contemplate and witness the perspective of others.

With prison theatre programmes, this may occur through playing a character or interactions with others. The participant experiencing this therapeutic approach would be encouraged to "…emphasize their critical response" (Jones, 2006, p.104), meaning that they are required to criticise and judge the actions of the character or the role that they are in and, in turn, connect their learning from this to the context of their own behaviours. The desirable outcome is the discovery of previously unacknowledged or unknown perceptions of the situation being dealt with by the participant, to develop their empathetic understanding to the wider issue. For some this may be an unconscious or unexpected outcome, however, others may be aware of this potential and act upon this awareness or choose to avoid it.

3.2.7 Interactive Audience and Witnessing

Interactive audience and witnessing (Landy, 2006 Jones, 2006) or problem posing theatre (Thompson, 1999) are activities which are closely related to drama therapeutic empathy and distancing. The individual participating in the performance is encouraged to understand what it means to be an audience to oneself and to others, developing from the model of distancing to active engagement in the role of onlooker. The essential quality an audience requires in this situation is to be less like the polite and encouraging theatre audiences stereotypically associated with dramatic performance, but rather to play an active role in enhancing the individual's experience and understanding of the issue they are working through in their performances. This is something that Baim (2004) identifies as a valuable part of his experience in the prison theatre field. He cites Geese Theatre UK as commencing such work successfully in the 1980s and using drama to force criminal audiences into considering the decisions of the actors and providing life advice to them. In actively offering such advice, the outcomes of their decisions were

then played out on stage, demonstrating the potential consequence attached to their decisions. The intention was to encourage prisoners to hold a stake in the stories they were seeing. They were encouraged to invest emotionally to make the right decisions.

This process is also an extremely useful tool for measurement. To gauge an individual's experience and perspective, and therefore identify a change when it occurs, enables an individual's level of empathetic relationship to the material being explored to be exposed. As Baim described, this process of audience interaction was specifically used as a measurement tool for the success of the programmes in at least engaging the participants on a psychological level, which could be seen through the levels of committed investment and involvement the criminals were willing to administer to the process.

The significance of the audience experience has also been highlighted by Jean Trounstine, a renowned prison educator in the field of English, writing of her experiences in a women's prison in *Shakespeare Behind Bars: The Power of Drama in a Women's Prison* (Trounstine, 2001). Trounstine highlights the perceived necessity by participants in her prison-based Shakespeare performance of *The Merchant of Venice* to translate the language from its original. This is not particularly innovative, since texts have been simplified and changed for use with appropriate groups for centuries, as far back as Charles and Mary Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* (Lamb & Lamb, 1807). What is noteworthy about this, however, is the prisoners' motivations for doing so. The desired alterations by the prisoners focused less on the translation of the typically altered "thees and thous" and focused on translating the metaphors that the prisoners felt would "affect their audience" and "reach their community." This is one case that demonstrates some level of shared consciousness about the importance drama may have to an audience experiencing it, as well as the individual performing their role.

There is a recurrent notion of engaging with performance as an audience member rather than an active participant as a tactic for working through personal issues without physical involvement. As providers of prison-based drama practice, there appears to be a shared awareness amongst practitioners, surrounding the impact audience response may have. The notion that prisoners share this awareness also, such as in the case of Jean Trounstine's female prisoners or indeed the programme groups explored here, indicates the value of audience response suggested by Jones (2006) in practice, demonstrating its existence and use in the field. Looking towards this project,

watching and sharing in the contributions of others is a significant area for consideration (see chapter 5.0).

3.3 Prisons and Prisoners

3.3.1 Michel Foucault: Theorising Prisons

It is arguably impossible to conduct work surrounding the purpose of prisons without consideration of Foucauldian ideas and theories. Though this thesis does not strictly explore the purpose of prison, Foucault's ideas must also be considered when examining rehabilitative practices, and when considering prisoner, practitioner and stakeholder explanations of why the programme appears to be statistically more successful than incarceration alone.

Although I have not used Foucault's ideas as a conceptual analytical framework, Foucauldian theory is undeniably influential and, indeed, relevant when exploring prisons and his critiques of prison and society have been influential in my thinking.

3.3.2 Knowledge, Power and Society

Danaher (2000) explains that most people in western societies perceive themselves to be individuals in charge of their own lives and choices, but Foucault rejects this idea of self-governing subjects. According to Foucault, people are governed by what they are told is truth, invented by dominant groups and forces, put into place by those who are perceived to have the power to do so (Foucault, 1975). This is one key reason why Foucault is not my chosen framework for this study, as I argue that the programme considered here explicitly offers the freedom for individuals to be sentient, self-governing beings, permitted free thought and encouraged to make personal choices and changes. The programme here considered does not explicitly instruct participants how to think, act and behave.

Foucault identified different types of truth, public and private. Public truth is drawn from a point of authority, and utilised by agencies of power such as legal, scientific or media entities, each empowered to make determinations about truth. This element is relevant to my research study. Private truths are those which are held by individuals including families and communities whereas public truths are posited by Foucault to be those which are impactful in society, even where they are known to be immoral or abusive, placing those controlled by them at a disadvantage because of them (Danaher, 2000).

One example of this, most relevant to this research is the media, which uses what Foucault calls a "media discourse" to determine which invented truths will reach society. An individual's truth can never have the impact the media has as this individual does not have the power that society has attributed to the media. The media is empowered to distribute versions of truth to the public and, even where it is known to hold biases, motivations and agendas, the media holds undeniable power in society at large to enable the truth it shares to influence society. This is particularly relevant when considering the perceptions of prisoners and how they are villainised in mass media, often regardless of their offence, grouped as a collective "criminal" with little to no differentiation based on anything other than their incarceration (Arendt et al., 2015; Dowler, 2003).

Foucault crucially argues that there is no true state of autonomous existence, only that which is a product of the dominating powers and discourses within society. One such institution of power he considers is the penal system; the very prisons within which the programme groups considered in this research take place. Foucault perceived prison to be not only a place to hold those who have been expelled from society, but a place where disciplines, routines and surveillance are enacted upon these bodies as a means of coercing them into behaving in line with the expectations of society. Foucault is by no means an advocate for this model of prisons, rather he offers observation and critique, but his observations contrast powerfully to what the programme groups considered in this thesis aim to foster.

Public institutions like schools or prisons, according to Foucault, claim authority for that which they do, under the auspices of truth. Maintenance of a set of beliefs, behaviours and truths are dependent on the practices of these institutions enacting specific actions on those within them to ensure conformity and maintenance of this status quo. A set of behaviours is maintained by a set of rules, and the desired set of truths becomes embedded in those housed within these institutions, at least in theory. This is not untrue of the prison environment, however, again it is contrary to the somewhat unconventional approach undertaken by the Shakespeare programme, undertaking to support and focus on individual autonomy, exploration and development, rather than mass coercion into a set of behaviours or values.

3.3.3 The Prison and the prisoner – control, confinement, coercion

Foucault's concept of the human, together with conceptions of individuals have been interpreted in multiple ways since their emergence, however, for the purpose of this project I undertake what Heller (1996, p.78) described as the most 'widespread

consensus' interpretations of Foucauldian theory. Foucault argues that human beings do not consciously exercise power, becoming passive objects bent by the will of truths accepted amongst society and perpetuated via discourses that are deemed powerful enough to do so, such as scientific, legal or media-based authorities given credence in society at large. These concepts of humans under the passive control of powers translate directly into his considerations of the purpose of prisons, and understandings of prisoners as subjects of these societal powers. Foucault writes extensively in his *Discipline and Punish* about the development, design, purpose and practices of prisons. He pays particular attention to the purpose of prison in inflicting and coercing behaviours onto those incarcerated.

In *Discipline and Punish,* Foucault considers the development and function of the prison as we have come to use and controversially understand its purpose in the modern sense. Foucault argues that prisons operate to enact truths upon the bodies of the incarcerated, dictating their expected behaviours and beliefs. The incarcerated bodies are, according to Foucault, trained to act in line with that which society maintains as acceptable and expected truths and these truths are those which people accept and live by. Foucault claims that prison is therefore a constructed space created to enact discipline, and that discipline functions to create docile consumers of control, used and regulated to fulfil a society's intended purpose.

In turn, rehabilitation, according to Foucault, has nothing to do with individual development and change, but is rather the reshaping and control of individuals, coercing them to fall in line with expected behavioural norms under threat of surveillance and consequence. The prison was designed as a means to make individuals believe they could be under surveillance, maintaining an awareness that they are under behavioural scrutiny and, in theory, forcing them to fall in line or face consequences. Foucault therefore argues that rather than genuinely attempting to rehabilitate prisoners on an individual basis so they may re-enter mainstream society, behaving appropriately by choice, prisons are only concerned with fixing and moulding people into a format through which they will adhere to behavioural expectations.

By enacting discipline, Foucault argues that docile bodies are created, to be controlled and contorted to the will of higher ordained powers, due to the threat of constant surveillance, control and removed freedom in behavioural choices. Shifting from the performative nature of punishment of bygone eras, the prison focus shifts from demonstrating punishment to society, to reshaping individuals for society. Prisons

create strict regimes of power and control through administrations and constructed disciplines that individuals have to conform to, within the confines of the prison environment. Much of this hinges on the notion of human surveillance, where Foucault supposed that prisoners, or indeed people in general, were less likely to misbehave if they believed they were being watched.

Foucault, in addition, makes prison part of a much broader network of control administered through all social institutions such as factories and schools, which all enact means of discipline, surveillance and control in order to maintain a desired behavioural output from those confined within each institution. Prisons are as normal in society as hospitals and schools, they have become commonplace and accepted as institutions, though our understanding of them from an outsider's perspective is informed by secondary claims and notions about them (McAvinchey, 2011). Society at large is led to assume that the institution will re-discipline and reshape the incarcerated inhabitants and this is accepted, based on media representations and social conjecture, unsupported by prison impact statistics.

Foucault argues that human beings are permitted very little individuality by societal measures enacted upon them; they are coerced and controlled by power administered via dominant social groups, both consciously and unconsciously with very little opportunity to resist such powers upon them. He argues that penal procedures place upon all criminals a broadly sweeping identity as "delinquent", regardless of individual circumstances, types of crimes committed or individual differences. Prisoners are stripped of their individuality with the assignment of a number, reportedly used less frequently than an individual name. The individual becomes one of the "inmates" or "deviants" grouped by their shared prisoner status.

Danaher (2000) explains that these individuals, in order to be reconsidered as human beings, are forced to comply with normalised expectations as dictated not by personal choice and decision, but rather the enactment of disciplines upon the individuals in line with the accepted truths, underpinning the desired outcome of the institution of prison. Interestingly, the theatrical approach entirely disrupts this idea, where a theatre workshop interrupts the whole institutional routine and such disruption is actually condoned by the otherwise regimented institution (McAvinchey, 2011). Theatre in this research project is introduced as a way to challenge existing knowledge, promote thinking and encourage a shift in culture both within and beyond prison walls, in direct contradiction to Foucault's assertions about the prison function.

3.3.4 Public perception, media coverage and social media

Programmes like the one considered in this research have attracted significant attention from the media and the public. Media and public reporting of Shakespeare programmes has been varied in tone, attention, and response. Early pilot programmes received limited media coverage, with online sources being far less popular and prevalent over twenty years ago.

Two decades later, articles, videos, and stories are shared daily and frequently via both formal news agencies, and social media outlets such as Facebook or Twitter. There are devoted accounts and online presences that focus solely on articles relating to particular issues, with prison education serving as focus for many outlets. Twitter is a key space for these discussions; *@PrisonEduc,* for example, shares articles and links several times per day relating to educational initiatives in prisons, and larger organisations and stakeholders use these platforms to disseminate their reports and stories beyond their specific webpages. The Prison Reform Trust shares a similar volume of work via their handle *@PRTuk* relating again to reforming and improving the current approaches to prisoner rehabilitation, including education. These are just two of many dedicated online sources intentionally targeting these purposes, but the debate has also become far more mainstream.

In spring 2017, a video produced by "AJ+", a subsidiary of the Al Jazeera media network, became viral across modern social media including Twitter and Facebook. This video contained footage and a brief explanation of prisoners engaging in Shakespeare as part of Californian "Marin Company" rehabilitative initiatives. This video comes over two decades since the original programme considered in this research was established, and it received significantly more positive response than the original media representations of the programme groups (Nicklin, 2014). AJ+ describes itself as a "…global news community for the connected generation [dedicated to highlighting] human struggles and achievements, empower impassioned voices, and challenge the status quo" so this video release fits with a potential pro-programme agenda. Regardless of this bias, the video has been met with overwhelming positive public response via the internet (AJ+, 2017; Up Worthy, 2017). In addition, the first 1000 Facebook reactions to the initial sharing of this video via "Up-Worthy" were rarely negative, and most comments contained positive support for the programmes, or where negative statements were made, positive arguments retaliated in defence of the programmes.

Twenty years of public response has demonstrated a divided attitude to Shakespeare prison programmes where they are potentially perceived as a treat, rather than the treatment they are intended to be. During preparatory research for this thesis (reported in Nicklin, 2014), I conducted an inductive discourse analysis of comment box responses to media coverage of Shakespeare rehabilitative programmes. The programmes were largely implemented pre-social media and pre-Twitter; however, online commentary on news articles via comment boxes had begun to emerge. In terms of published public response, there were clear divides in opinion with few presenting commentaries of a mixed perspective. The key discourses that emerged related to politics, economic factors, stereotype, and the status of the offender and where many such statements are without grounding, this also offers insights into societal prejudices and stereotype, which motivate the dismissal of rehabilitative programmes in place for the development of offenders.

There was overwhelming opposition toward the programmes, drawn largely from perspectives of financial uncertainty, negative perceptions of prisoner capability or worthiness and Shakespeare specific discourses. Though there are more channels for online public response now, it is seemingly a scene of polar opposition when examining current responses to these programmes. The introduction of these programmes in the mid-nineties yielded a predominately negative response, focusing on the punishment-based rationale for prisons rather allowing the potential of prisons as rehabilitative institutions (Nicklin, 2014).

However, modern media consistently reports new educational initiatives and ideas for prisoners and appears to have a far more mixed response, with people engaging in dialogue around it. Returning to Laura Bates' work in solitary confinement, she received significant media coverage:

> "Some of my colleagues sent me newspaper clippings about my work with collegial comments 'Great Work Laura!' Others expressed views that prisoners do not deserve any kind of special treatment"
>
> (Bates, 2006, p.229-230).

It is noteworthy that opinion was significantly divided in both academic circles and society at large. Though such divisions still exist, very little of the "Marin Shakespeare Company" (AJ+, 2017) social media coverage was linked to negative responses; it was shared as something worthy of exploration or appreciation rather than as the subject of

mockery or anger. This is a significant shift to be considered. Publishing my own research working with Juvenile Shakespeare Programmes in the USA (Nicklin, 2017), I also received an overwhelmingly positive response, not only from friends and colleagues but also from academics and external organisations, with the *Times Educational Supplement* recently commissioning an article from me on this work to reach a wider audience (not yet published).

3.3.5 De- and Re- humanisation of Prisoners

In contradiction to Foucault's observation of the prison system, the desire for the individualisation of prisoners as human beings, treated with humanity, is reiterated throughout offender and stakeholder voices throughout this data set. However, in the variety of published material I have encountered, and opinions of prison staff, members of the public and my own community, I have encountered a dehumanising and marginalising attitude towards prisoners. I argue this is a fallacy that ultimately serves to enhance segregation and feed cycles of recidivism, increasing criminal activity.

In common discourse, prisoners become "thugs", "punks", "scum" and other variations of a collective derogatory title when they are discussed. Most significantly, they are rarely considered "people" or "human." Those who argue any case for their humanity are generally rebuked by their peers with further spouts of derogation. James Thompson (2011) talks about the pressure of defining or justifying the work of TIPP when asked, explaining a need to try to convince people or pass the "Public Acceptability Test," describing the experience as "…somewhat embarrassed and far from articulate" (Thompson, 2011. ix.).

There is a societal understanding of prisoners that is based on false assumptions, which in turn leads to a fallacy in judgment of those who work with them, portraying them in any kind of positive light. Prisoners are dehumanised and have been for an indeterminate amount of time. Thompson considers this also, explaining that the media, *The Sun* as his case in point, launched a campaign against a comedy-based intervention project in a UK prison which led to its termination by the then home secretary Jack Straw in 2008. The media is powerful, as Foucault suggests, and could have a great power in reshaping these perceptions but instead too often positions itself in arguments of stereotype and assumption, rather than empirical evidence and fact. However, the prisoners, practitioners and those who have spent genuine time in a prison, either for work, visitation or as an inmate in their past, offer an explicit account of the falsehood of this dehumanisation of prisoners. Further they demonstrate without intent through

their own actions that prisoners are human beings, who for the sake of their life choices are now or have previously been punished by the legal system for their actions. The Shakespeare programme seeks to restore choice, to restore opportunities for creativity and individual thought and to de-marginalize prisoners from society, reintegrating them both physically and ideologically. McAvinchey (2011) explains:

> "The worlds of theatre and prison appear immiscible. On a very basic level, prisons are places associated with punishment and pain, and theatres are places associated with entertainment and pleasure. However, both sites are culturally defined spaces which reflect, re-inscribe or, potentially, re-imagine ways of being in the world. They negotiate the relationship between the individual, the audience/community and, thence, the state."
>
> (McAvinchey, 2011, p.60)

The prison and theatre, though seemingly different, provide a combination of physical and imagined space through which, when integrated, segregation of offenders and society at large can be overcome through reflective, theatrical reconnection.

3.4 From Theory to Practice

This thesis is an empirical research project, crafted to explore and interrogate these Shakespeare programme groups, to qualify their outcomes. This research takes verbatim prisoner and practitioner voices, and though its intention is not to evaluate the success of the programme groups, it does explore why this approach seems to work so successfully with offenders from different age groups, criminal histories, social backgrounds, and classification of criminality. 'Prisoner' is not a sufficient label, any more than one based on race, nationality or sexuality can be, so a fix-all model is virtually impossible, as history has demonstrated. However, this approach reaches more participants yearly and continues to replicate low rates of recidivism, so it is useful to consider what it is about a specifically Shakespeare and theatre-based approach that holds such universal potential. The next chapter demonstrates how the research questions were determined and the methodology which was employed.

4.0: Research Methods and Methodology

"I have been studying how I may compare
This prison where I live unto the world"

(Richard II, V. v.)

Throughout previous chapters, the lack of information considering the practices, intentions and perceptions of the Shakespeare programme groups has been identified. Although they espouse value in using Shakespeare, much of the measurable success from this work was, at the commencement of this study, largely unknown. This research investigates the way in which the programme is delivered with the prisoners, not just the subject matter within it. In chapters two and three, I explored the current landscape of prison, prisoners and society and identified theories and concepts connected to prison education, applied theatre, drama therapy and psychodrama. In this chapter, I will explore the methodology of this research and how these theories and concepts have been utilised in my research design.

The research project was designed specifically to explore the practices involved in the programme groups; the intended and perceived outcomes from stakeholder perspectives; and why Shakespeare is selected as the medium for this work. To address these research questions this enquiry was conducted through a multi-sited ethnographically-informed research approach. It draws on first-hand participation in pioneering Shakespeare-specific programme groups in the United States of America, and input from leading practitioners in the conception and undertaking of this work. This chapter outlines the methodology of this research including; the conceptual framework, research aims, research philosophy, design, data collection and analysis.

4.1 Research Questions

1) What were the specific programme practices and how were they delivered?
2) What were practitioner and participant perceptions of the specific use of Shakespeare?

3) What were the perceived and intended programme outcomes reported by and for practitioners and participants?

4.2 Conceptual Framework of the Study

In the study of prison education, it is vital to identify the research context as there is such diversity, variation, and individual difference of which to be aware, compared with education in more typical settings. In fact, the provision of prison education is so varied in its volume, type and quality, in both the UK and US contexts, it is essential to acknowledge the specific needs, requirements and context within which the research is conducted. The setting itself must be considered as both a place for rehabilitation, but also as the lived environment of participants, and the world within which they can make their learning tangible. This includes both the specific learning environment, for example, the classroom, theatre or workspace, and the wider context that learning operates within, the prison at large.

This research study asks how a Shakespeare-based initiative impacts the lives, decisions and world view of offenders participating in these environments. It examines what impact the specific practices these programme groups have on participants and whether the outcomes match those intended by practitioners and participants. It also considers how offenders apply their learning to their lives, and therefore acknowledges the classroom, prison and society at large as three separate locations or domains, within which the learning may operate differently. The intention of sociocultural research practice is to explore the relationships between human behaviours and the cultural, institutional and historical contexts within which they develop and occur (McDowell, 2011; Wretch et al., 1995). Within educational research, it is often the connections between educational practices and interventions, their impact and how these interactions may be understood, that is examined.

This research adopts a largely ethnographically-informed approach as the chosen methodology, placing myself as the researcher within the research participant group, engaging in the same activities. Ethnographically-informed studies, developing from traditional anthropology, call for the researcher to place their research within the world of the study, drawing a co-constructed reality from participants' and researcher's experience. This research is therefore situated within the direct context of the prison environment across a wide range of data types and mediums, identified by active participants as appropriate means of communicating their educational experience including, for example, stories, poems, and conversations.

4.3 Research Strategy and Design

My research strategy necessitated a process of engagement through which a deeper understanding of the motivations, practices and outcomes of the programme groups could be ascertained. Where this practice is so specific, and until recently so sparsely used in the prison context, I was fortunate to be permitted access to pioneering programme groups in this field. As there were so few of these groups accessible at the time, this research utilised all opportunities to engage, and therefore conduct study, across multiple sites. This enabled the building of a wider portrait and development of a rich dataset from ordinarily insular communities. By introducing multiple sites, themes could be triangulated across a wider dataset, and recurrent ideas could be identified that had stronger reliability when attempting to translate individual inputs into generalizable outputs. For this reason, in my thesis findings, I have combined data from different groups to identify shared practice outcomes across these interventions. This also strengthens the anonymity of any given participant.

My intention was also to identify inconsistencies in practices and explore the potential impact of these; however, I discovered that the programme groups I visited, regardless of the prison, group or state I worked in, held shared values, approaches and outcomes. This work undertook a collective case study approach (Stake, 2003), as it focuses on broader concepts or ideas drawn out of data taken from multiple sites, rather than treating each location of data collection as a singular stand-alone sample, "casting a wider net" than traditionally single-sited investigations (Holmes & Marcus, 2005; Stake, 2003; Falzon, 2009).

Ethnographically-informed research functions both as a methodological practice and a philosophical epistemology. It also stems from the considerable overlap between other methods, initially developing from anthropological research and laying its foundations across a variety of intertwined existing practices (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Lareau & Shultz, 1996). Throughout history, ethnographically-informed research has broadly comprised of a descriptive investigation into a community or culture (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Thomas, 1993). The *Oxford English Dictionary* currently provides the modern definition of ethnographic research as "the systematic study and description of peoples, societies, and cultures" (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2019). While accurate, this definition is missing the key information that moves a research practice from studying communities or cultures, to participating within them. It is a developed practice that integrates both "first-hand empirical investigation and the theoretical and

comparative interpretation of social organisation and culture" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007: 1), and such work is usually conducted in "a society very different from [the researcher's] own" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007: 9).

Ethnographically-informed research is a multileveled practice that allows for a flexible, reflective and practical approach. For this study, ethnographically-informed research was reflective of the subject matter being considered and makes allowances for the potential restrictions that need to be overcome or alternate routes to discovering answers to questions. As this work was conducted within closed communities, multiple approaches to data collection were necessary which provided more than one medium through which the validity of these answers could be triangulated. The next section will discuss more closely the decisions made in specifically selecting ethnographically-informed research for this study.

As an ethnographer, I was called to fit myself into the community under consideration as an active participant within the project groups. In the case of this study, the participant community is not only seemingly different from my own, but a community that would ordinarily be closed to those who do not either work within it, or who are not incarcerated themselves. To navigate this, and my obvious difference within the community, the data was largely collected via open-ended means, and I chose not to know anything of the individual participants' crimes or backgrounds before meeting them. I did not know any further information about them after this point unless participants disclosed anything to me voluntarily.

4.4 Research philosophy: exploring ethnographically-informed research and navigating social worlds

This research study draws on an interpretivist philosophical framework, working from the standpoint that to understand a community fully, one must move beyond observation of their behaviours and activities into experiencing these things through participation. This is reflected through a participatory inquiry paradigm (Heron & Reason, 1997) identifying a participatory worldview to be "…more helpful and satisfying." Ethnographically-informed research, as a research philosophy in its own right, undertakes these principles beyond its ideal function as a participative method of data collection (Green, Shukauskaite & Baker, 2012: 38).

Where positivist approaches make claims that the social and natural worlds can be considered in the same way, and examined as such (Wakeford & Cohen, 2008), the

interpretivist position places emphasis on a difference between the socially constructed world of humanity and the natural world surrounding it. Human beings differ and should be considered accordingly, in order to fully construct understanding of individual perceptions and meanings of their lived experience (Eglinton, 2008; Schwandt, 2000). Prisons are a specific socially-constructed and figured world, wherein there is a clear

> "socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognised, significance is assigned to certain acts and particular outcomes are valued over others"
>
> (Holland et al, 1998: 52).

The physical space may not dictate the figured worlds within the prison, but rather the shared activities created, shared and sustained by those within it together form a potential figured world to be the world of Shakespeare-based rehabilitation. To understand and interpret the programme, I deemed engaging in this world to be essential.

The constructed world of Shakespeare-focussed prison education is not tied to a specific geographical or purpose-built location within the prisons, with programme groups running in chapels, classrooms, libraries, recreation rooms, bunkhouses, dining areas, and communal halls. As Cain (1991) explained, with such therapy programmes the physical locale within which it operates is of little significance compared to the figured world maintained by the shared principles of practice by its members. It is the application of the lessons learned through the developed and shared values that allow the programmes to exist as worlds, maintained by the physical practices of the groups' shared activity. I had to experience the world of the Shakespeare circles to understand its transcendence from the formal prison. The physical real-time activities of the group provide the shared experience or world from which individuals can develop or rehabilitate their own individual lives. Whether this initiative is a substance abuse rehabilitation programme, a religious group or in the context of this research a Shakespeare-focussed rehabilitation initiative, each of these groups creates and exists within figured worlds which are co-maintained by those active within them and therefore to attempt to understand these worlds necessitates becoming a part of them, at least to some degree.

There are limits to how far the physical experience of the participant can replicate the non-physiological impact of this work on the participants, due to the psychological, educational, and emotional responses such approaches have the potential to elicit from their participants. There is a limit, therefore, to how far my own responses as a researcher alone can be understood to be legitimate. It is widely accepted however that a combination method of "observation plus any other appropriate methods" (Crang & Cook, 2007: 35) is a virtual necessity for truly reliable ethnographically-informed work. Due to the need for an adoption of multiple "ways of seeing" (Grimshaw, 2001: 1) and data for triangulation beyond this researcher role, adoption of other methods of data collection are integrated into the ethnographically-informed portrait. These include interviews and conversations with practitioners, participants and graduates, and collection of mission statements and written contributions and observations. This allowed for triangulation of data both inter-participant and inter-programme group, to ensure accurate representation of the activities and the response they elicit. This is recurrently cited as a necessary practice for initiating and developing depths of understanding, and a means of assisting the researcher to "both experience and observe their own and others' co-participation within the ethnographically-informed encounter" (Tedlock, 1991, 69). This self-reflexivity is crucial to fully utilise the practical participatory element of the data collection process.

Essentially this data must hold the authority from the voice it is presented with, just as my own ethnographically-informed diaries of personal experiences throughout the process is perceived to hold authority. Data from all research participants and stakeholders remained anonymous throughout the research. All participants discussed are given pseudonyms throughout to ensure their anonymity, in accordance with the BERA ethical framework (BERA, 2015). Also, the information may hold sensitive details as there was such a broad range of ways data could be gathered. For this reason, participants are also not directly linked to their programme group location. Beyond this, all participants are identified as one large participant group to draw conclusions surrounding the programme.

As a researcher, I was not in the groups under the same auspices as the genuine participants, and I was only enabled to share in them to a limited extent for a limited time period. Therefore, I cannot profess to a full understanding of this world as an active participant. However, by constructing my findings through the voices of those who are situated within this world on a daily basis, some for over twenty years, the findings of this research maintain as much authenticity as an insider's perspective as is possible.

4.4.1 The Philosophy of Ethnographically-informed research

Ethnographic research can be considered a research philosophy in its own right (Green, Shukauskaite & Baker, 2012), and this research study treats it as such. Agar (2006) and Sobers (2010) defend the notion that ethnographically-informed research functions as an epistemology or way of knowing. The way of knowing is drawn out of the constructs co-developed through the ethnographic process, including identified patterns, actions and outcomes drawn from personal and participant experiences of the community in question.

Unlike many other approaches to fieldwork methodology, ethnographically-informed research does not espouse a set of predefined elements: all data is relevant. In fact, in this type of qualitative research "what initially appears the most 'useless' may turn out to be the most useful" (Brinkmann, 2013: 49). No source of data that could potentially hold relevance is discarded during this method of data collection. What is shared through the ethnographically-informed philosophy is a common goal ascertained through the process of personal, social, and cultural interaction between researcher and participant community (Denzin, 2011; Bryman, 2008).

A key difficulty for an ethnographer undertaking this position is to set aside personal assumptions, either consciously or subconsciously held, to allow themselves a greater chance at understanding the participant perspective without bias. As Heath (1982) explains, this means placing personal prejudice or assumption in a "bracketed realm" (17) rather than allowing it to inform participant interaction. Self-criticality is essential where personal documentation of experience in this research was collected both in terms of practical understanding and personal reflection. This distinction is critically made within the data set, as explained later in this chapter.

4.4.2 Selecting an Ethnographically-Informed Methodology

Although this research study is not a traditional ethnography, the research methodology was heavily informed by that style which calls for a series of methods to be interwoven into a larger tapestry, providing a full image of the phenomena being examined (Sobers, 2011; Richardson & St Pierre, 2008). As several sites were investigated in a relatively short period, it was vital that as much relevant data could be gained as possible. Therefore, this approach offered an ideal way to collect high volumes of data and offer several layers for triangulation of the findings. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) highlight the

potential for interpretive approaches conducting "bricolage," meaning that the portrait is created through the incorporation of multiple perspectives, sources, and types of data to formulate the complete picture (Eglinton, 2008; Kincheloe, McLaren & Steinberg, 2011).

The ethnographically-informed process, in this case, includes the intentions of the work from a series of stakeholder perspectives, including the selection of Shakespeare, activities undertaken and their perceived outcomes. Shakespeare-specific criminal rehabilitation work at the commencement of this thesis was only well publicised as being conducted at a limited number of sites, largely in the USA. Though access is difficult and limited, and attempts to join UK groups were largely unsuccessful, I was fortunate to be granted access to pioneering organisations in this field in the USA. I opted to include all contact offered in my time in the programme in the data to gain a representative experience and triangulate the practices across sites. The programme groups involved in this study engaged in practical courses, with performance and active engagement at the core of the work conducted. Due to the practical nature of this approach to criminal rehabilitation, a participatory methodology was necessary.

The individual participants had committed a range of crimes, some remaining unknown to myself, yet as an ethnographic researcher, it was crucial to acknowledge that I was working with "criminals" whilst compartmentalising this for my interactions and experiences with the participants as "human beings". Denzin (2005) elaborates on emancipatory discourses and actions, claiming the potential for performance as a "…pedagogy of freedom" (p.949). As Denzin explains, conducting a performance or ethnographic research calls for an "…ethical, relational and moral theory of selfhood and being" (p.949). By this, it is meant that the approach to such work must be one of understanding, of moral adjustment and essentially a relational position. The nature of the ethnographic research methodology undertaken within this study directly calls for participatory input from the researcher to develop their understanding of the subject matter. This necessitated the prerequisite for a participative world view, which positions the mind-set of the researcher as a part of the whole, rather than someone transcendent of the subject matter or research group. As the researcher, I was therefore situated in the living world, never just using the participants of my research as simple units for data collection but establishing relationships with them and allowing them agency over what they had shared (Bennett & Roberts, 2004).

4.5 Data Collection and Sampling

Several approaches to data gathering were undertaken to allow the widest possible selection of relevant materials to form the dataset. Data sources included researcher diaries and records; interviews; conversations and written materials. In addition, direct materials were taken from the courses themselves such as activities; mission statements and visual resources; creative writing; recordings of performances and written feedback. Prisoner written contributions and records of dialogue formed the majority of the data as this was the method of communication participants placed value on.

All data offered was considered on its own merit rather than exercising a blanket policy eliminating certain types of data from consideration; however, any data offered was also assessed critically and checked for accuracy as far as possible as is explained later in this chapter. This is a strong practice within this methodology as it ensures that all input considered is ascertained from as many sources and perspectives as possible. This included participants, practitioners and public perceptions, and the information was verified to some extent through triangulation, comparison and consistency across the data types. It also ensures that anything which the participants deem to be a valuable expression of meaning is treated as such. For some prisoners, this came in the form of single quotes, for other participants poems they had written or secondary resources which they felt expressed their response, such as magazine articles or play scenes.

My approach for the initial design of this study was drawn out of key questions surrounding the research aims. Statistical data demonstrates reduced recidivism rates for those who have participated in alternative training in place of judicial incarceration (see 2.1.4). Though recidivism is one measure of success, the programme specifics and impact are not well publicised. In addition to this, advocates and practitioners of Shakespeare as a rehabilitation method claim that the intention of the programme is something more important and deeper than a superficial statistical reduction.

As there are a limited number of descriptive examples used in existing literature surrounding these courses, I pursued several data collection methods to build a detailed qualitative insight. I made the decision to move beyond the common practice of separating researcher and participant, therefore watching, into a collaborative process of placing the researcher in the frame as a co-participant and therefore actively participating in the workshops delivered.

During the completion of this thesis, Robert Pensalfini released his book Prison Shakespeare: For These *Deep Shames and Great Indignities* which now serves as an invaluable complementary text to my own thesis investigations. In describing his chosen method, although published after my own research had been completed, Pensalfini (2016) shares a common view that this research approach is necessitated by this subject matter:

> "The mix of sources, including personal experience and observation, necessitates a shift in authorial viewpoint throughout the work between one who observes, one who does and one who directly experiences. Where necessary the first person takes over from the more scholarly third."
>
> (Pensalfini, 2017. p. IX).

The scholarly or academic voice of authority commonly found in academic writing is placed in lower significance than experience, as the balance between the participant and scholarly voice is crucial if my research is to accurately represent the programme being researched.

All participants in the groups who were willing to contribute were included in the sample. No participants refused contribution by the end of my engagement, but several asked to redact comments or keep them off the record which was respected. Individual practitioners and programme graduates were secured for interviews through snowball sampling, so a limited but diverse range of perspectives were collated. These interviews were used for consideration with the main data set as practitioner perceptions; consistencies and differences are particularly interesting.

Participants for interview were selected from those both willing and permitted to be interviewed, and unstructured conversations as small groups were more commonly possible than one to one structured interviews. A key feature of ethnographic research is the maintenance of a natural environment and to ensure the researcher experience is as realistic as possible, providing support for the perception of the method as ecologically valid. As this is the case, the unstructured natural conversation prompted only by the introduction of a topic was selected as the best possible approach to collecting verbal participant contributions.

4.6 Data Types and Research Instruments

4.6.1 Research Diary

A research diary is an essential tool for any ethnographer as it contains direct reporting of any experiences both at the time of experiencing them and from a point of reflection (Alaszewski, 2006). My research diaries offer first-hand recording of my experiences in real time, or as close to real time as possible, aiding my memory and avoiding embellishment. This is because eyewitness testimony becomes fallible as any time passes between event and recall. It includes any personal observations, feelings, and experiences from the perspective of myself as the researcher in the role. The amount I was permitted access to was group dependant, however. Where possible, I placed myself within the practices and the situations surrounding them, rather than withdrawing myself and identifying as separate to the group as an external agent.

As the researcher, I visited several different sites that use Shakespeare for criminal rehabilitative purposes in the USA. A pioneer company in this field allowed me to access their work as a participant observer, actively involved in samples of their programme groups. Throughout this element of the research, I participated in the activities set by the practitioners alongside the offenders in the process. From this, I created research diaries of my experiences. As many notes as possible were made throughout the day and following the day’s work. I endeavoured to record everything I possibly could, including reflective documentation of the process. My research diaries hold records of all interactions and experiences I had undertaken throughout the time. This may include written notes, sketches and diagrams, and photographs acquired.

There were restrictions surrounding writing implements or any other form of recording equipment in some prison groups or areas. On these occasions, I took notes directly after the experience recording all that could be remembered at all available opportunities. Due to the fallible nature of eyewitness testimony, a rule within my research collection was imposed so that I was unable to add anything the following day after I had slept or more than 3 hours later. This ensured that anything recorded was as accurate and recent as possible. Such measures as this are a necessity in ethnographic work (Thomas, 1993).

It is essential that as an ethnographer I had to constantly check and take great care to ensure certainty and accuracy in recorded data, also checking for any accidental imposition of researcher values that could alter the accuracy (Thomas, 1993; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Due to this issue, I adopted a verification process to

avoid or at least as far as possible overcome the potential limits of human memory and the validity of my records. Measures for this involved checking, where possible, specifics of the activities undertaken with the relevant practitioners, setting tight constrictions on time limits and reliability, and avoiding any embellishment of data which I was uncertain about.

The first-hand experiential element of this research is key as it is the experiential quality of the data that informs the research findings. The additional elements vary as an undetermined number depending on individual programme groups, institutions, and participant allowances however all data was equally as important. As Sobers (2010) points out, "…reflecting on one's own experiences in contrast with data provides an added layer of cultural analysis and dynamic reference points…" (122) explaining that there is key importance within this methodology on including ourselves and others in the conclusions that we draw.

4.6.2 Creative, personal and emotional writing

I had not anticipated the wealth of creative writing submitted by participants throughout the process. Many adult male participants chose to respond using poetry, letters or reports they had written, after taking time beyond sessions to consider my research questions, and the questions that I had presented to them. These then became a primary source of data for this study. Creative activity and writing have a substantial history in rehabilitation for people with severe mental illness (King et al, 2013) or who have faced significant emotional trauma (Baikie & Wilhelm, 2005), and often focus on emotional experiences, personal problems and traumatic events (Burton & King, 2004). In the prison context, the spectrum of emotion and trauma is vast. Emotional writing has proven a popular tool for increasing happiness in participants (Toepfer & Walker, 2009; Lyubomirsky, Sousa and Dickerhoof, 2006; Pennebaker, 2007). It is most commonly utilised as an expression vehicle for emotional trauma or experiences that participants find difficult to vocalise at the initial point of sharing (Chaffee, 2014; Bolton, 2010; Hayes & Feldman, 2004.)

Writing as an approach to therapy is offered as an alternative to spoken expression. It may offer participants a vehicle for expression, in as much detail as they desire without fear of repercussion. Participants in creative writing therapies can be encouraged, or permit themselves, to write what they feel unable to say. This may be due to the nature of the information, or due to the personal decision of the person sharing; a written form of expression provides a medium for uninhibited self-expression.

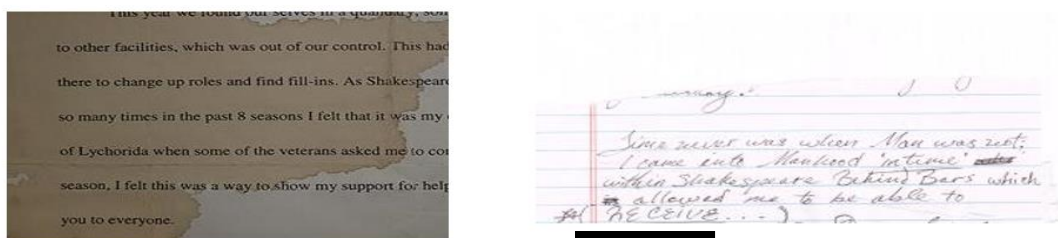
The first person to see their writing is the writer, retaining control, with the freedom to even destroy it upon completion. This approach offers freedom that vocalised information does not as although words cannot be unsaid, they do not necessitate being read if the writer does not wish to share them. Writing initially can support participants in clarifying their ideas and ensuring that the way they choose to share information accurately represents what they want to say. They can be uninhibited in writing as it is an entirely personal endeavour in the first instance and as such can be used as a starting point to clarify ideas (Chaffee, 2014; Bolton, 2010; Hayes & Feldman, 2004).

The written word is a historically established vehicle for emotional expression, explored extensively in psychological, social and educational research (Toepfer & Walker, 2009; Lyubomirsky, Sousa and Dickerhoof, 2006; Ullrich & Lutgendorf, 2002; Francis & Pennebaker, 1992). Many participants who used writing in this way describe the process as giving them a voice or allowing them to speak. In more modern consideration written expression of emotions and feelings has translated into social media, with public expressions of written emotion, and responses to personal experiences shared on platforms such as Facebook or Twitter as a semi-public expression platform, still protected or facilitated by the spatial distance offered by the internet (Lee et al, 2017; Bazarova et al, 2015; De Choudhury & Counts, 2012).

The written word for prisoners, the majority of whom are not permitted access to such modern technologies, is one method of communication that permits the sender to at the very least write down everything they wish to say to the intended recipient. Though there are no guarantees the recipient will be willing or able to receive such correspondence, the sender has had the chance to express what they desired to, targeting the intended recipient. This is the crucial element of this practice, more so than any return dialogue that may emerge from it, as the process of creating the letter in itself has provided a vehicle for an initial emotional exploration and expression (Miers et al, 2001; Prison Fellowship UK, 2016)

It is noteworthy that such written expressions were written on any writing material they could find meaning that the back of papers or torn off corners of worksheets were often used as sources as well as damaged or marked sheets of paper. This demonstrated their eagerness to contribute, seeking resources beyond their possession, to ensure they could contribute see examples below:

Figure 2: Materials used for Prisoner Contributions



to other facilities, which was out of our control. This had
there to change up roles and find fill-ins. As Shakespeare
so many times in the past 8 seasons I felt that it was my
of Lychorida when some of the veterans asked me to co
season, I felt this was a way to show my support for help
you to everyone.

Since never was when Man was not;
I came into Mankind 'in time'
within Shakespeare Behind Bars which
allowed me to be able to
RECEIVE...)

4.6.3 Interviews and Conversations

The input of participants, practitioners, graduates and any other stakeholders formed an essential layer to the data set. This consisted of interviews with practitioners; participants in and graduates of the programme; natural conversation excerpts recorded with consent obtained and any other written or verbal contribution to the data set that participants requested to make.

Interviewing as a methodological choice yielded invaluable first-hand feedback from programme participants and practitioners. Any verbal contributions including those presented during sessions, offered without prompt in conversation and directly presented for an interview, were recorded. All participants were completely aware that this was the case throughout the project and any that did not wish to be included or opted to withdraw their statements were granted their requirements. Any interviews conducted were largely unstructured, with a few prompts in place for specific research questions but also allowing the flexibility for spontaneous exploration of anything voluntarily offered by those interviewed throughout the process.

Formal interviewing of participants was initially dismissed in the early stages of research design as a method of data collection due to both ethical considerations and institutional constraints preventing such practices. However, depending on the groups attended, this became an option, therefore there are limited formal interviews included within the dataset. More usefully, and in greater supply, permission was granted for the use of anonymised conversational contributions, group discussion input and spontaneous, unprompted verbal responses to be included in the data set where gathered. This included permission for direct quotations to be transcribed and included within the research findings.

Interviews with practitioners, though limited in number, form a key part of the data gathered through this research. Interviews with practitioners were undertaken face to face. These sources collated as a larger open-ended interview process with

practitioners willing and consenting for their information to be collected, shared and analysed. This data set again included formally disclosed information as part of a largely unstructured interview process, alongside conversational, unprompted and discussion-based information when relevant. Practitioners held a separate consent form in addition to the blanket consent forms presented to them which specifically addressed the issue of their right to anonymity. If practitioners were willing or wished to be named, they signed an additional consent form (see appendix B) however in the end it was a conscious ethical decision to not name anyone in line with ethical rules . Practitioners were therefore assigned a pseudonym at the point of data collection and at no point are their names or those of their companies disclosed in this research.

A third dimension to the interviewing process was offered through a preparatory conversation with some practitioners involved, who could provide access to several individuals who had graduated from the programme and with whom they were still in contact. This led to a small number of interviews with those who had returned home following successful completion of the programme and their sentence. These interviews were semi-structured with a few key questions coupled with simple prompts to allow graduates the discussion space to talk about their experience of the programme and any impact they perceive it to have had on their own lives. This adds a level of richness to the data provided by the existing participants, as well as demonstrating the theory behind the practice through practical application to real life cases. The intention of this was to determine the longer-term perceived impact on participants in the programme from their perspectives. Their recollection of activity, retrospective feelings and the current state of behaviour were considered valuable sources of information.

Where possible, any individual who has or had any involvement in the programme groups was offered opportunities to share their thoughts on the programme such as likes and dislikes; perceived gains; motivations for participation and relevance of the subject matter. I considered the opportunity for the participants to use self-expression as a vehicle for their own voice to be paramount, as to remove such data would be a betrayal of the ethnographic method and my own inclusive attitude towards research practice.

4.6.4 Visual and Audio Resources

Visual resources were collected where possible from some research sites. Such sources included; photographs, drawings, session plans, visual representations of participant feedback, tableaus and sketches made by myself within my research diary. These

resources served as a visual prompt to combine with textual recordings and offer clarity within the data set. In cases where participants reported a low level of literacy, the opportunity to provide visual and kinaesthetic representations of their feelings became fundamental for them to provide an input, so as much of this activity was recorded as possible. This offered participants a further platform to make their voice heard and their perceptions and experiences known.

Some projects worked towards the creation of a final project such as a video recording or show performance. These programme groups, where possible, allowed me to record these sessions or provided me with a copy of this output work for analysis. This means that where lyrics had been composed or a performance had been created by the participants, a physical record of this was available for dissecting and enhancing the wider ethnographically-informed portrait.

Ethical consent issues and protection of participants did make it difficult to keep or use some visual sources accessed, however, where this was the case the visual resource was either analysed and then not physically included within this thesis, or an audio or written recording was taken and transcribed for consideration within the dataset, maintaining the protection of participant anonymity.

4.6.5 Stakeholder feedback

I was either able to witness matriculation activities or interact with stakeholders connected to or impacted by the groups involved. I requested such feedback where possible, in any format, from stakeholders such as prison workers, volunteers, community workers, ex-prisoners and of course participants.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

This research study was full of thorny ethical dilemmas, particularly in relation to guidelines set by AERA and BERA, institutional requirements from the University of York and institutional permissions and requirements from research sites. As a researcher, I undertake a universalist stance on ethics that holds the perspective that ethically-grounded rules laid out from the initiation of the research should not be broken under any circumstances (Bryman, 2008). Though this is the case, some ethical requirements, such as the right to withdraw in some cases, are impossible to permit due to instant anonymity given to the data at the point it is collected. Problems such as these are considered within the universalist approach, for example by Erikson (1967) who

identified the absurdity of attempting to engage with an ethical requirement that is beyond the capability of the research project.

This research has been approved in accordance with the ethics procedures provided by the University of York (see appendix C). Specific consent forms were designed to fulfil the multiple participant groups engaging in the research, (see appendix B) and were approved by the Education Department Ethics Committee at the University of York. Consent for this research is taken subjectively, where in some cases prisons or young offenders' groups are *in loco parentis* and are enabled to consent for whole groups (Freedman, Fuks & Weijer, 1993; Bunsen et al, 1996).

However, though this fulfils a requirement of consent, even where individual consent was not necessarily formally permitted, or did not count in terms of the prisoners' "right" to consent, due to the withdrawal of rights incarceration carries, I still chose to deem them to have the same ethical rights as my other participants, even though *in loco parentis* permission is often deemed enough in adult prisons where inmates are not considered able to consent alone or are required to consent with an overarching body (Gostin, 2007).

In these cases, though blanket consent was ascertained for the participatory elements of the data collection, further individual consent forms were adopted for any participants, practitioners or graduates who could offer input to the dataset (see appendix B). No deception occurred at any time during the project with an open-access policy for the intentions of the research. Within this, the data was anonymised at the point of collection so the right to withdraw was virtually impossible in terms of gathered data; however, a programme participant holds the right to withdraw from the process at any time and no further data was gathered from that individual.

My research philosophy places emphasis on a collaborative representation of the individuals and programme, rather than a mandatory data collection by force, so any individuals who do not want to participate were not compelled to do so, even where group or *in loco parentis* consent was in place (Nicklin, 2019). Part of this was acknowledgment of myself in the role of a researcher and as a 'privileged outsider' and there were key ethical considerations surrounding this so I had to be wary to navigate the line in a socially just way, an issue I have reflected on in considering my future research practice based on my engagement with this research project *(See Nicklin, 2019: Shakespeare in Prisons: Working as a Privileged Outsider. In L. Atkins, & V. Duckworth,*

Research Methods for Social Justice and Equity in Education. London: Bloomsbury.) All members of groups were, however, required to be present throughout the experiential phase of data collection, as it is not the individuals necessarily being considered at this point but the wider specifics of the activities that they are undertaking.

Most participants in this study were incarcerated individuals and were offered the programme groups as educational supplements to their incarceration. It is important to incorporate policies relating to consent for prisoners specifically the "Code of Federal Regulations" (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2009). The key requirements specific to informed consent for prisoners are:

1. "Any possible advantages accruing to the prisoner through his or her participation in the research, when compared to the general living conditions, medical care, quality of food, amenities and opportunity for earnings in the prison are not of such a magnitude that his or her ability to weigh the risks of the research against the value of such advantages in the limited choice environment of the prison is impaired."
2. "Adequate assurance exists that parole boards will not consider a prisoner's participation in the research in making decisions regarding parole, and each prisoner is clearly informed in advance that participation in the research will have no effect on his or her parole."

(US Department of Health and Human Services, 2009)

The future impact of this study or rather the advantages to the individuals, as earlier discussed, emerge from the potentially large contribution to thinking about prison education that, if successful, this research could promote. With regards to the impact on parole situations, it is their participation in the wider educational programme that is under consideration that parole boards may already consider (Scott-Douglass, 2002) and participation in the research project will not enhance or influence this. Participation in this research holds no more requirements than the courses themselves, and parole boards will at no point be encouraged to consider the individual's participation.

It is vital when working with any groups, including vulnerable groups, that the researcher can offer protection from physiological and psychological harm (Bryman, 2007; Diner & Crandall, 1978). The individuals participating in the programme were not at any point asked to talk about their crimes or what specifically brought them to the programme, although they sometimes voluntarily disclosed this information in

conversation. However, graduates of the programme and consenting adults were asked about what they feel the programme has offered them and the impact that they think it has had. In this case, disclosures of sensitive information could have occurred but again these were anonymised, and the participants were not coerced to disclose anything beyond their voluntary contributions.

Dealing with personal issues may be likely to connect with psychological issues, which may mean that psychologically relevant responses emerge naturally through people's participation in the programme; however, this was not at the fault of the researcher, as participants were treated within the programme exactly as they would have been if the researcher was not there, therefore the responsibility for prisoner well-being is not upon the researcher directly. I did, however, give them relevant signposting to appropriate support services e.g. mental health. From the researcher's perspective, there was nothing within my study that held the potential to cause harm to the participants, either physiologically or psychologically.

As suggested by Atkinson & Hammersley (2007), issues may arise because of the actual process of doing the research claiming that at the very least, being researched can sometimes create anxiety. However, I was fully open to all participants about why I was there, and any specific individuals who presented data were specifically not placed under any stress or duress. In addition, data was gathered through voluntary participation and individuals were also entitled to ask any questions that they requested.

Most of the data collected from programme participants was not on a one-to-one basis; however, where this was the case the data was anonymised at the point of collection, meaning that there was no traceable link to the participant and their input. The larger groups were anonymised alongside their locations, with the specifics of data collected from groups entirely undisclosed.

Even with informed consent obtained, it is claimed that research involves the exploitation of those studied: that people supply the information which is used by the researcher and yet get little or nothing in return (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007). Admittedly, there was little for the specific individuals to gain from their involvement in this research, but their gain, however, is the same as it would be without the presence of the researcher, as their gain, theoretically, is coming from participation in the course. What is gained as a population was that criminal justice systems, in general, may

be prompted to consider such programmes on a wider scale where findings may be published in favour of the programme approach.

This research, as explained above, grows from the assumption that these programmes do have an impact and, at least on paper, work towards the reduction of recidivism rates. It is essential to be transparent about this perspective which I held throughout this research study, as it must be understood that this research project is not seeking to discredit or establish the effectiveness of the programme, but to identify their practices, choices, intentions, and perceived outcomes beyond their evident impact on recidivism reduction. This alone is an incentive for further adoption of such courses to other judicial systems. On a deeper level, the identification of gains beyond statistics that this research provides offers the potential to provide a counteraction toward the negative perception of such programmes recurrent in public response (Nicklin, 2014) that these courses are treats or rewards rather than the treatments that they are intended to be.

I must acknowledge again at this point that my stance on prisoners is "pro-inmate" (McDowell, 2011) as far as I believe that prisoner education is vital and through this research my intention was not to necessarily advocate for this programme blindly, but rather conduct research identifying its potential and in turn advocate it if the research participants deemed it a useful, successful, and valid approach to criminal rehabilitation. In any ethnographically-informed study, the issue of objectivity is continually raised, and as I have just acknowledged, I held a bias in favour of prison education as this research began.

Reuss (2000) dismantled the automatic assumption of bias in the event that the teacher-researcher believes in the positive possibilities for participants within prison education. Reuss explained that a researcher who is teaching or present or actively engaged with the researched group is more than likely to notice any changes happening within the participant group throughout the learning process. If this witnessed change is then reported in the research findings, of course, it may be mistaken for bias; however, commenting on witnessed change is occurring because it has been witnessed, not because of a bias towards prisoners. When I undertook this project I took significant guidance in my approach from similar research projects in this field, including the work of Lila McDowell (McDowell, 2011), and discovered that whilst many prison education researchers acknowledge their standpoint going into their research projects, they were able to separate the misinterpretation of personal feeling and bias in results from their

work, identifying it rather as good methodological sense to be researching something that they believed in.

Sympathy is also frequently presented to prison researchers as a flaw - an accusation this research has faced at several conferences. However, empathy is at the core of the work conducted in these programme groups, as I later detail in my findings, and I acknowledge witnessing and developing that empathy. However, I also want to identify that I am not, nor have I ever been, sympathetic toward the crimes committed by the men involved in my research. The ability to see another's situation from their point of view is a core finding from this research; it is a primary feature of the programme and it forms a critical recommendation I make at the end of this thesis. Empathy is largely absent from the rehabilitative system, yet in relation to the programme considered here, it is arguably essential. I, therefore, acknowledge any demonstration of empathy found in this research, and Liebling (2001) and McDowell (2011) support this standpoint with the acknowledgment that, in their experience as prison researchers, features of humanity including sympathy, empathy and openness, are at the depth at which the research operates. In line with comments made by McDowell (2011) and Liebling (2001), the more affective this type of research study can be, particularly considering shared emotions and experiences, the better the research is.

The future impact of this study then emerges from an enquiry into a concept that is underrepresented and not well understood in most judicial systems. Particularly where this programme forms an alternative to incarceration or a mandatory element of the sentencing process. This research offers an experientially based insight into the reality of such courses, which has the potential to make a large contribution to thinking about prison education, if successful. The motivations or ideal outcome for this study would be positive outcomes and spreading the word for the programme, and as they are not well publicised currently, the angle of free publicity and caution when presenting findings will hopefully alleviate this issue. Also, confidentiality and anonymity dispel the potential for anything negative being directly attributed to the specific programme as far as possible. Some of the data that I collected, particularly in the forms of prisoner contribution was subsequently given to another researcher by the participants; in this research, which published after my data collection but before submission of the thesis, the participants and the programme are named. On the basis of maintaining anonymity, I have not acknowledged this overlap when I mention the text, but it is a cautionary tale that anonymity in education research can often be a convenient fiction. (This overlap

applies only to a small portion of the data, and not to any findings or conclusions I have drawn.)

4.8 Analysis

The data collected is a portrait constructed via what research participants said, did and witnessed. The purpose is to tell a detailed narrative story, exploring and exemplifying successful intentions, practices and outcomes of the programme considered here, and to explore what the specific use of Shakespeare brings to this. The ethnographically-informed analysis does not necessarily use a traditional analytical style, but rather a combination of approaches to help source avenues into the subject matter. In this case, several analytical approaches were introduced to draw out broad themes and break them down to show a deep and detailed image of the phenomena of Shakespeare-focussed criminal rehabilitation and its impact on participants engaging with it.

Phase one of my analysis was firstly to read everything, making notes throughout about themes, consistencies, and experiences. This enabled me to initially process my data gathered and organise it appropriately. This had to precede formal analysis of any kind due to the sheer volume of data; multiple sites collected from and varied types of data in the collection. I needed to refamiliarize myself with the data as a participant researcher and read the data set as one whole collection rather than as separate incidences. This creates a broad portrait of the programme as a general phenomenon rather than individual case studies segregated by location. Exploring the data, I could identify a clear overarching theme of "dehumanisation of offenders" which formed the basis of my initial key finding, that the programme seeks to rehumanise offenders within themselves and in the eyes of society at large.

Next, I began my formal thematic analysis. Elements of discourse analysis and thematic coding were each crucial in exploring the research questions here. The thematic analysis provided a way to draw meaning out of communications (Bazerman & Prior, 2004, McDowell, 2011; Saldaňa, 2009). This approach involved coding all narrative data surrounding the specific outcomes of the programme from the perspective of participants, practitioners, myself and stakeholders, where coded data included discussions, interviews, creative writing, written responses and both individual and public statements written by participants and practitioners which participants submitted as their response to the research questions. To be clear, this study is not a discourse analysis, however this methodology provided a useful approach for ascertaining themes within the data set and themes through which other data sources

could be explored, combined, and analysed. To construct the ethnographically-informed portrait, this method provided a way that the image could be constructed by voices of all those involved.

I scanned or photocopied each of the research diaries, poems, stories, and other sources of data contributed by the research participants and created by myself during my time as a participant researcher. I re-read this data, seeking themes or discourse types, using firstly simple highlighter coding, followed by more detailed coding into subsets or subcategories. During the initial coding, I identified material relevant to each of my three research questions, namely:

i) Programme Practices
ii) Perceived Programme Impact
iii) The perceived impact of a Shakespeare-specific approach

Across themes, there was a consistent reference to the rehumanisation of offenders through the process, which introduced and constructed the critical finding of this research. Coding varied between each source:

Table 1: Data Analysis Coding Methods

Data Type	**Coding Method (first)**	**Coding Method (second)**
Research Diary/ written notes	Read and coded into notes based on broad themes as relevant information was sourced. Lists compiled into thematic categories.	Lists recoded or subcategorised within each broad theme
Participant Writing	Photocopies coded with highlighter coding, information added to compiled lists.	Lists recoded or subcategorised within each broad theme
Playbills	Read and coded into notes as relevant information was sourced. Lists compiled into thematic categories.	Lists recoded or subcategorised within each broad theme
Interviews	Transcribed or coded by ear into notes as relevant information was sourced. Lists compiled into thematic categories.	Lists recoded or subcategorised within each broad theme
Verbal data	Coded into notes compiled into thematic categories.	Lists recoded or subcategorised within each broad theme

The second level of coding within this phase meant that several sub codes, categories, themes, and ideas were discovered within each of the broad themes and these sub codes have formed the structure of my findings chapters (see 5.0, 6.0 and 7.0).

As is typical in ethnographically-informed informed research, the analysis then became more free-form in constructing and drawing meaning where description and reflection form a crucial part of the research findings. The findings contained within this thesis aim to tell a detailed and co-constructed story of successful Shakespeare-focused initiatives as a phenomenon. Though relatively well established, such Shakespeare specific programmes are also notably rare, therefore a descriptive and detailed account offers a previously unavailable window into a rare yet successful activity within a usually private or hidden part of society, the prison. Discourse analysis allowed themes to be drawn out, supporting and structuring this narrative. I then discovered that the rehumanising narrative was heavily intertwined with the distinct Shakespeare specific and programme practices ideas.

After my coding was completed and I had compiled the narrative elements of the research, I now needed to make connections with theoretical approaches to understand and explore how or why the concepts illustrated and shared by prisoners as having an impact, may be doing so. The final stage of this analysis was reconnecting or connecting the emerging ideas to existing theory in this area in relation to drama therapy, psychodrama, applied theatre, and criminal rehabilitation. I was able to critically connect the constructed narratives with my research questions, underpinned by theory to offer a full image of the potential the programme held for criminal rehabilitation from the perspective of those who have direct experience of this. This enabled me to create coherent findings, reinforced by theory, to promote the introduction and use of this practice more frequently in the criminal justice system. During the first three phases of analysis, I had moved from raw data to an organised and coded body of relevant information. In this final phase, I could sort this information to explore broader programme practices and the specific use of Shakespeare in constructing one potentially successful approach to reducing recidivism and rehabilitating offenders.

From the outcomes of this process, meaning could be given to the data set. From this practice of coding through discourse and thematic coding, a clear overarching theme emerged of "humanisation", meaning to be human, within which two main themes were present: The impact of the practice specifics of the programme and the perceived impact of the specific use of Shakespeare. Within each of these sections a plethora of subthemes

and ideas were identified, with significant individual differences between different members based on each element, therefore the data sets were then coded to source the individual ideas emerging from each key theme. Reconnecting to research philosophy, authenticity remains at the heart of this practice, whereby the intention here is to create a realistic and authentic insight into the programme groups from the genuine voice of those engaged with it first-hand. This is not my personal interpretations of their stories, but my retelling through research the first-hand stories and experiences of those who are either currently participating in or have led, supported or participated in these projects directly. Crucially, the identification of patterns in constructing this thesis is essential for the data to be triangulated across different voices and sites to construct an accurate picture of this practice at its core. That is not to say differences between groups are overlooked, but rather the essential core activities of these practices could be identified because of this attention and connection of themes across the dataset.

The following three chapters detail the research findings and are broken down by the research question they sought to answer. Indeed, this research project emerged as an exploration of the impact of Shakespeare programmes used in criminal rehabilitation; however, two significantly different aspects emerged when participants articulated their reasons why they felt the programme groups were impactful. One strand of impact was specifically related to Shakespeare, and the use of reading, writing and performing Shakespeare's texts as part of the rehabilitative process. A second, and equally strong strand, related to the broader practices, environments and ethos of each group, indicating that the outcomes for many were not specifically reliant on Shakespeare.

5.0: The Shakespeare Programme: Practices and Delivery

"Things won are done,

joy's soul lies in the doing."

(Troilus and Cressida, I. i)

Vignette one: Programme practices - A example day

Each morning commenced with a search and security check in order to enter the prison. Then the practitioner and I, accompanied by escort staff, crossed the sparse prison recreation yard to one of a series of looming buildings. On my first day I am less than comfortable crossing this yard, as I feel hundreds of eyes staring at me and from guard to prisoner, I can't help but feel intimidated. On entering the blocks, we walk through the dim hallways into a room containing a circle of around twenty chairs, and I am struck by the chatter that reminded me of waiting for the teacher to arrive at school before my own lessons began.

The room was often at least half full once we had arrived and got through security checks. On my first arrival I looked for a spare seat assuming we would join the circle with everyone else, but the practitioner walked around to every seated man, shook his hand and greeted him individually before eventually taking a seat so that we became a part of the circle ourselves. At this point on my first day I held anxieties influenced by my only insight into prison and prisoners: television and film. Regardless of this, I copied the practitioner on my first day, out of politeness and uncertainty as to what exactly I'm supposed to do now I've made it into prison. I went around the circle to meet each individual myself and was greeted with welcoming and positive gestures. I quickly realised that it was not only the practitioner that does this, but every participant adopted this practice too. As time went on, I adopted this practice as not only a routine, but an important part of my day.

Eventually the group would start, usually with a warmup discussion, question or drama game. The group members are asked if there was anything they would like to share or say, and new people, such as myself, are introduced. In some groups this check in or warm up was a verbal conversation or a question thrown out to the group and in others I played drama games such as "zip zap zoe", a team concentration game. This initial activity served to launch the day's activities and bring the group together through something inclusive that involved everybody. Due to the circular and inwardly facing set up of the room, if you were not speaking, you were acting; if you were not watching, you were playing, and the activities were set up in such a way that everybody was equally welcomed to engage.

The main activity would then start. This could be sharing writing or performances that individuals or groups had been working on, preparing for upcoming sharing events, matriculations or events, or performing scenes from up and coming productions. For some the subject matter presented were poems or scenes directly from Shakespeare's writing. For others, it might be discussion of a single quotation they have discovered that provoked thought, or it might be entirely removed from Shakespeare, another play or a piece of personal writing they have created and wish to share, develop or open to discussion. Throughout these activities, opportunities for questions, discussions, and analysis were introduced.

On a typical day the group may focus on one or two individuals' contributions in detail, using these to springboard a wider and deeper discussion as a collective. One striking day, the group focussed almost entirely on the contribution of a relatively young man, Vinnie, reduced to tears when sharing his own reflections on his life so far through his writing and engaging with discussion surrounding it with the whole group. It was his birthday and with that he had taken the time to reflect deeply on his life to this point.

On other days there was less discussion and more performance, offering many individuals the opportunity to share a work in progress or contribute their current phase of work. It allowed them to consider a particular character and how they might be played or portrayed. This often challenged them to push their comfort zones playing roles, engaging with subject matter and grappling with perspectives ordinarily taboo or foreign in the prison environment, such as gender, sexuality and emotional vulnerability. It was particularly powerful to witness, in progress, the challenges presented to participants when engaging in this work and how this discomfort manifested and was overcome.

After any contribution there was usually a discursive dimension, varying in length and detail introduced to the group. Though not allowed to "advise, fix or instruct" their peers, participants were encouraged to ask difficult questions of their fellow group members asking them what they meant, felt or were thinking about when sharing a particular piece of work, sparking further discussion. This could spark some difficult situations when, as participants expressed it, they "call bullshit," that is, when someone was being disingenuous, challenging individuals to ask difficult questions of themselves. The practitioner took a guiding but non-invasive role in this, at times reiterating or wording important points or questions that individuals are missing, but never instructing or giving the "right" answer. This was also an opportunity to reiterate the rules and boundaries of groups at times such as "no fixing", or the bounds of fraternity and trust that the groups pride themselves on as paramount.

In order to close a session, every group member was offered the opportunity to make any final comments or points, ask questions or raise issues that will either be discussed then or worked on before the next session. Some groups use a formal debrief whereas others discuss this more informally. Finally, after 1-2 hours, any questions are answered, points are noted, and the group was drawn to a close with a collective farewell and new ideas born ready for the next group meeting.

Research Question 1: What were the specific programme practices and how were they delivered?

This initial findings chapter offers a brief overview of each of the different programme practices that emerged from participant and practitioner reports, and my first-hand experiences of the programme groups. It specifically addresses findings in relation to the research question "What were the specific programme practices and how were they delivered?" However, this question was also explored throughout chapters 6 and 7 in much greater detail considering Shakespeare-specific impact and overall programme outcomes. Chapter 6 then explores in greater depth the perceived impact of Shakespeare-specific activity, including different activities and approaches to learning drawn from this Shakespearean focus. Then, chapter 7 discusses the groups' broader outcomes, approaches and ethos from the perspective of participant-reported outcomes. For these emerging activities, the Shakespearean content or theme had little to do with the impact described, but rather the way the programme was delivered.

Due to the nature of my research approach, I give the strongest authority to participant voices, as they are the individuals directly impacted by the practices explored throughout this chapter. The practitioner intentions for these practices are also however undeniably important when considering the design and structure of these programmes. In exploring the practices, I am able to see the reported value of "the doing", cross referenced with the broader theoretical practices and practical approaches that underpin these activities. As is the case in any teaching space, intended teacher outcomes from a lesson or activity cannot be automatically assumed to have been learned by the students, but the intention of the practitioners in the design of this are still important to consider when establishing measures of success.

5.1 Activity types

The broad activity types identified both via my experience and participant reports were solo, group and ensemble activities, within which specific practices emerged and were identified as important or impactful by participants and practitioners alike. Specific noteworthy practices that were recurrently highlighted included:

1. Reading, performing and interpreting Shakespeare
2. Circle of trust, greeting and acknowledgment "rituals" and building community

3. Developing the skills of reflection, emotional development, identification and empathy
4. Milestone completion
5. Enhancing functional skills: personal writing, performing and sharing.

Underpinning each of these practices was an overall intention for prisoners to be seen, to see themselves and to explore the fact that they are human beings that are part of society at large, whose actions impact their own communities. As one key practitioner, Will, explained, when describing their dedication to rehumanisation:

> "In the world of the American Industrial Prison Complex [Shakespeare Programme] works to create a circle of trust in which we learn to grieve for our losses and harms; to find language for our trauma and shame; to give voice to our suffering; to listen deeply to others; to find ourselves in another human being's story; to find the compassion we need for ourselves and others; to become the most empathic human beings we can be."
>
> (Will, Practitioner)

The practice of treating prisoners as human beings was therefore found to be the overarching programme practice identified, by both practitioners and participants and witnessed by myself, as a general and intentional outcome of all programme activity.

Throughout the range of activities undertaken there were opportunities for participants to work alone, in pairs or small groups and ensemble, with most groups ensuring a combination was undertaken by all at some point in their programme. As a researcher, I largely engaged with whole ensemble projects, acting as a witness to individual or group work that had often been developed externally to the allocated session time, such as in bunk houses, personal cells or during recreation time.

5.2 Solo and collaborative activity

The majority of activity assigned to whole group sessions were activities intended to either call for the whole group or ensemble to actively participate, or for the whole ensemble to engage with an individual's contribution to the session. The practice of including and engaging the whole ensemble in both individual presentations of material and whole group activities was embedded in the programme design, to foster an

understanding that beyond being individuals, every participant has a place and impacts upon the world beyond themselves. Toby, a young participant articulated:

> "You are letting out (sic) every one of your brothers if you don't take this for what it is…you have got to take it seriously."
>
> (Toby, Participant)

Ensemble activities I experienced or were described to me by participants included:

- Engagement with a "Circle of Trust"
- Greeting and acknowledgment "rituals"
- Milestone completion/ matriculation
- Performances
- Discussions and sharing

Practitioners shared both individual development and the ability to work collaboratively as essential to programme activities, with the intention that participants get opportunities for both personal and communal development. Participants and practitioners claimed that ensemble activities supported community development, and offered multiple ways to access programme content, allowing individuals to learn at their own pace. Participant findings reinforce practitioner intentions which, at the core, reflect a collective desire to create positive learning communities, scaffolding personal progression for all individual needs. As one participant, Howard, shared, this was not an easy experience for all participants, who essentially begin as untrustworthy strangers. He told me:

> "I worked hard to embrace the teamwork in this troupe. Yes, there was the occasional ego flair up but mostly there was cooperation and dare I say it, caring and love"
>
> (Howard, Participant)

Whole ensemble activity was the predominant practice style utilised within the physically allotted group time. The group functions as an ensemble and participants in all groups recurrently identified themselves as a 'family,' fraternity' or 'brotherhood' that functions as one cohesive unit and operates collaboratively rather than competitively. They work towards both a shared goal, and a plethora of individual goals and successes, supported and encouraged within the group context. This development of community is not without resistance from others; racial, social, and criminal-classification based

integration has significant challenges within the prison environment, however, this focus on a shift from segregation and exclusion to collaboration and progress was continually articulated as paramount. When considering communicative development through collaborative writing, Thompson (2012) writes:

> "The story of the boys' successful collaboration towards their completed text can be summarised as a sequence in which they moved from uncertainty and resistance into a consolidating and supportive relationship, and finally to the creative fulfilment of the task."
>
> (p.212)

This process as described by Thompson in relation to writing improvement through peer interaction in the case of two-year nine school children, can be almost directly mapped onto the stories many of the adult participants in this research described. Thompson's year nine boys held a view of writing, learning and drafting that rarely led to significant improvement, significantly evoking frustration from one and only superficial engagement from the other as individuals who were tasked with improving their writing based on teacher feedback. This is not unlike the group members in the prison. The prisoners within the prison system are told that their way of thinking, or behaving, is wrong or needs to be changed yet there is resistance and the prison does little to support such individuals to shift this thinking pattern. The Shakespeare programme equips them with the community, equipment and opportunity to challenge these views in a supportive environment much different to that of the wider prison. Initially, members report the "uncertainty and resistance" described by Thompson, later reporting a shift to developing "supportive" relationships and indeed to some extent "creative fulfilment of the task" which may be a whole group target or the overcoming of individual barriers.

Small group activities facilitating positive and creative collaboration were varied as some were intentionally designed and some emerged organically through breakout groups, where small groups could work on pieces or have smaller scale discussions to be added to the full ensemble through performance or group collaboration. Group activities included:

- Performance of devised pieces, scene direction and performance
- Peer support/ mentorship/ group discussion
- Exploration of individually shared personal stories, challenges and experiences
- Matriculation or milestone ceremonies and performances

As a researcher, I only had access to the groups when they were in designated project time, therefore I was unable to witness first hand much small group work and performances outside of the programme confines; however, I could observe some of this work when shared with the wider group as material for commentary or discussion and via this channel I was able to gain insight into the practices underpinning these tasks, as well as their perceived benefits.

Personal change was at the heart of the intentions of the programme and by design, practitioners claim that through engaging in the communal activities, participants are scaffolded and encouraged to reflect on their own life choices and their individual actions, behaviours and views about the world. These are rarely the outcomes stated to the group for each activity, but rather a by-product to be developed from personal reflections on the wider group activities. There were many reported individual activities, usually conducted outside the confines of the ensemble, that participants highlighted as important or impactful. Noteworthy examples of these included both set tasks and by-products of activity engagement including:

- Writing and presenting personal material
- Individual performances
- Reading plays, poems and stories
- Developing self-reflection and empathy

According to practitioners and participants alike, the self was most important in the process, hence the necessity for individual activity, both within and beyond the confines of the allocated programme hours. These individual activities were encouraged by the programme and reinforced by fellow group members who questioned and critiqued their peers if they had not completed a requested task or were perceived not to be giving their full or honest effort in their group contributions. Practitioners explained that this dimension of inward or self-focus was not to enable or encourage selfishness, but rather to give clear and structured opportunities for participants to acknowledge personal issues and explore individual experiences that they perceived surrounded their behaviours. For example, before being able to apologise and rebuild connections with those impacted by crime, long-serving programme participants claimed that they needed help or support to understand this impact for themselves.

Many participants, although acknowledging that they had committed a crime, reported being unable to, or demonstrated unwillingness to, understand, acknowledge and accept both their responsibility for that action and the impact of that on other

people. Practitioners highlight this as an essential feature for participants to be able to work towards life beyond their offence, taking responsibility for it, before establishing how they may progress from it. It was common for participants to report a prior rationalisation of their actions by events of their pasts or people around them, blaming others for their situations. Though personal circumstances likely influence individual behaviours, and structural injustices do contribute to the likelihood of engagement in criminal activity (see 2.1.2), practitioners encourage individuals to accept that regardless of mitigating factors, they were responsible for their behavioural choices, resulting in their eventual incarceration.

5.3 Shakespeare-focussed activities

As explored in detail in chapters 6 and 7, there are specific Shakespeare-focussed activities undertaken by the programme that must be acknowledged here. There were three broad types of engagement with Shakespeare either reported to or witnessed by me; reading Shakespeare, performing Shakespeare, and interpreting Shakespeare, either in groups or as individuals, both within and outside the allotted programme time.

5.3.1 Reading Shakespeare

Reading Shakespeare's texts was a core feature of all Shakespeare circles where participants are encouraged to read and engage with them. These texts are not simplified and are usually accessed either through personally owned texts, prison libraries or provided copies. Texts are never simplified according to lead practitioner, Will, because:

> "Failure in Shakespeare was when people try to help [each other]. They [The Participants] don't need it dumbed down …they could go toe to toe with the pros"
>
> (Will, Practitioner)

They also can engage with texts outside of Shakespeare, adding food for thought and contribution to discussion, but a Shakespeare text was always the core material used to springboard further group discussion, activity and learning, so reading such texts was an essential requirement of the group.

> "Through the readings of Shakespeare sonnets and poems, there was a whole world out there that I have tapped into"
>
> (Joel, Participant)

For some activities, set texts are recommended or required for the purpose of performance or a specific focus, but beyond this, participants are encouraged to read the texts for personal consumption and exploration, without the requirement of a programme of study or any prescribed learning outcome. Participants report a range of outcomes from reading Shakespeare as an activity. For some, it was about expanding vocabulary, improving reading skills and by virtue of the activity increasing literacy; part of this was giving participants the ability to read and understand Shakespeare's works in a way that was most relevant to themselves, adopting his language and phrasing if they deem it relevant to reflect their own situations:

> "He [Shakespeare] taught me how to say things, things I can't say on my own. That's what I want you guys [the younger men] to get…Shakespeare could be a voice you don't have yet"
>
> (Harley, Participant)

Several participants discussed what they gained from their exploration, understanding and eventual acquisition of Shakespeare's language as a vehicle for expressing their own thoughts or emotions (as explored in greater detail in 6.3). One participant, a young male, cited the adoption of "exuberating" into his dialect, and others cited specific speeches as resonating with them. One such speech was from *Richard II*. This particular phrasing holds an obvious connection to prisoner lives:

> "Richard II: I have been studying how I may compare this prison where I live unto the world: And for because the world was populous and here was not a creature but myself, I cannot do it"
>
> (V. v. p.364)

Shakespeare's plots, characters and specific content found within the texts were identified as tools for learning, exploration, understanding and self-exploration. Some groups had yet to perform a full Shakespeare play [July 2015, performances may have occurred since], but all groups reported reading Shakespeare as a critical exercise within their practice. The benefits of this from the practitioner perspectives fall heavily in line with existing literature surrounding Shakespeare as an insight into human nature; Shakespeare as a voice that holds presentist capability – not just for the age and context in which he wrote – and critically that any person, characteristic or emotion can be found across the canon of Shakespeare's characters, plays and poems.

For participants, however, there are more nuanced outcomes from reading Shakespeare, again better explored in chapter 6. Some of these include the vocabulary and expressions gained from the works equipping individuals with a means by which to express themselves, exploring and thinking through characters and character actions in the context of the plays as a whole and reflecting on their own actions in the context of society at large. Such things allowed participants to develop understandings and interpretations their own way without textbooks or scholars enforcing "correct" meanings and feeling smart, validated and intelligent in their interpretations, feeling able to read texts that hold such cultural capital and perception as difficult, challenging and higher cultural value.

5.3.2 Performing Shakespeare

Where performances are undertaken, they are usually, if not always, grounded in one or multiple Shakespeare plays, or they are building on work initiated or connected with Shakespeare. Some groups work towards production of an entire, or abridged, Shakespeare play. They all use original language as presented via a complete works or relevant edition, never using modernised or simplified versions. In addition, one participant group worked towards a yearly production of a Shakespeare play that they would then invite members of the public to attend, performing Shakespeare's plays to members of the wider community, including potentially those who may reject prisoners as explored in chapter 3. For example, a now practitioner in the programme describing attending his first in-prison performance reluctantly, as he himself held assumptions about prisoners and did not see the benefit in allowing prisoners to perform in such a way. Not all groups work towards one specific performance, however. Some groups encourage the sharing of scenes or monologues as part of the whole group activities, structured in such a way that they could present these performances within their small group or large group and use these performances as opportunities for deeper group exploration.

Recurrently reported by participants was having had opportunities to play particular characters, either performing as a part of a large-scale production, smaller matriculation activity or in-group presentation. Participants report selecting characters based on the characters they feel either resemble themselves, resemble an element of their crime or who are polar opposites to themselves intentionally selected as an opportunity to "see the world in a way you never have" (Rob, Participant). Engagement with characters was reported to be a particularly difficult element of the process for

some groups as individuals may share an affinity with a particular character. Others may not want to play a character because of their behaviours, and gender in particular emerged as an area of contention, whereby some prisoners were uncomfortable or unwilling to play a female role, or a male role in a non-heterosexual style. All groups held performative elements as part of their practices, with one presenting a play about Shakespeare in prison rather than specifically a Shakespeare play.

Casting and undertaking roles are often heavily grounded in this element of reading Shakespeare whereby participants are encouraged to read a set Shakespeare text to be performed, to explore characters that they feel connect to themselves, their learning, their crime or their life experiences. This was an important part of the casting process for groups that do performances via applied theatre pathways: undertaking the journey and experiences of the individual within that role are paramount, rather than the quality. The "best" actors would not by virtue of talent get the biggest roles; this was not the point of the exercise. Rather, participants secure roles, where possible and when achievable, that relate to themselves and can offer learning and insights to them. These insights are not prescribed, and participants are not required to identify what these benefits may all be from the outset, but from initial engagement participants are encouraged to immediately engage in the casting process reflectively.

In addition to this, performance itself and the process of rehearsal, character work and reflection throughout the process of developing the final performance are cited as the essential features of this practice by practitioners and participants alike. Of course, where the matriculation activity was a performance, some emphasis will fall on the construction of the performance, but the quality of this, though reportedly usually high, was irrelevant to the process. Through the channels reported by participants such as relevance to their own lives, relevance to society and opportunities to see the world from alternative perspectives, engaging in performative practices offered participants pathways and opportunities to relive, re-experience and re-explore events and emotions in a safe yet realistic reconstruction that one participant, Gareth, explained thus:

> "It was far enough from real life, and too close to it. You can't not think about real life when what you are doing was so close. You feel close you feel like you're doing it you feel like it's happening to you."

5.3.3 Interpreting and working using Shakespeare

Participants reported engaging with Shakespeare as an opportunity to explore or reflect on their own behaviours. This was either through direct representation, for example a murderer playing a murderer or murder victim, or through symbolic interpretation where significant work was done to encourage projection-based activity to contextualise Shakespeare's scenes through a kind of presentism, i.e. placing Shakespeare's stories in a modern context, as a mode of interpretation of plots, characters and storylines to real life situations.

> "I am planning on rewriting *Much Ado About Nothing*…Part 2 a modern version with a penitentiary twist., since much ado was my first Shakespeare play behind bars…Knowing that Shakespeare came up with these plays out of his head, putting a twist on people he knew…its truly amazing…Everything that Shakespeare has written still has feelings in today's world. They never grow old."
>
> (Joel, Programme Participant)

In addition, where groups engage more often in individual or small group sharing events and activities, participants read Shakespeare plays and texts to bring and discuss during sessions. They engage in close-reading style activities pulling apart specific lines or passages to find applications to their lives or learn monologues or passages of text that they feel speak to them, building on them with their own writing, description or context as they desire. They also bring their questions and confusions, seeking input from others about the texts rather than their own situations. Again, this engagement creates a safety that the personal was removed but the food for thought was formulated through this process for the individual to then later apply to their own life circumstance and situation.

Other examples included niche interpretations of characters often considered to be minor or usually played in a particular way but interpreted by the individuals as alternatively impactful based on their own life stories and experiences. By connecting the drama with their own lives through a series of scaffolded activities, participants are given the opportunity to develop skills in empathy, communication, understanding and crucially recognition that they are not the only people affected by their crime, understanding and exploring the true consequences of their actions on wider society.

This was where individuality was most heavily presented and the significance that the applications of individual experience was espoused to have in determining individual "success" or "learning" drawn from the programme. This interpretation process can occur organically through any method of engaging with Shakespeare from

either acting a role, reading a text or witnessing others play a role actively participating in a scene.

5.4 Learning, Development and Skills Enhancement

5.4.1 Structuring engagement and building community

Practitioners reported aiming to "construct positive communities" where, regardless of personal circumstance, all participant perceptions are given value. There was a strong focus on encouraging individuals to trust the group in receiving personal information and, in turn, the group was expected to maintain this trust and engage in supportive discussion and exploration of individual issues without judgment. The benefits of group discussion and collaboration are highlighted by practitioners as highly significant in fostering positive learning environments for participants. Yet, motivations for offenders to engage, and maintain engagement, with any initiative was problematic and requires the building and nurturing of a therapeutic alliance and community with offenders (Cordess, 2007).

A standard desks-in-rows, facing the front, teacher-in-authority set up was common in classroom environments. A wealth of research identifying a plethora of problems with this structure facilitating student disengagement was explored in chapter one (Hannah, 2013; Rosenthal et al, 1985; Grubaugh & Houston, 1990). The circular classroom layout was one approach that practitioners of the Shakespeare programme groups argue was best placed to achieve high levels of engagement and interactivity, through which such openness of interaction, deterrence from distraction, and environment for inclusion may be constructed.

The proposition that more on-task behaviour was exhibited by learners sitting in a circle formation than those working in rows was not new and was often closely associated with the native American tradition of talking circles (Rosenthal et al, 1985, Pranis, 2005). This teaching style was focused on enabling separate individuals to come together in a comfortable format as equals, in physical position and shared authority. As identified by Pranis (2005) there are key structural features identified within the native American practice of talking circles. Several of these principles are reflected within the Shakespeare programme practices discovered here, therefore this format has been used to explain the role and use of the circle within the Shakespeare programme considered here.

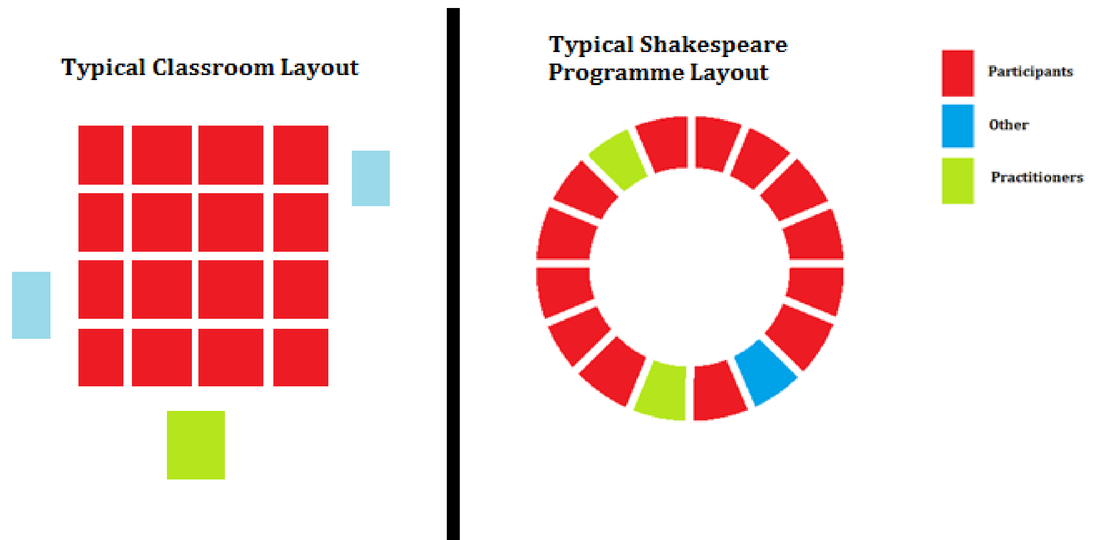
Table 2: Comparing Native American Talking Circles (Pranis, 2005) and Shakespeare Programme Practices

Pranis' (2005) Teaching Circle	**Shakespeare Programme Practices**
Principle 1) Opening and closing rituals identifying the space as unique	Shaking hands/ greeting / checking in
Principle 2) Agreed rules/guidelines	Rules for interaction / speaking from self/ not telling what to think
Principle 3) Talking or focus piece	Issue/ story/ text/ play/ writing/ question
Principle 4) Facilitator to maintain space as directed	Practitioners and mentors
Principle 5) Consensus, decision making and inclusion	Reinforcing/ learning/ praise/ pleasure

These five principles summarise the intentions of practitioners in creating spaces where participants regain some control and input into their lives and learn from peers. The circle functions as a separate world within, yet seemingly separated from, the prison. Restorative justice practices and programmes aim to cultivate such separate space, where all participants, regardless of extenuating circumstances, perceive themselves to have significance and belong (Clifford, 2013). Structural activities to encourage mass participation within an active and engaged community were maintained within the programme as essential features of practices. These included the physical space and structural set up of the group activities, greeting rituals to commence the groups, and communication and interaction techniques undertaken within the groups, that differ from the usual engagement styles within the prison environments.

Every programme used a setup whereby practitioners and participants sat in an inwardly facing circle of chairs, or at the very least in a circle-style formation where the space permitted it. Practitioners, participants and any other individuals present were seated in equal positions within the space; there was no head or physical position of authority, regardless of their role or status, rather than the traditional classroom layout with desk rows promoting hierarchy and providing unequal engagement opportunities.

Figure 3: Illustration: Typical Layout of a classroom vs found typical group layout



Made exclusive and transcendent from the prison, the Shakespeare programme groups introduce an environment potentially fostering positive opportunities for engagement, interaction and eventually rehabilitation. The circle style of approach has allowed for additional opportunities for programme levels and mentorship to be created through development and training in circle-based communication and teaching methodologies. This circle format was considered a core feature of the programme groups where all whole-group discussions and activities are conducted within this type of space. Participants are invited to discuss their lives, share ideas, perform Shakespeare's texts and their own writing, and complete set activities. The purpose of these elements individually is explored later in this chapter. Practitioners claimed that this equally positioned circle format provides "equality" and "removes any barriers", either physical or socio-hierarchical that may be perceived.

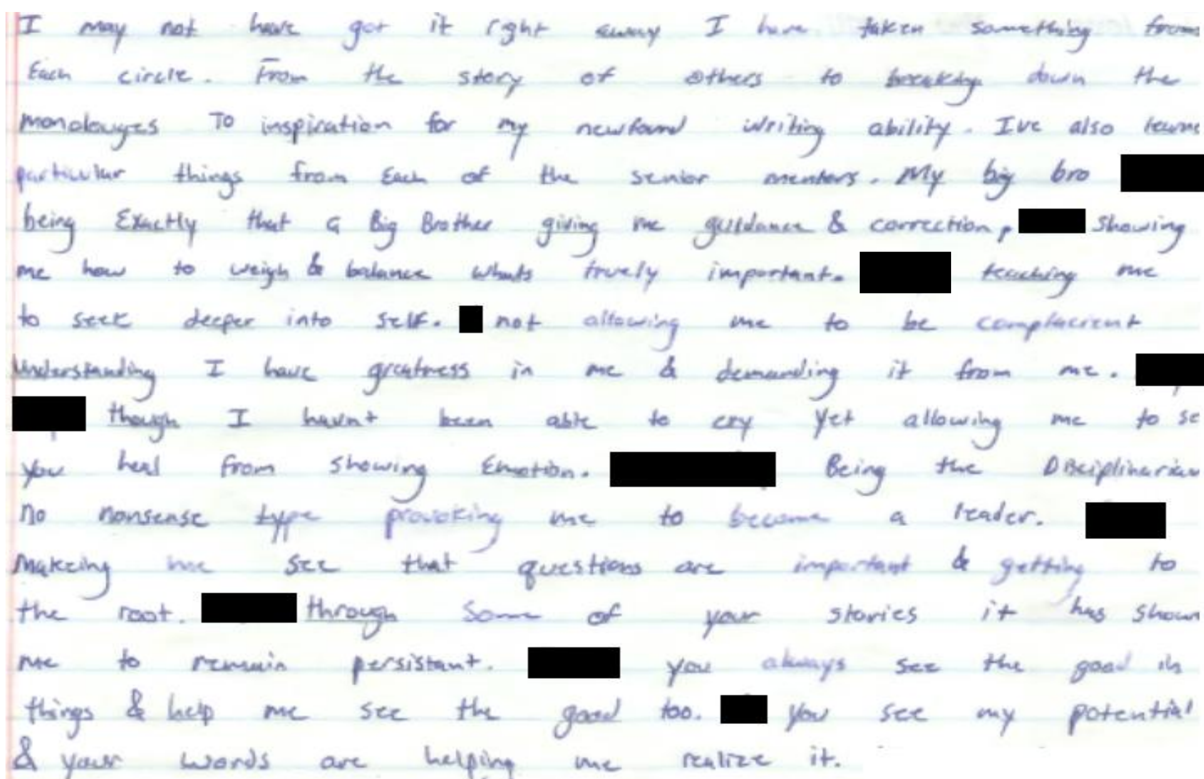
Greeting and acknowledgment serves the function of a starting ritual into the world or community of the Shakespeare circles. Greeting gestures and acknowledgments are common in therapy-based groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous who mandate personal introductions and group acknowledgment before contribution to the wider room. The essential principle underpinning this practice was encouraging participants to "get active" with their therapy programmes (Caldwell, 1999), meaning active mental engagement without having to be told or forced. By enforcing tasks such as the greeting

of others, the aim was to ensure that each participant develops personal attachment to the group, rather than just being present.

All participants must greet each other to start each session. In practice, the first person to enter takes a seat, the next shakes hands with the first, this continues until all have greeted each other. Some groups go even further, whereby every person must greet the whole group and share their current state before the groups may continue. In common group therapy meetings, Baldwin (2003) suggests an unfortunate indistinguishable divide between group arrival and group beginning, the latter only signalled by a leader enforcing commencement. In such cases, it was unlikely that the presence of everybody has been acknowledged (Coleman, 2015). Both participants and practitioners consider this a crucial part of the task at hand, where greeting and acknowledgement are hailed as a compulsory and crucial part of the session, to be given however much time and attention it duly needs.

Whether a person in the circle was the prisoner or practitioner they are placed at equal standing to all others with every physical body spaced and positioned as equally as the activity within it. Practitioners aim to foster an environment within which participants perceive themselves to be shared owners of the group, with no clear leadership permitted. This includes the practitioner, situated most often as a facilitating participant rather than an authoritative instructor. One participant, Carmine, shared how each individual member of his circle had influenced his journey thus far, presenting a piece of personal writing on this subject (figure. 4).

Figure 4: Prisoner Writing: Community Benefit (Names redacted to protect anonymity)



I may not have got it right away I have taken something from Each circle. From the story of others to breaking down the monologues To inspiration for my newfound writing ability. Ive also learnt particular things from Each of the senior members. My big bro [redacted] being Exactly that a Big Brother giving me guidance & correction, [redacted] Showing me how to weigh & balance whats truely important. [redacted] teaching me to seek deeper into self. [redacted] not allowing me to be complacent Understanding I have greatness in me & demanding it from me. [redacted] though I havent been able to cry yet allowing me to se you heal from showing Emotion. [redacted] Being the Disciplinarian no nonsense type provoking me to become a leader. [redacted] Making me see that questions are important & getting to the root. [redacted] through Some of your stories it has shown me to remain persistant. [redacted] you always see the good in things & help me see the good too. [redacted] you see my potential & your words are helping me realize it.

In this written expression of gratitude, Carmine highlights both his general and specific learning gains from community participation. Here he identifies learning from activities such as “my newfound writing ability” and “breaking down monologues” but also individual lessons that have been “giving guidance and correction,” teaching him to “seek deeper into self” and “getting to the root” through the “stories” of other members within his Shakespeare community. This text exemplifies a consistent message from practitioners and participants alike that community development and the role of the community, both in structure and practices to facilitate and encourage engagement, was perceived to be critical for the success of the programme.

To engage with and explore the issues within the communities, participants are subject to a set of agreed rules and guidelines. In the programme, I discovered ten formal rules that reflected practice across all groups considered.

Figure 5: Data Sample: Rules for group participation

Rules for an optional adult group

1. Come to work with 100% yourself
2. Presume welcome and extend welcome
3. Believe it was possible to emerge refreshed, surprised, and less burdened than when you arrived.
4. Always invitation, never invasion, always opportunity, never demand
5. NO FIXING---No saving, fixing, advising
6. Be open to learning from each other
7. When the going gets rough, turn to wonder
8. Speak for yourself
9. Listen to the silence
10. Observe confidentiality

(Will, Practitioner)

All participants must adhere to these rules and participate in the sessions as part of the whole circle, positioned within it and connected to it with no exceptions. Structure and rules are a critical feature in any corrections environment; however, this has an associated history of retaliation and backlash, where liberties and freedoms are already removed from prisoners' lives. However, as self-governing agencies, the Shakespeare groups take their community guidelines seriously, with the guidance of a reminding practitioner that intervenes whenever a rule was breached. The rules are non-negotiable but are also non-restrictive to personal rights and liberties. Though they require participants to complete set tasks, they also allow space for individuals to engage on different levels. The rules, for example, dictate how participants should treat their fellow group members, encouraging them to overcome fear of repercussion.

There are four core questions that underpin the adult Shakespeare programme groups that participants were to use in their reflections, discussions, and considerations, serving as talking pieces:

1. Who am I?
2. Who do I love?
3. How will I live my life knowing that I will die?
4. What is my gift/ legacy to mankind?

(Will, Practitioner)

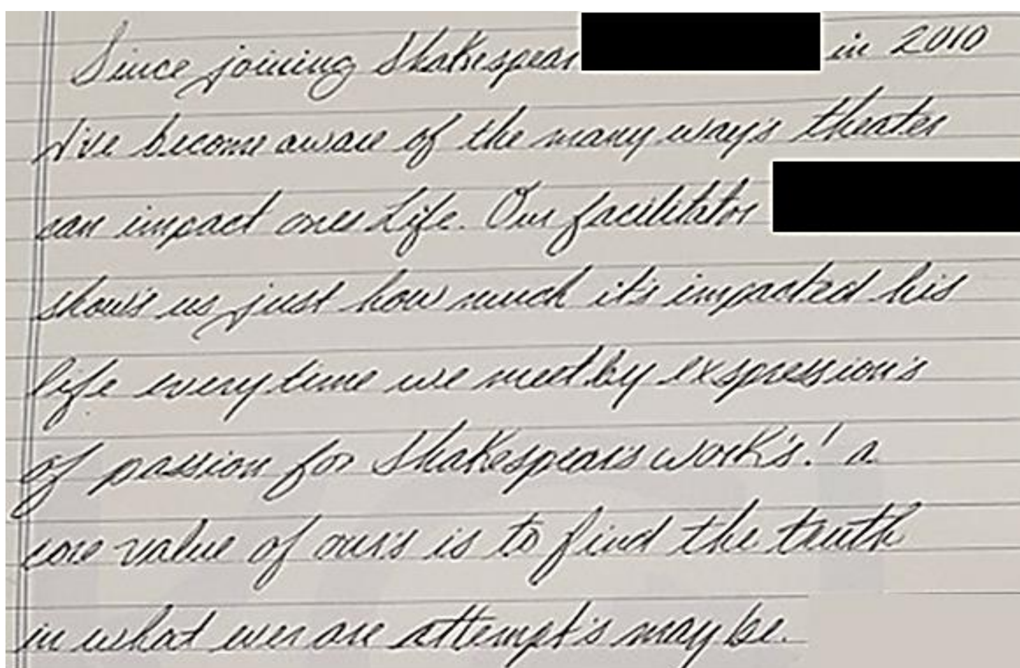
Practitioners claim these questions help guide participant input, framing how participants consider and present their ideas, and reflect on their behaviours reconnecting to humanity. By reiterating such questions to the group, one lead practitioner seeks to enable participants to explore different roles of the self, developing a sense of who they were, are and desire to be. One lead practitioner explained the use of these questions as a framework for participants to identify how they may use their lives to make good decisions, and positive contributions to society at large; a common desired practice in reflective rehabilitation (Ward & Gannon, 2006; Bee & Boyd, 2003). This approach was grounded in a model of "primary goods" (Laws & Ward, 2011; Ward & Gannon, 2006) or "Human goods" (Ward & Gannon, 2006) that can be offered to society by all individuals in it regardless of their past behaviours, assuming humanity and the capability to make valuable societal contributions beyond criminality.

Such goods are often defined under different names, but usually include healthy behaviours; knowledge and education expansions; positive and healthy interpersonal relationships, and positive contributions to society (Willis et al, 2013; Purvis et al, 2010; Bonita & Andrews, 2010, Ward et al, 2009; Ward & Gannon, 2006). By proposing such questions, practitioners encourage participants to identify value in themselves and their peers and explore their potential value in society.

5.4.2 Self-reflection, expression and issue exploration

The programme fostered a number of activities aimed at facilitating self-reflection and issue exploration. These included encouraging verbal and written expressions of emotion through reflective writing, personal and group discussions and explorations of stories, issues and dilemmas and examination of personal and emotional experiences through expression, performance and discussion work.

Figure 6: Prisoner Writing: Shakespeare for life reflection


Since joining Shakespear in 2010
I've become aware of the many ways theater
can impact ones Life. Our facilitator
shows us just how much it's impacted his
life everytime we meet by expression's
of passion for Shakespears work's! a
core value of ours is to find the truth
in what ever are attempt's may be.

Transcription: “Since joining Shakespeare [redacted] in 2010 I’ve become aware of the many ways theatre can impact one’s life. Our Facilitator [redacted] shows us just how much its impacted his life every time we meet by expressions of passion for Shakespeare’s works! A core value of ours is to find the truth in whatever are (sic. Meaning our) attempts may be”

(Oscar, Participant)

Firstly, focusing on specific practices themselves that seek to scaffold this reflective practice, table 3 demonstrates a series of sample activities and their potential outcome as deduced from practitioner input, theoretical connections and my time within the group.

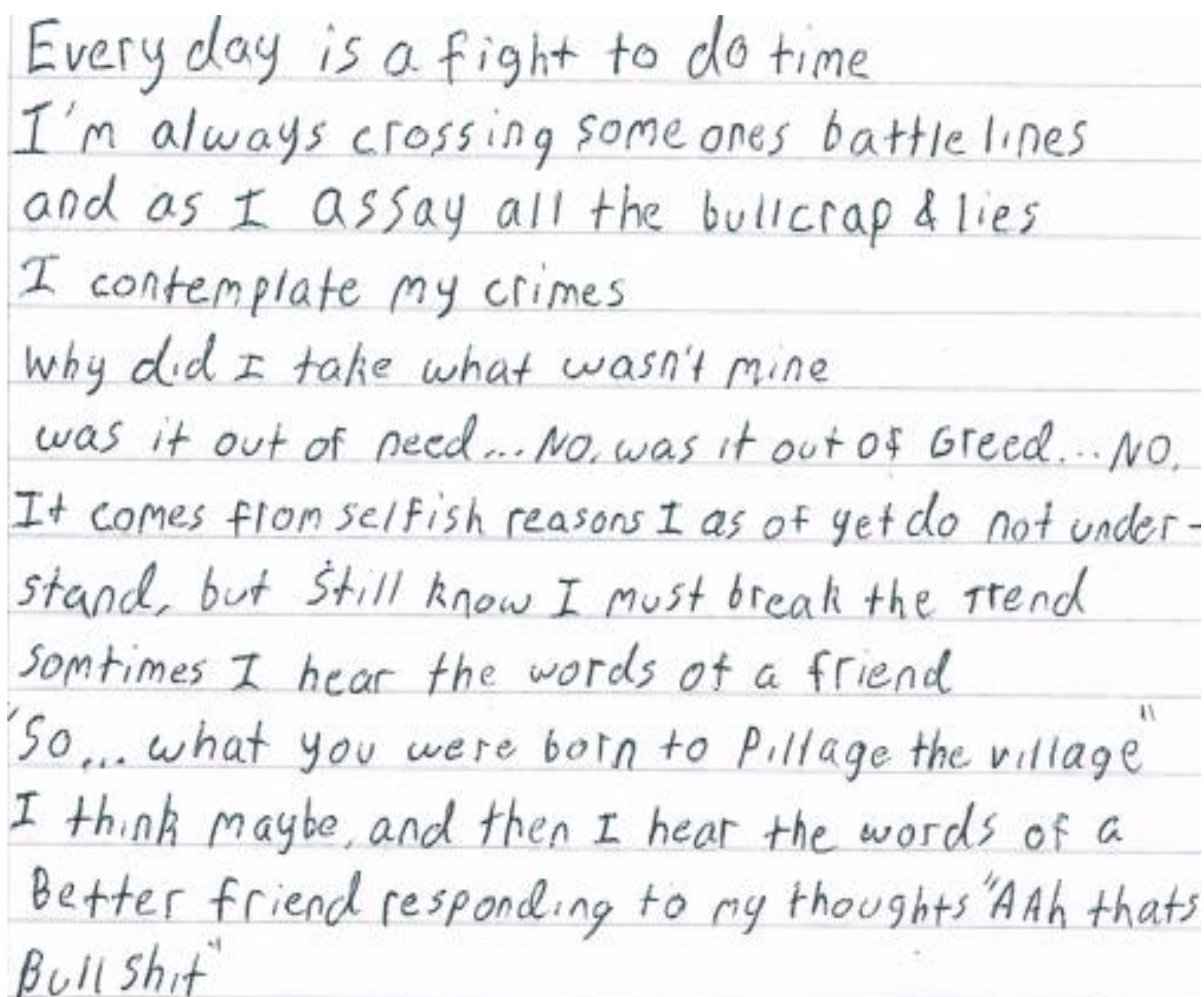
Table 3: Sample Reflective Activities

Activity	Description	Potential Outcomes
Character exploration	Individuals or groups spend time identifying key features of a character. They identify first characteristics and behaviours of these characters, and then identify their lines of impact on others, their motivations and the events that caused specific behaviours.	-New Perspectives -Impact identification and understanding, -Bigger picture world view -Emotional connection -Life Drama Connection
Playing a role or participating in a scene	A role was undertaken by a participant who presents themselves as a specific character in a scene, monologue, or full play. They are required to engage beyond reading it as a character, considering their behaviours, emotions, motivations, and impacts of their behaviours.	-Life-drama connection -Taking off the mask -Experience as perpetrator -Experiencing as a victim -Experiencing as other
Interactive witnessing	Participants watch or listen to individuals sharing, and then engage actively through group discussion. Participants may ask questions to the performer or sharer to encourage them to consider what they are sharing on a deeper level including their motivations for what they share, the background to its creation and what their next steps of action are going to be beyond this point.	-multiple perspectives -deeper engagement -difficult questions -no fabrication permitted -perceiving situations form multiple angles
Creative writing and sharing	Participants are encouraged to write their own stories, letters, and poems either for individual use or for group sharing or matriculations. All participants are required to share something for certain milestones such as matriculations, and some programme groups placed a heavier emphasis on sharing personal writings than others, but all allow opportunity for this activity to occur.	-Share on a personal level -Explore personal feelings and/or experiences. - Communicate with others literally -Communicate with others symbolically

Creative writing was hailed as both a reflective tool and a vehicle for personal expression in rehabilitation programmes. This approach, which can be structured or unstructured,

solicited or unsolicited and in all forms, was encouraged. Practitioners intend participants to find an outlet for communication, and creative writing can successfully offer this. Aligned with an applied theatre model, the emphasis was on the process of participation rather than the quality of any product. Creative expression of personal stories, feelings and issues, unconnected to Shakespeare's texts, either through written or verbal communication, has for many participants become their primary outlet and most important activity in their development. Though not all participants engage in it most have the opportunity or requirement to do so and identify it as vital.

Figure 7: Prisoner writing: Reflecting on behaviour



Every day is a fight to do time
I'm always crossing someones battle lines
and as I assay all the bullcrap & lies
I contemplate my crimes
Why did I take what wasn't mine
was it out of need... No, was it out of Greed... NO,
It comes from selfish reasons I as of yet do not under-
stand, but still know I must break the trend
Somtimes I hear the words of a friend
'So... what you were born to Pillage the village"
I think maybe, and then I hear the words of a
Better friend responding to my thoughts "AAh thats
Bull Shit"

Blame and emotional difficulties were reported to be commonplace amongst the prison communities but where conversations and conflict resolution cannot be established via person to person contact, the written word was utilised by practitioners as a "next best thing," enabling expression, communication development, increased literacy, and for some the opportunity to reconnect with society through performances, publications and playbills containing the writing of offenders being distributed internationally.

There are many approaches and uses for the written word across programme groups, again deduced from my time with the groups, practitioner voices and participant input, see Table 4.

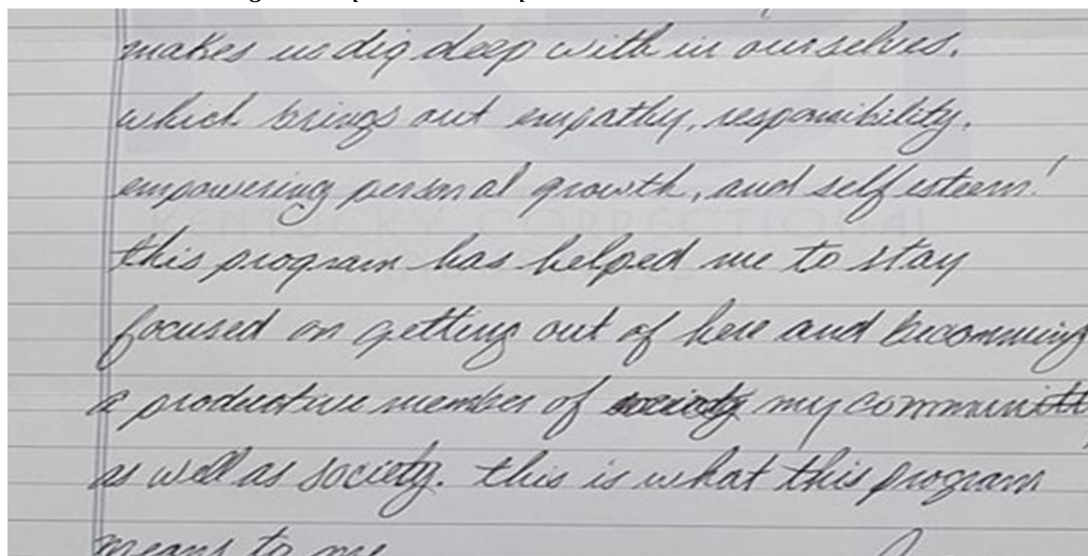
Table 4: Potential Outcomes of Writing Based Activity

Activity	Description	Potential Outcomes
Writing or articulating letters, poetry or stories	Participants write texts that express their feelings, emotions or experiences. These can be solely for personal reading & use or for semi-public and public sharing & distribution,	-Life-drama connection -Self Expression -Organizing thoughts and identifying emotions -Self-reflection
Writing for public consumption	Participants write passages about their experiences of the programmes or learning related to the programme. Programmes dependent, they can publish these in prison newspapers, external journals & playbills for public consumption on an international level.	-Offering insight into the individual -demonstrating capability beyond offence -Communication -Changing/ challenging perceptions
Writing for an event	Though the writing itself will be very like that written generally, these pieces are specifically written for sharing, or selected by participants willing to share them from existing written pieces. Participants will write a poem, story or piece for matriculation, performance, public or in-house sharing.	-demonstrating capability -Communication -Changing/ challenging perceptions -Life-drama connection -Expression & Reflection -Organizing thoughts -identifying emotions
Emotional connection, communication and sharing	For some participants, there are those they wish to communicate with however circumstances mean that they cannot. Where this was the case participants still write to such individuals but never send the text, rather writing what they would say given the opportunity to do so.	-Share on a personal level -Explore personal feelings and/or experiences. -Communicate with others symbolically -Vehicle for personal resolution and expression

Practitioners unanimously connected their practices on the Shakespeare programme with ideas of emotional learning, identification and expression. Practitioners make it

clear that the programme groups are not therapy programme groups but rather have therapeutic outcomes through engagement in the activities and participants such as Oscar, support this notion:

Figure 8: Prisoner Writing: Therapeutic Shakespeare



makes us dig deep with in ourselves.
which brings out empathy, responsibility.
empowering personal growth, and self esteem!
this program has helped me to stay
focused on getting out of here and becomming
a productive member of ~~society~~ my communitty
as well as society. this is what this program
means to me.

Transcript: "Makes us dig deep within ourselves which brings out empathy, responsibility, empowering personal growth, and self-esteem! This program has helped me to stay focussed on getting out of here and becoming a productive member of my community as well as society, this is what this program means to me."

(Oscar, Participant)

5.4.3 Enhancing functional skills

Many participants share the enhancement and development of "functional skills" or "skills for getting by in life" such as reading, writing, talking and communication, problem solving and leadership techniques from the programme. Such skills development was not uncommon across prisoner education programmes globally, with a key focus being on "useful" skills for life beyond prison and emphasis being placed on programmes that equip participants with such functional outcomes. However, the way this was administered via the Shakespeare programme considered here was by no means as prescriptive. Instead, the programme facilitates this kind of development much more serendipitously by the practices, activities and values they encompass. They never, for example, report having taught participants to read or having graded them on the quality and development of their writing or sharing. Rather, participants are encouraged to push their personal boundaries as part of their community, scaffolded by practitioners that encourage them to read, write, perform or share but placing true emphasis on the process involved in this, not the quality of any work produced. For example, in discussion of a matriculation event participants are encouraged to share, with their peers, written

or learned pieces from Shakespeare or from their personal creativity or both. Further they are encouraged to engage with this work collaboratively between peers, and between peers and their peer mentors, those who have engaged with the programme for longer. Sharing was seen as marking their engagement in the programme and process of doing so.

> "I want people to get out of the play…yes we are locked up but there was so much more to us…Shakespeare has helped me pour my pain through a pen, in the pen. My thoughts my writings help me."
>
> (Roger, Participant)

Communication was heavily endorsed by the practitioners and participants as a key functional skill outcome and this was one element where specific guidelines and structures are implemented, to encourage and ensure useful and constructive communication develops. As explored in chapter four, the simple introduction of 'I statements', taking from the self without telling others how to feel, was one methodology through which active listening, constructive contributions and low conflict communication was ensured. Other tactics include encouragement of participants to question their peers, encouraging the individuals to think and articulate their experience, reasoning or response without ever instructing them what to say, think or contribute. They are not encouraged to pursue social desirability in their responses, but rather honesty and truth and as explained by Will, a lead practitioner, "find their own truth."

Aggression or conflict resolution were also recurrently cited by participants as key skills taken from the project. Participant Ryan shared the significance of having a circle within which he could safely air a grievance and with the support of peers seek an adequate resolution without the negative consequences associated with conflict, frequently connected with violence or consequence in the prison context.

Many participants also shared having limited interest or experience in reading prior to programme participation. Part of the programme environment encourages participants to read, not only Shakespeare's texts, but supplementary materials and valuable texts that are deemed relevant to them. Some openly share having read very little, or the experience of reading and writing forming a critical part of their personal lives as brand new. Reading Shakespeare has many reported benefits, as reported above, but reading at all was reported by participants and practitioners to enhance vocabulary, as one participant, Roger, explained for example:

> "**Shakespeare gets me**; **I can say the things I'm trying to say with him.** He says it into that funky way or whatever but **what he shows people was what I'm trying to say**. I can take some **words from Shakespeare** and I can be like yeah this was how I feel, I might not have been able to put it into words myself for a long time and he's like there, **there's the words you need**. "
>
> (Roger, Participant)

This in turn allowed participants to express different perspectives or enable channels through which participants could gain and explore alternative perspectives and influences. In a society that places such heavy significance and value on reading as a functional skill, participants are directly enabled to enhance and develop this skill through a programme that does not necessarily identify itself as a reading enhancement programme. This was a by-product of a programme, arranged around holistic learning self-reflection and personal exploration.

Teamwork and leadership are interesting emerging skills. By nature, the group was not encouraged to have a set leader, however, participants are encouraged to take up positions of responsibility through mentorship and collaborative support to serve as role models and supportive influences on other participants. This builds a dimension onto the built community whereby although all individuals are treated as equals and individual entities, more advanced group members are equipped with leadership skills to support and facilitate less experienced members through their phase of programme engagement. At some programme groups, this was explicitly given as a role whereby participants in the major circle participate in smaller branches of the programme in that official role. In other iterations, new members join the programme via "sponsorship" of an existing participant voluntarily selecting and mentoring other individuals as they embark on the programme.

Participants report a vast array of outcomes from this; one of the strongest outcomes being the impact of having responsibility for another individual, making them not only accountable to themselves but to others also. For some it was the impact of being seen as worthy of undertaking this role, for others it was what was required in this role through patience, active listening and support, even where they may disagree or want to instruct the individual. Participants can question, they can support, and they can listen, but they cannot advise, tell others how to feel or behave. This mentorship role was about guidance and support without control or negative consequence and through this, participants report the development of vital personal skills such as confidence, patience

and problem solving as well as transferrable communication and behavioural skill development.

Commitment was a skill almost every individual I met shared as an outcome of the programme either achieved or developing and improving. This notion of committing to something and completing it was so rare for many of the individuals, several of whom had not held down employment, completed high school or held a single academic and/ or vocational qualification. This was not true of all participants, it was vital to add, but for a large proportion of them, having a community-driven group that holds commitment and attendance as paramount was encouraged by peers. Interestingly this emphasis on compulsory attendance was not from the management or practitioners. It was drawn from the group itself and the value they place on active participation and commitment to engagement. This kind of commitment was an undeniable essential skill for any employment or further endeavour beyond incarceration. This commitment was also not incentivised. There are no prizes for participation from good behaviour time to doughnuts or coffee, accolades commonly used as an incentive in other prison initiatives. The emphasis was solely on participation for self-development, demonstrated and marked only by acknowledgment or personal learning success and reflection. There are unincentivized opportunities to celebrate learning, however, whereby though no specific commodity of value was received, participants have matriculation activities to mark their progression and milestones within their participation, as will now be explored.

5.5 Milestones and Matriculations

Every programme has a milestone that participants work towards. This may be a matriculation or performance serving as a milestone of achievement. These can also be very small or larger incidences, where a personal milestone may be simply working towards feeling able to share a few words or a poem to fellow group members, whereas for others it may be making a more public demonstration of their learning and achievements.

Matriculation was a ceremony that celebrates and marks successful participation in some groups. Participants have requirements to fulfil, delivering a text or making a personal speech reflecting on their time and learning thus far. Matriculation usually happens within the confines of the group, with invited guests such as peer-mentors, wardens, and in-house stakeholders. To matriculate, participants must stand individually and share with the circle. Following completion of a successful presentation, participants are presented with a token to mark their achievements to date. In the case

of my attendance, participants were given a commemorative T-shirt and a book of new texts to work on throughout the next year of their programme. It was vital to note that the matriculation or graduation marks the end of a period of activity or project, not programme completion, so afterwards participants will continue working through the programme. The matriculation or graduation encapsulates more explicitly a core implicit benefit that performance-based milestones aim to foster. The performance was a celebration of work completed, it was an opportunity for external recognition of internal development and work.

Performances can be in many forms, from an entire production of a Shakespeare play, to a selection of short scenes or devised pieces. For some programme groups, a full production signals a milestone of a completed season, whereas for others, smaller scale and more frequent opportunities to mark success are disseminated throughout the programme. Participants also have a group photograph taken commemorating milestones, and although the law now prohibits personal copies being given to inmates, they were displayed in the prison by the warden to provide a positive example to others and mark participants' achievements. In addition, individual photographs of matriculations are given to participants or sent home to families or friends on request.

It was crucial to understand that milestones are not incentives to work and no emphasis was placed on milestones as the highest achievement. Instead, they are hailed as a crucial part of a process, offering opportunities for reflection, celebration, and identification of needed future progression. In addition, if an inmate chooses to perceive matriculation or milestones as their incentive or highest achievement, that was at their discretion, but neither the process nor practices of the programme support this perception. Such events are for recognition of achievement to date, not the sole achievement of the programme in themselves.

5.6 Programme Practices

This chapter has outlined the critical programme practices that I experienced, and which were reported by those involved in the programme groups considered in this study. This chapter provides insights into the day-to-day operations of the programme, and how activities are integrated and used. There was a range of activities surrounding functional and transferrable skills, engaging with Shakespeare's texts and enhancing personal, social and emotional skills and development.

Though not a formal applied theatre programme, the approaches here appear to reflect many of the principles of applied theatre and dramatherapy explored in the

previous chapters. The majority of activity assigned to whole-group sessions were activities intended to either call for the whole ensemble to actively participate, or for the whole ensemble to engage with an individual's contribution to the session. The physical structure of the group ensured inclusion at all times and activities undertaken enhanced emotional expression and issue exploration. For participants in this study, there were a number of different programme practices, some grounded in Shakespeare and others grounded in communication, functional skills acquisition and emotional development.

The programme did not dictate meaning or state what was to be learned from each activity, like a teacher setting out learning objectives for a class. Instead, the programme involved a range of activities and techniques and allowed participants the freedom to connect, break down and explore themselves, their own stories and the input of others within those contexts. There was no judgment, no correcting of participant perspectives and no telling people what to think and, somewhat surprisingly for the demographic, these rules are respected and upheld by the participants under a consensus that they are important. This adherence to the rules was interesting as the programme aims to offer freedom, autonomy and choice in their practices, external to the controlling parameters of the prison environment. However, the use of the rules here was connected to the ethos held and used by the programme where participants do have a choice, the rules rather provide a scaffolding within which this choice can be exercised in an appropriate, supportive and non-judgmental manner.

The programme had an ethos by which a range of different activities and activity styles were implemented, enabling both solo and collaborative activity through which personal development and community engagement could be developed simultaneously. This facilitated a dynamic of positive reinforcement and behavioural challenge which directly subverts the communities that much of the prison demographic report being situated in. From negative past experiences of education, to engagement in communities where criminality was normalised, and deviant activity celebrated, the groups seek to provide an equalising positive community for prisoners to connect with and engage in, as an alternative world to their day-to-day prison environments.

There were three broad types of engagement with Shakespeare either reported or witnessed by me; reading Shakespeare, performing Shakespeare and interpreting Shakespeare, either in groups or as individuals, both within and outside the allotted programme time. This allows for different access pathways into the subject matter and multiple ways to access and understand the content. By encouraging participants to

develop their own understanding, there was no direction or dictation but rather a bestowed autonomy and responsibility in learning.

From these findings it is clear that Shakespeare was not the only subject matter engaged with during this project and not all activities discovered were Shakespeare-centric. Shakespeare-centric activity focussed on reading Shakespeare, either alone, within the group or outside formal group confines, performing Shakespeare, and interpreting Shakespeare allowing participants to use Shakespeare as a source material for their own reflections. Building on this, Shakespeare then bled into other activities and conversations undertaken. In writing activities or writing undertaken by participants, Shakespeare quotes and references to Shakespeare's characters and scenarios appeared in sharing conversations, links, and connections across groups and references were consistently made to the content of a play individuals or a full group may have been looking at. The theme of the groups was Shakespeare, but the outcomes and activities undertaken go beyond simply consuming Shakespeare's texts.

There was also a variety of impacts from these activities that begin to emerge in this chapter and will be further explored with relation to the groups as a phenomenon in chapter 5. There were a number of identified activities surrounding reading, speaking and writing. Communication and expression skills appear to be central to the programme's activities. Reading, writing and performing feature heavily within the programme, including reading and writing personal pieces or requested texts, and reading Shakespeare. Such activities connect to prisoner literacy enhancement and address research problems identified in chapter 2, whereby prisoner literacy, particularly in relation to reading and writing skills, are statistically at low levels across the prison population upon initial incarceration (Western & Pettit 2010; Western, 2006; Harlow, 2003). Improving literacy by encouraging participants to read and write was a widely reported intention across the prison education field and though this programme was not a teaching intervention, the activities undertaken directly correlate with enhancing these skills (Geese Theatre, 2016; Shannon Trust, 2016; Clark & Dugdale, 2008). This translates into the milestone activities offered within the programme groups as markers celebrating participant progress. In addition, the practices identified here focus on the creation of positive communities, shared learning experiences and emotional developments, enabling offenders to reflect on their behaviours, mindsets and actions. Community and integration are at the core of these activities, encouraging participants to identify themselves as capable human beings who are part of wider

society and encouraging them to explore their impact upon this society through their actions.

Overall, this chapter has summarised insights into the type of activity undertaken by the programme groups and has given initial thoughts from participants and practitioners about the impact of this. The research question "what were the specific programme practices and how were they delivered?" has been addressed here to an extent, but this can only go so far without deeper consideration of the participants' personal stories, experiences and interactions within these activities that participants articulate. With this in mind, chapter 6 will now consider the value of Shakespeare, how his works are seen and utilised by the groups and their practitioners and, crucially, what impacts the specifically Shakespeare-focussed elements of the programme are claimed to have. This will be followed by chapter 7 which will explore in detail overall outcomes of the programme, as reported by those who have experienced it. Chapters 7, 8 and 9 will translate the findings reported to that point into clear outcomes that have the potential for impact on existing criminal justice structures and prisoner rehabilitation, by not only the criminal justice system but also society at large.

6.0: Shakespeare as a vehicle for education, exploration and expression

"If you would know your wronger look on me"

(*Much Ado About Nothing*. V.i)

Research Question 2: What were practitioner and participant perceptions of the specific use of Shakespeare?

A major research question underpinning this thesis was to explore the impact Shakespeare's works as a source material brought to these initiatives. Investigated from the perspectives of participants, practitioners and stakeholders, several sub-categories surrounding the specific use of Shakespeare emerged and will be explored throughout this chapter. This chapter considers each individually cited impact of using specifically Shakespeare in prison, drawn from participants and practitioners. It connects these individual outcomes to overarching ideas about re-humanisation and drama-therapeutic practices. This chapter considers the Shakespeare-focussed dimension of the programme groups and addresses research questions surrounding both why Shakespeare is the material selected for use and what the perceived impact of Shakespeare is.

The impact of Shakespeare was intimately connected with the role of the group as a place to "vent", as one participant suggested, somewhere that he and his fellow participants were able to "escape" to and express themselves in a way they would not "normally" do in a prison:

> "The big circle as we call it... Is a place to **vent and let go of problems** that we have… an **escape when you need one**…you can talk about **things that you wouldn't normally talk about with people in prison. "**
>
> (Joel, Participant)

Shakespeare is equally something that Joel would not "normally" talk about, and here his works become a pathway towards talking about other things. Section one considers Shakespeare as a teacher, identified and somewhat exalted as a moral advisor and source of lessons to be not only learned but also trusted by participants. Section two then

considers Shakespeare's deeper role as a counsellor, attributing Shakespeare's characters and scenes with emotional connections and impact. Such interactions are identified and utilised for issues-based, emotion-based and problem-solving dimensions. Section three considers Shakespeare as a voice whereby participants recurrently identify Shakespeare's language and the activity, they have conducted using it, as a vehicle for vocabulary expansion and development of communication abilities. Finally, this chapter gives an overarching view of Shakespeare as a vehicle for empathy development and emotional understanding, exploring the impact participants and practitioners attribute to engagement with Shakespeare's texts.

6.1 Shakespeare as Teacher: Learning Lessons from Shakespeare

Shakespeare is recurrently described by participants as an equal or familiar, but moreover, he is consistently referred to as a "teacher" or "mentor" by practitioners and participants alike. This title is given as praise for Shakespeare's works, with the suggestion that his works alone contain critical lessons, and that he teaches directly through his work. Though not a breakthrough insight into Shakespearean scholarship (Bate 1998; Stredder, 2009; Rokison, 2012; Gibson, 1998), for prisoners to identify this independently, accept Shakespeare into this role in their lives and still commit to engaging with Shakespeare, has powerful implications. Participants respect and support Shakespeare the teacher as the driving force for their own educational advancement, which many report to be an entirely new phenomenon. Many participants reported a lack of trust, belief or willingness to engage with teachers previously, often rooted in poor past experiences or limited school-based personal success.

For some, their Shakespeare programme groups provide the only educational activity they have been able to complete or participate in with any success, including during their lives pre-incarceration. For other participants, although their Shakespeare programme was just one course of many they had completed within the prison, many perceived that it was one of their best programme groups for personal learning gain. Due to the programme nature of not having a set start and end for completion, a large number of participants had chosen to continue to commit to it for several years' worth of matriculation activities and beyond. There are participants who are serving lengthy sentences, which have given them the time to collect countless certificates, qualifications and educational accolades, demonstrating their ability to complete educational courses; at least where such courses are assessed with examination or qualification process.

Jeffrey was one such participant who has completed a number of education programmes within the prison, and by the time I met him he held a PhD, several undergraduate and postgraduate degrees and educational awards, (proof of which was seen by the researcher):

Figure 9: Researcher Diary: Veteran Participant Engagement

> *Researcher Diary: "Sitting in a small classroom for my final time, I have just heard final comments from the group about their experience of their Shakespeare programme groups. A veteran member of the group, Jeffrey, has approached me with the torn off corner of a sheet of lined paper. On it was hand-written a single sentence, an eagerly awaited response to my question of his perceived outcome of his Shakespeare Programme group. It reads;*
>
> ***'I came into manhood in time, within my [Shakespeare programme group] which allowed me to be able to RECIEVE.'*** *(Jeffrey, Incarcerated male.)*
>
> *Jeffrey has been on this programme group several years, has been long-term incarcerated (which I learned when he laughed at my reference to ten years in prison) and holds a folder of other educational and vocational achievements to share from his time in prison. He is even an ordained reverend; however, he pinpoints his Shakespeare programme group as the one programme that taught him or ensured he learned what was needed to complete his non-physical transition from boy to man."*
>
> *(Research Diary)*

Shakespeare to Jeffrey was a teacher he could identify as causing the most change in himself and teaching him the most valuable life lessons. In addition to his educational attainment, Jeffrey was an ordained reverend familiar with figures of teaching, yet he placed Shakespeare as his most significant teacher, facilitating his personal development. Throughout my weeks of interaction with him, Jeffrey shared at length how his Shakespeare group guided his life from discussions with peers to specific activities, but his analysis of the programme groups recurrently came back to Shakespeare at the core:

> *"**This is Shakespeare**, this group is together, and **they listen to Shakespeare.** Some of the guys haven't listened to anyone else in their life, I have listened to others, and **I have listened to myself.** Shakespeare offers **a voice that makes sense**, and the things he talks about are lessons and warnings which man cannot*

> *ignore. Man does not listen to the teachings of God closely enough, man does not listen to himself critically enough, but* ***most men in here will listen to Shakespeare."***
>
> *(Jeffrey, Participant)*

In popular culture Shakespeare is often framed, as Aesop, Fontaine or Anderson, as a creator of stories through which moral lessons and truths about "real life" can be taught and learned, issues can be explored, and universal truths may be applied (Jaime, 2010; Hurley, 1998; Bristol, 2011). Participants recurrently shared similar conceptions. This perception is very much in line with Ben Johnson's still-used phrase "Shakespeare was not of an age but for all time" (Johnson, 1616). Where there are intentionally created stories from other authors writing specifically to teach moral lessons about human behaviour, usually to children, there is no evidence to suggest Shakespeare's texts were ever written with this intention. Shakespeare's works are instead being appropriated into that role by the programme groups and its participants (among others), exalting Shakespeare into the same somewhat controversial and multifaceted position for reflecting on morality.

Many participants in the prison programme groups discuss Shakespeare in this context, placing him in the position of the teacher or source of wisdom, transcending physical teaching influences such as those of practitioners, mentors and peers. Participants describe having "learned", "developed", "grown" or "understood" critical lessons that connect to the impact of their prior, current and future behaviour, directly from Shakespeare's texts:

> "Shakespeare is a **teacher**, he can tell you things that you want to **believe or understand,** and **he makes sense** because **his plays are real life**."
>
> (Alvin, Participant)

> "Shakespeare is a **smart guy**. You have to **respect him**, he must have seen some things."
>
> (Travers, Participant)

> **"I have grown because Shakespeare** makes me understand, he doesn't just say **here's the lesson** learn it, **he shows me** properly."
>
> (Phil, Participant)

Here it is implied that Shakespeare has learned from and is able to teach from real life or his own life experiences, not necessarily formal education, constructing a resonance

between Shakespeare and the prisoners as becoming worldly-wise as opposed to academically qualified. The concept of Shakespeare then as an embodiment of "teacher" carries with it its unusual connotations when placed within prison environments, as perceptions of teachers or formal educative authorities are often negative. Shakespeare as a teacher is honoured, respected and by some, arguably, worshipped. Yet teachers are not always seen in this light by prisoners, particularly prisoners new to prison education who have the statistically typical history of poor educational engagement, attainment and experience. In one Shakespeare programme group, participants openly shared that they were still uncertain whether or not they trust the practitioners and people they bring in with them, but they did report trusting Shakespeare which is a critical reason they maintain their commitment to the programme groups. There is a critical connection here to the research question: "What was the intended and perceived impact of the specific use of Shakespeare?" From the prisoner perspective, Shakespeare appears to be far enough from the confines of the prison or the establishment to be trusted, by some participants at least.

Participants in every group confidently and spontaneously reported having had negative experiences of formal schooling, and a negative perception of formal education more broadly prior to incarceration. I never formally asked them about their pre-incarceration experiences, but they frequently explained that their life pre-programme participation and the programme practices cannot be divided if they want to properly engage with the programme groups:

> "I **never finished** high school, I **didn't see the point**, I **didn't use what I learned,** and I didn't get what was supposed to be useful"
>
> (Claude, Participant)

Throughout academic literature those involved in early criminal behaviour are reported to have or personally report that they had poor relationships with figures of authority such as teachers, guards and parents, and the authority of figures enacting the law, does not deter many from engaging in criminal behaviours (Sampson & Groves, 1989; Grunewald et al, 2009). One prisoner discussed this with me at length; he explained that many of his friends within the prison did not respect the police, and that the N.W.A. (1988) song "Fuck tha Police" had been banned from their "in-house" music access, much to the amusement of his peers and himself, who continued to sing it decades after its release. Teachers were often assumed to hold similar oppressive characteristics in pre-

prison life for many participants, with several choosing to reject all figures of authority entirely, preceding the offence for which they were incarcerated.

Shakespeare, on the other hand, is afforded an immunity or protection from such perceptions whereby all others are consistently referred to in terms of an "us and them" division. Dividing prison culture, inmate-on-guard violence and guard-on-inmate violence levels, globally imply a lack of respect for authority within traditional prison environments (Butler & Drake, 2007), and many participants reported having had poor relationships with their parents, teachers or carers, rejecting authority and particularly rejecting education:

> "Shakespeare gave me the chance to be a **student and a teacher** – two things **I didn't ever want to be**"
>
> (Andrew, Participant)

The educational history reported by many participants correlated with their reported attitudes to education in later life, as is reflected in related research, whereby negative experiences in youth tend to project negative attitudes or suspicions toward education (Hall & Killacky, 2008; Mageehon, 2003). Participants described such suspicion reaching initial interaction with all figures of authority, under a shared assumption that they were untrustworthy by virtue of how unusual their role was, extending to "do-gooders," "volunteers," and "staff." This suspicion was considered by participants, where some participants articulated their lack of trust for the programme leaders:

> "All you guys [Practitioners] come here…leave nothing behind, usually anyways. That's why **we don't trust you types**, we never know what you're getting out of it"
>
> (Callum, Participant)

> "…don't think it is important that we trust you [practitioners], we're **here to help each other** and it's about what we get out of it, it helps to trust those guys [facilitators] but it's not essential, **we trust Shakespeare**"
>
> (Johnny, Participant)

Trust is something participants frequently reported as gaining through the programme groups, identifying it to be a foreign concept in the broader prison environment. However, Shakespeare is treated as a separate entity from assigned teachers or leaders; a non-physical being known only by his works who is trusted throughout participation. Shakespeare's perceived views and opinions, however, as interpreted from his texts, are

deemed by many participants as worth changing one's behaviour for, and in turn one's entire life trajectory.

Although there are low levels of literacy amongst young people upon entering prison, with decades of statistics demonstrating this, literacy as the ability to read or write at a high level, is not necessarily a reflection of their intelligence (Vacca, 2004). Although educational attainment does not necessarily correlate with a reduction in recidivism when wider factors are placed into consideration, educated prisoners are less likely to re-offend (Vacca, 2004). Shakespeare is positioned by participants and practitioners as a teaching voice that transcends time and is trustworthy to teach crucial lessons as part of, not separate from, the group:

> "**He knows me, he knows us**, **Shakespeare isn't outside**"
>
> (Kevin, Participant):
>
> "Shakespeare **he's a brother**, and when I say what's up to all the guys in here, **I'm saying it to him** and **he's writing it back to me**"
>
> (Ian, Participant)

It cannot be assumed that prisoners are unintelligent or unteachable just because they are incarcerated or hold poor histories of engaging with formal education pathways. The term "prisoner" is a status of being, not a reflection of an individual's capabilities and intelligence which is a frequently overlooked distinction in the public eye. This is a stereotypical perception engrained in popular cultural representations and societal assumptions that have been historically fuelled by mass media approaches. Recent tabloid headlines and articles exemplify this such as The Sun's "Soft Justice" (Beckford, 2019) and "Jailbirds of Prey: Dangerous crooks are enjoying falconry displays and pet visits behind bars" (Beckford, 2019) and The Daily Mail's "Living it up behind bars" (Matthews, 2016) and "Gove's reward for inmates who take classes" (Drury, 2016) fuelling the idea that prisoners are being treated or rewarded unfairly or that they are unworthy of an education, criticizing any positive strategies used in prisons as soft options or perks with "Jails to get even softer" (Doyle et al, 2016). Although, as noted in chapter two, there appears to have been a significant shift in attitudes towards these programme groups of intervention, much tabloid, social and mass media commentary continues to disregard prisoners' capability to learn and positively contribute to society.

For participants, Shakespeare has become a teacher whose lessons emerge through engaging with his texts as cautionary tales or moral guidance. Shakespeare as a figure that is trusted to teach valuable lessons provides grounds for deeper exploration

in terms of why Shakespeare is perceived to have such power. More broadly, his connectivity and association with an understanding of the human condition has recurrently contributed to scholarship and his cultural authority (Bate, 2016; Bloom, 1998), with many claims from actors, scholars and practitioners in these programme groups that Shakespeare is able to understand the human condition better than most. Whether this is the case remains to be seen but it is this perception that fuels many participants' trust in him as a valuable teacher:

> "I think just about **every kind of person is there in Shakespeare**, they're right at the heart of everything he writes from the butler to the boss to the king to the kid, **Shakespeare gets people and he gets how they feel**. That's what **Shakespeare teaches me**, feelings. There are consequences to my actions, not just on me but on the people, I have hurt, and some things can heal physically but others take a lot more thinking and a lot more emotion."
>
> (Les, Participant)

Extensive research in criminology has established that criminality, or criminal offending, can be transmitted through generations within families who teach them, where a teacher or role model has significant exposure to a young person impacting, directing and shaping their early conceptions of right, wrong and a world view. As Goodwin and Brent (2011) explore, family factors are critical indicators for continued criminal behaviours, with familial or familial-type reinforcement overruling environmental factors in most cases. Adult, male relationships such as those of a father-son or mentor-mentee nature most clearly indicated inherited criminal behaviours in males (Farrington et al, 2001). Shakespeare takes up this position for many participants, becoming a trusted teacher, role model and guiding voice to offer guidance for change, frequently referred to as a 'brother':

> "Shakespeare is **part of the group**, he's **that brother who can steer you**, and he's that **guy you look up to** because you know he knows. **And we're guided by him, not forced, like all the guys here he guides us"**
>
> (Robbie, Participant)

Trusted teaching voices are at the heart of this outcome. What Shakespeare provides is a teacher perceived to be worth listening to and worth taking lessons from, presumably not leading the individual into criminality, as the previously mentioned trusted figures may have done. Although schools may provide a common regulatory ground to teach social, cultural and moral lessons, the home environment can choose to teach an

opposing, but more valued message than wider society. Just as prisons seek to correct behaviours as a formal institution, they are fighting opposing reinforcement from a different individual and different community backgrounds. Such reinforcement of positive behaviours for many participants comes from Shakespeare's texts, offering them practical demonstrations of lessons they had either not accepted or not understood via other channels.

Prior to prison, participants shared that such reinforcement, usually for illegal behaviours, was drawn from communities including families, groups of friends or gangs. For these individuals, the dominant ideology directing their life choices was not the one most widely subscribed to in society, but rather that which is accepted in a specific set of circumstances, among a specific community. The power and authority of teaching voices influencing participant decisions are essential. This is a sentiment reiterated by many of the men I worked with, that though for many their home, community or family environments taught them the "wrong" lessons, these were the sources of the highest authority. For many who did not relate to parental influences, influences at any phase of life were equally important. Participants identify the programme groups as having directed them to take personal responsibility, many for the first time, as is explored in chapter 7.

Shakespeare has become the new role model for many participants, as a new point of reference to judge the appropriateness of actions. Though most people who attend formal schooling are at least told the difference between right and wrong, for example that theft, violence or substance abuse are criminal offences, there is a difference between knowing, acknowledging and understanding these issues. As Simons et al. (2004) explain, though external agencies may teach that action or idea is not acceptable or lawful, this does not necessitate compliance or agreement, particularly if family environments foster alternate perspectives. Raymond, a middle-aged participant, explained:

> "Did I know people didn't think drugs were good? Sure. I was told that, but from when I was just a boy, I'd be running around making deliveries for my [relative]. I thought it was fine because my family said it was fine. It's like **what your parents say and what people say, they're different but if it's ok at home then it's ok when you're a kid, you know**?"
>
> (Raymond, Participant)

Prisoners espoused that significant perceptions and important life lessons influencing personal decision making have been altered through engaging with Shakespeare's writing, claiming that reading, watching or exploring Shakespeare's texts had enabled them to learn alternative perspectives and understandings that no other agency had been able to teach. Shakespeare is given authority as a teacher whose lessons are transported via the text, through which participants identify themselves in his characters, their behaviours, consequences and decisions, to be valuable directors of their future actions.

6.2 Shakespeare as Counsellor: Emotional learning through character engagement.

According to Bloom (1998), Shakespeare "invented the human as we continue to know it" (p.7). For Bloom, Shakespeare literally invented the understanding of personalities. Participants throughout the dataset consistently reported Shakespeare's invented characters as enabling them to understand and identify themselves and others around them, including claims that Shakespeare can "read", "see" or "know" them. Prisoners consistently reported Shakespeare's characters, including their situations, personalities and decisions, as vehicles for personal lesson learning, emotional engagement and moral development.

Frequently cited by participants and practitioners is a prisoner who asphyxiated his wife to death, eventually working through this own programme groups to a point where he would reconstruct and relive this action, building up to playing Othello in Shakespeare's *Othello,* a character that does the same. This parity between character and individual has become legendary across circles that work with and discuss Shakespeare in prisons, but not all, and in fact few, connections are as explicit and direct as this. There are significantly more nuanced and inexplicit connections that participants and practitioners report as a crucial element of participant experiences.

> "I have discovered that my character and I are a lot alike. He has no idea what is going on or how to do his job. He was just pushed to do the job. A lot of times during my life I was just thrown into something that I had no idea what to do. There were jobs I had that I didn't know anything about. The watchman was a bumbling idiot, and there were times in my life, like getting arrested, when I felt the same way. I, like the watchman, was easily influenced into doing things and would say or do anything to fit in. I have also discovered that I was acting a lot of times like an idiot to keep people from getting too close to me. I just didn't want

> people to get too close because I was so insecure about myself that I didn't want people to see the real me. Maybe they would not like me. My character made me realise that even if you are an idiot, it's not how you see yourself that really counts."
>
> (David, Participant)

Fred was a different long-serving participant who went from rejecting the programme groups to engaging. He articulated how engaging with specific Shakespeare characters enabled him to develop an understanding and empathy for others including victims, family members and peers. In his descriptions of his experiences, he considers how playing a role and exploring the context in which it operates has allowed him to empathise with members of his wider community, specifically his parents. He explained his difficulties when experiencing the feeling of playing a father having not had the chance to be one himself due to his incarceration. In his reflection on playing Leontes in *Much Ado About Nothing* he writes;

> "This role is helping me to understand **what it feels like to be a father and opening my eyes to what parents go through when their child is harmed or mistreated**. Seeing the fears and joys of parenthood is one of the most precious gifts life has to offer."
>
> (Fred, Participant)

Not only was Fred enabled to explore something he has not experienced and which he may never, but also the implications of his behaviours on non-immediate victims; those who are hurt by crime even if the crime is not directly committed against them. This directly relates to ideas around life-drama connections and drama therapeutic empathy and distancing (Jones, 2006), whereby prisoners are enabled through performance to directly explore and engage with their own lives. This principle is undeniably at the heart of character engagement for many prisoners where they can not only use projection (Jones, 2006; Landy; 1991) to explore their own experiences but, crucially, access wider perspectives from different channels to learn how to empathise, see things from different perspectives and access alternative options. They find connections to the people and experiences of their own lives within the texts of Shakespeare. They claim that this triggers or cements their explorations and understandings of their impact on others. Prisoners in every group I entered highlighted the importance of this process, placing emphasis on their ability to develop personal connections with the characters as enabling them to look beyond the immediate and establish who the true potential victims

of their crimes are. Many participants openly articulate either having spent time, or still spending time, perceiving themselves to be victims of a system, or of the actions of others with a shared consensus that accepting blame is "one of the hardest things to accept" (Carl, Participant). Participants describe a shift between only considering the impact of their sentence on themselves and being shown, by Shakespeare's works, the wider implications of their actions. This ability to literally hold a "mirror up to nature" (*Hamlet, Act 3 Scene 2)* appears to be one clear and consistent outcome surrounding why Shakespeare's works can offer opportunities for identification and reflection to such diverse communities.

Practitioners in all programme groups do not distinguish characters by gender, age, or race: all participants must engage in roles different from their own to encourage and facilitate interpersonal understanding. As explored in chapter seven, to be anything but a tough, straight male is difficult in the prison context. During my time in the prisons, I experienced elements of this both explicitly through prisoners' refusal to participate in opposite gender roles or wear gendered items, and through my serendipitous experiences within the communities, with homophobic slurs appearing in conversation as everyday terminology. It is an unfamiliar territory for many of the men within prison confines to openly accept homosexuality. For me, the inverse was true, as it was entirely unfamiliar to be in a situation where acceptance and diversity was not the norm.

I questioned whether the discomfort I felt could be reflective of that felt by the men in these situations. I talked with practitioners following a session in which a participant was asked to play a homosexual male, and he was noticeably uncomfortable, attempting to avoid this wherever possible. The practitioners place emphasis and encourage the playing of inter-gender, and indeed inter-sexuality roles by the men, embracing it as a necessary part of the programme. The practitioner shared that this episode highlighted a crucial problem when you have a place where prejudice can thrive, and specific personal features can be a weakness. The fear in playing such a role, or indeed being openly LGBTQ+ is that this may result in bullying or ostracism in the limited social microcosm the prison creates. He explained that particularly amongst newcomers there is an unspoken need to not seem anything but a tough, straight, "real" man. The environment fosters a derogation of people by type that no matter how uncomfortable participants may be with that type, they will conform to as a matter of survival. Nevertheless, the programme groups continue to persevere with this practice as part of the learning experience.

Practitioners highlight the fraught relationship between distinct cultures and crime, as statistics can reinforce in both the UK and the US with hate crime associated with protected characteristics such as religion, sexuality and gender still operating at high rates across both (Corcoran, Ladder & Smith, 2015; FBI, 2015). Working against this, practitioners promote and enforce the exploration and undertaking of roles in such different groups as a major programme activity to encourage alternate perceptions and promote empathy.

Participants consistently report having to "wear a mask", meaning to adopt a persona, in the prison context. Practitioners undertake reflective approaches to encourage opportunities for them to find their honest voice through their personal writings and performances, with the protection that it is just a performance. When participants select a character, they feel relates to them, they are encouraged to play it with themselves in mind, allowing participants the opportunity to explore who they are beneath any façade they are living. This may be explicit encouragement to project their own lives onto characters, though without prescription of which character and how they do this. Practitioners intend that by offering characters as vehicles for participants to explore their own situations, they then progress to being able to do so without the character as an alternate mask. This connection can be as explicit as a specific character directly reflecting the actions of a participant, or it can be more nuanced and what they experience can be things to consider for them to reflect on their role within. Crucially, participants are offered the tools to make these connections, but these connections are never made for them. As one adult practitioner explained;

> "Participants do not have to play a character that has done exactly what they have done. Although this has been done. **They need to play roles, read texts, and understand perspectives from different people affected by the action of another**. It is that simple. They then have the encouragement from us to explore whether what they have learned through this can be applied to their real lives."
>
> (Scott, Practitioner)

This idea is common, another practitioner who conducted similar work with juvenile participants explained:

> "they understand when you say this person hurting this one had a huge effect on lots of other people. You can ask them what a character's parents might have thought or how they would feel if it was their friend or the person, they're dating

> treating them in a certain way and they can explain it. They can work out that on the other side of negative behaviour, nobody benefits, and they can see that on the Shakespeare programme groups in all these scenes they do. And then they can see it through the reaction of those who come out and support them, they see how much a positive activity or behaviour can make a difference to other people lives."
>
> (Michelle, Practitioner)

Though participants were often in prison for crimes that could be aligned with events from or incidents in Shakespeare's stories, all participants engage with material from which they can see the wider impact of behaviours offering opportunities to empathise with people drastically different from themselves, through experiencing, witnessing or playing a role from their perspective.

The Shakespeare programme groups appear to resonate with a vast array of individuals, indiscriminate of race, ethnicity, sexuality, religious belief or gender orientation which, according to participants, is rare in the prison context. Will, a founding practitioner, describes prisons he has worked within as "the Campbell's condensed soup of society," where every single individual within society is represented without the dilution brought by those who conform to behaviours deemed appropriate within wider society and accepted social norms. Every type of person can be found in a prison, according to Will, the only difference being that these people have made different choices or have been caught. This is very much reflective of my experience as a researcher within the prison Shakespeare programme groups. No two prisoners were the same; their crimes dictated very little about their personality. No two gang members, drug dealers, thieves nor murderers expressed themselves in the same way or committed their crime with identical motives.

Just as every prison holds diversity, Shakespeare's plays do the same with every play and genre holding reflections and representations of the human spectrum. One prisoner, Keith, challenged me to find a type of person that was not in Shakespeare, citing examples from *The Tempest* and *Twelfth Night:*

> "Keith (Participant): You see, we're **all in there** somewhere, some of us are the big kings and some the Caliban's or Marvel, wait, the guy in the… [gestures]
>
> Me (Researcher): Malvolio?

> Keith (Participant): Yeah him. There's loads of different types of people make a community so in Shakespeare **there's loads of types of characters that could be us**."

This concept of reflective characters offering a mirror to prisoners of either themselves or for some, the wider society within which they operate, is a powerful message that participants across all programme groups shared. For many, they identify a specific turning point character who "spoke to them" or "offered them insight". There are many examples of this however even where prisoners cited similar characters, their reasons for doing so were distinctive and diverse.

Simon, who had participated in his Shakespeare programme groups for many years cites the role of Macbeth as his turning point character, though not through playing him, but simply engaging with him. He explained;

> "See Macbeth **does a lot of bad stuff,** he has bad voices in his ear, like his woman who really just wants power and is needy or whatever. **He listens to the bits of what he wants** to from the sisters, he takes their words and **thinks hey I'm invincible**. **I've felt like that like nothing could touch me. I have also been that selfish.** But he gets what's coming, because what he does, even though it gets him what he wants, also **hits a whole bunch of other people** and he can't escape that. Even dead guys chase him down."
>
> (Simon, Participant)

For Simon, Macbeth represents himself as a prisoner, an offender who was influenced by others and behaved for personal gain regardless of the wider impact of this. Simon admits that he was selfish in his actions prior to "getting caught" and that he continued to behave as such. Conscience and empathy are at the heart of this revelation, where new perspectives can be seen from not only the character, and therefore the prisoner's eyes, but from the perspectives of those surrounding them and impacted by them. Simon identifies that Macbeth is easily influenced by the "chance of being a big shot" however, Macbeth is also responsible for his own actions, and he "chose to do evil things for his own better, and then tried to make things better for him through more evil things" (Simon, Participant). For Simon, Macbeth represents himself, struggling to see the bigger picture.

In terms of drama therapeutic principles, this outcome is heavily grounded in the concepts of life-drama connection and mirroring or projection (Jones, 2006; Landy, 1991; Prentki, (2006). The life-drama connection describes a dramatic activity that

offers a platform to an intimate connection between real life and life within the drama (Jones, 2006.) This relationship or connection offers the opportunity for individuals to see themselves and their own actions through another, enabling them to reflect upon the implications and outcomes. This closely relates to mirroring, where the drama offers a mirror for prisoners to identify themselves within the texts (Thompson, 2009, Stredder, 2009). Shakespeare provides a mirror or interpreted imitation of the individual issues experienced and impact of human actions. Every emotion, from uncontrollable joy to inconsolable mourning, can be found somewhere within the works of Shakespeare and the practice of connecting with characters opens doors and provides opportunities to develop, explore and understand emotion.

Much of what is considered throughout this chapter relates to individuals identifying themselves as part of Shakespeare's plays, with their own experiences reflected in the cast and being able to view the implications of their actions through another person's eyes. This essentially encapsulates a critical function of applied theatre, connecting the dramatic experience to real-world applications (Nicholson, 2010), via the drama therapeutic processes of projection, personification and impersonation amongst others (Jones, 2006; Prentki & Preston, 2013). This can mean physical impersonation for some, by physically mimicking their experiences through a character they felt connected with. Their experiences included explicit examples such as fathers who had impacted their daughters, then playing Prospero in *The Tempest;* partners who had harmed their wives may then play characters such as *Othello* and *Hamlet,* or more nuanced or less explicit roles explored through playing non-protagonist and/or chorus roles. Though participants reported attempting to develop an understanding of their victims, this provides an active process offering opportunities to witness themselves through somebody else's eyes.

Participants report this accessing of Shakespeare's characters and the wider context of their actions seen within his plays. Much of this realisation has led to emotional responses for prisoners. I personally witnessed a participant turn 26 years old and breakdown into tears whilst sharing his write up of his time on his Shakespeare programme groups.

> "[practitioner] spoke to me **I hope I can get to Prospero** but what will be will be. It bought me out of a shell… Shakespeare felt like Lord of the Rings. He spoke to me sorry there's a reason I'm sharing today. **It's my 26th y sentence I'm serving it in three stages asking myself does this really for me is this who I am?** The thing I'm proud of most is that I didn't lie to myself for me to trust

> somebody is a very big deal. **I want to thank you [group] for helping me find somewhere I could trust** [tears falling down cheeks, notably shaken, struggling to speak]. **A person can be as smart as he wants but have no common sense**… not now, **[Shakespeare programme] is like a milestone in the journey of life."**
>
> (Vinnie, Participant)

There are many stories like this shared by the men involved in this research, where either publicly or personally they found avenues for expression of emotion. Participants aspire to be characters; Vinnie aspires to regain control over his life and make his peace with the world as he felt Prospero could in his wisdom by the end of *The Tempest.* This self-reflection we see here where Vinnie is "asking myself does this really for me, is this who I really am?" is again reflective of the encouraged practices where participants are encouraged and scaffolded to constantly make such reassessments of themselves and their behaviours, emotions and characteristics. His final point, "[Shakespeare programme] is like a milestone in the journey of life" encapsulates the ethos perpetuated by practitioners and stakeholders, the programme groups are not designed to fix participants but rather serve as part of a rehabilitative journey through which people are enabled, educated and equipped to make changes to themselves.

For some, this has allowed them to rebuild and re-establish human connections with family, friends and communities within and beyond the prison gates. Feelings and emotion are, however, countercultural in prisons: prisoners try not to show emotion, for fear of being perceived as weak and the potential consequent ramifications. One prisoner, Jed, explains prison rules for emotional engagement;

> "I grew up here, I know prison. **I know not to feel or show what I'm feeling.** I know its ok to be angry but never to be sad. I know what the risks are. But I know that in here, in this circle, I know that I haven't cried yet, but I know that you guys have, and **nobody's gone running out there blabbing about it.** I feel like I can trust you all, that's pretty new for me"
>
> (Jed, Participant)

Rick, a participant from a different prison explained these sentiments writing again through engagement with a character:

> "**Growing up in prison, I learned really fast to never show my true feelings,** to never let my emotions get the better of me and come to the surface. In prison

> people almost always have a secret agenda, so showing vulnerability can sometimes cause serious issues…The character, Claudio, I believe has some of the same problems. I guess in a way by playing **Claudio I have allowed myself to deal with some of my issues**, and through him, I have allowed myself to be vulnerable. And you know what? **I am ok with that.”**
>
> (Rick, Participant)

By connecting his personal situation with that of a character facing similar issues, Rick describes the ability to feel safe in allowing vulnerability, sharing feelings, problems and issues. The characters the men play through their programme groups are emotionally charged, and they are expected to play them as such. The men spend time with their characters, exploring them both individually and with the group, and though this was explored further in chapter three, it is important to note here the depth and detail of character development that everyone is expected to put into the role he is playing. Roles are cast according to prisoners selecting which characters “speak to me” or “say something about me”. Practitioners describe this as a key feature of selecting Shakespeare as a medium, where “every human emotion can be found in Shakespeare” (Scott, 2015 p.71) and every individual is given the opportunity to find these connections for themselves and direct their engagement with them.

There is a collectively shared sense of empathy, community and personal development drawn out through reflection-based role-playing activities. One participant shared;

> “When I play a guy, I am that guy. I get in their head and they get in mine, and somehow we get each other.”
>
> (Chris, Participant)

Participants place heavy emphasis on specific characters fostering their personal epiphanies, identifying any role, Shakespearean or not, as a major trigger for personal reflection. Participants describe the experience of playing specific roles with language such as ‘eye-opening’ or ‘game-changing’, perceived to be pivotal for many participants in acknowledging their role in their behaviour. In conversation with Barry and Raj, adult male participants, they shared;

> “I didn’t think this was my fault. I knew I had done what I did, no question about that I knew that for sure, but it wasn’t my fault in my head. It was my family, or where I grew up or whatever. It wasn’t me. Then I did Shakespeare, and honestly,

> I played a whole bunch of different people in stuff but every time I did a little bit of me got to see a little bit of what one person does can do to other people"
>
> (Raj, Participant)

> "Yeah, this is newer for me I guess but I get that too. You know you got up in someone's face and you know what you've done but this puts you in that person's body. You have that person up in your face or you're up in theirs and you feel it. You know what words are coming next and you see what that person does when your bit is done. That's when you actually see what you've done"
>
> (Barry, Participant)

In line with the drama therapeutic practices of reflection, mirroring, or playing an embodiment, participants consistently reported playing a role or engaging with those they know in the aftermath of a scene, as providing context for the impact of their actions in their worlds beyond prison, reporting the development of empathy through working with uncomfortable subject matter. Many prisoner perspectives aligned with those of practitioners in suggesting that playing (particularly) other genders or being involved in scenes as or with people playing the opposite gender was 'uncomfortable,' 'difficult,' or 'dangerous' but also 'important' within the context of the prison environment. For some, this difficulty comes in working beyond the parameters of existing comfort zones and making themselves vulnerable in the eyes of that, outside the Shakespeare circle communities. Many explain that they had no real understanding of gender differences or people persecuted due to their sexuality as they were never in that position or on the receiving end of such derogatory perceptions. Overcoming this is cited by participants as a crucial factor in their personal development whereby they are enabled to understand on a deeper level the impact of an action. One participant explained:

> "To have someone all up in your face and threatening you, well for me I can handle it, but it isn't nice or whatever. To be playing a woman and put yourself in that headspace, so it's a guy all up in your face and you may not have the strength to defend yourself and you're scared, Nah, that a whole other level right there"
>
> (Barry, Participant)

He also explained that he was not stereotyping all women in this statement, but rather that this is one realisation in many he has discovered:

> "Not all women are this girly delicate thing either, Lady Macbeth isn't. She's tough and nasty and uses her man to get the power she wants. Not all women are that neither but it's important to see the impact that men can have on women and women on men, just cause that's what they are."
>
> (Barry, Participant)

By playing a character a participant can figuratively transform into them, and the deeper they engage with the role they are dealing with, the clearer the experience can be as a reflective exercise (Landy,2006; Nicholson, 2005). Participants report that when they connect with characters that are so far removed from themselves that they must try to be the different person, they are given a golden opportunity to learn from and understand them (See 6.2).

Participants also claim the ability to be honest under the guise of a character, particularly characters who they perceive to be like themselves, as refreshing. Across programme groups, participants report a mask or façade they feel is compulsory for their survival within the prison. Participants equally report working towards removing that mask within the Shakespeare group and for some in their wider lives, including within the prison, removing it in their communications and relationships outside of the prison environment. Several participants shared a similar experience:

> "The Shakespeare performance last year had **a profound impact** on my life; something that I have not been able to find in a therapeutic setting, finding the core reason for my own turmoil and pains, [Shakespeare programme group] has helped me **look deep into my own soul** to unleash so many pains that I have been **hiding from myself for** so many years; pains that I have felt and the way that I lessen my pains by **projecting them onto other people** and all of the hurt that I have caused for so many others."
>
> (Phil, Participant)

> "Like my character I was on a path that was not good. I had my own demons and dark places that I hadn't dealt with that had led me to want harmful choices. The part I play shows me that if I don't continue to change the way I used to think, I will spend all of my life in prison or worse."
>
> (Ollie, Participant)

> "By **connecting with your characters** or roles **you can see who you are on** the inside. In a way [**Shakespeare programme group] is helping me see who I am** and the person I want to be"
>
> (Derek, Participant)

Participants consistently identify their partnership and identification with characters to be a critical factor in changing perceptions. This experience does not always necessarily have initially easy-to-face outcomes, as in understanding impacts of behaviours, there can be a tendency to have an even further negative view of those who have caused such impact, whether the self or other members of the group in this prison context. Participant Geoff shared:

> "Every day I get the chance to be **more empathetic**, but I also see things that make me less empathetic. But I know **I got to try and understand** the other sides and where they're coming from. It's vital."
>
> (Geoffrey, Participant)

There are individual cases where either through explicit and uncanny similarity or subtler routes, prisoners report being enabled to see new perspectives, understand their crimes, and understand the wider elements contributing to and following the actions that led to their incarceration. Many of the men involved in these programme groups acknowledge this identification or understanding as their first step to change. Challenging their existing mindsets and admitting that what they have done is wrong was recurrently identified as difficult by all prisoners. As participant Harry explained:

> "**We don't like to say we're wrong**, nobody does. And for **some of us, we don't even think** we are. It [sic] true, for a long time, especially when you're young or whatever, **you think you're above the law** that the man is wrong and they're just trying to get in the way of you getting rich or high or whatever. "
>
> (Harry, Participant)

Greg further develops this idea through creative writing surrounding the concept of "We Were Kings Once." He chose to respond to the question "What do you think the outcomes of your Shakespeare programme are?" through submission of creative writing. Though I never learned what Greg's specific crime was, the poem suggests that he was involved in drug dealing, living in poverty and possibly involved in gang culture:

Figure 10: Prisoner Writing: We Were Kings Once

We Were Kings Once

We were Kings once...
and our reign was swift and fierce
Battle cries echoed from the ocher bricks of our hood
at once interpretted, and vastly misunderstood
We Were Kings Once...
and our dispensaries were overflowing
We medicated individuals with the balm for their need
Cocaine, Heroin, Ecstasy, Cash or Weed
We Were Kings Once...
and we wielded our power ruthlessly
Invincible as long as our guns were high
and the things we did were written across the sky
We were Kings Once...
and we never realized our world was glass
that the sands of time were slowly flowing
pushing us into a different world without us knowing
We were Kings Once...
In control of a disputed kingdom
Searching for unobtainable riches, for people unknown
Fighting for brief tenure on a blood soaked throne
We were Kings once...
Trapped in the war of circumstances
Badgered by bad choices and worse options, predetermined fates
Boxed in by poverty and dreams, love and hate
We were Kings Once
and we failed our subjects. We failed our families and our obligations.
our people. our homes. We failed our nation. We were Kings Once.

(Greg, Participant)

Greg considers that they believed that they were serving people, offering what people needed in their neighbourhood. This connects again to social constrictions and shared negative attitudes ingrained in cultures of structural injustices (see 2.1). However, he also considers that this perception was not only short-lived, but also false and naïve. These stanzas highlight the lack of knowing or understanding highlighted by many

participants. People who are engaged in an activity with a focus, reported either at the time not being actively aware of, or even considering the wider risks and implications of their actions. This is not to say that they do not know implications exist, which is a vital distinction that participants make. It is rather to say that although they know that their actions are illegal, or they are in danger for what they do, they do not engage with this beyond awareness of it.

Though Greg acknowledges this status, he also closes his poem with consideration of what he knows now, having participated in the programme groups. He shared these texts with me because he said they best answered the question of the perceived outcomes of the programme groups. For him like most participants, fresh perspectives came from Shakespeare's works; he saw new sides and his own experiences through fresh eyes. Though beyond a morally questionable apothecary in *Romeo and Juliet*, there are no explicit drug dealers present that I can find in Shakespeare's canon, there are numerous opportunities for life reflection. The action does not have to be identical for this dimension of understanding to emerge, and occurrences such as betrayal, murder, deceit and the fallout from these have widely applicable features for any person to draw upon. Greg closes his poem speaking of "searching for unobtainable riches," being "badgered by bad choices and worse options" and crucially that "we failed our families…people…homes and nation." Greg now acknowledges the wider implications of his selfish actions and can build from this attempting to repair damaged relationships; repent harm caused and use his time now to make positive contributions to a "nation", meaning the wider community, a part of which he was complicit in damaging.

Drama-therapeutic witnessing, empathy and distancing also operate within this dimension of the Shakespeare groups. Engaging with a character through watching or reading is reported by participants and practitioners to have equally profound impacts on the individuals. Bradley considers watching his fellow group member perform Buckingham in *Richard III.* In a written piece intended to be distributed to audiences at their production via playbill, he shared:

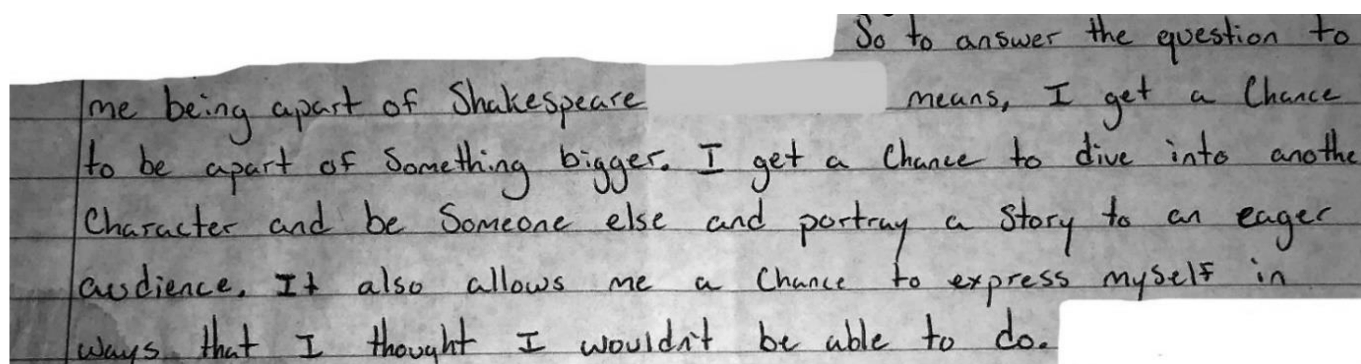
> "Throughout work on this play **I have really been able to relate to Buckingham** – even though this is **not the character who I play**. It seems that Buckingham is a really intelligent, crafty and charismatic individual and throughout the entire play he presents himself as a very confident and capable person…in the end he is asked to do one thing he wouldn't likely have been able to do(morally)- and in fact, nearly doesn't…he begins to see his world fall apart….

> I have often in my life pursued advancement, wealth and power and spared no expense in the attempt to obtain whatever it is that I desired. Much as that is here **with Buckingham, I have come to realise that** my illicit desire for wealth and advancement is often fulfilled with ruin…fortunately, I believe that I was able to figure this out before it was too late…. If it **wasn't for this program, I would have probably not wanted to change**, and accept responsibility for my most heinous crime."
>
> (Bradley, Participant)

Participants and practitioners reporting that engaging with Shakespeare's texts can play a role in emotional reflection, exploration and resolution as though a long-term counselling aid, working to help participants explore such issues with Shakespeare as a listener and exemplifier; a responder but never an instructor. In Shakespeare, the men in these groups either look for their stories, the plotline or character that best reflects them, or find their stories and come to understand their situations through their interaction with character experiences within the plays. Participants are encouraged through the programme groups to make conclusions, choices and expressions themselves but for many, Shakespeare's works and the way the programme groups engage with them provide a similar service to that of a counsellor; not only supporting emotional expression and development but also permitting it in a prison context, where it is consistently reported to be rare as a phenomenon.

6.3 Shakespeare as Voice: Vocabulary expansion and vocalising Self-expression through Shakespeare

Figure 11: Prisoner Writing: Self Expression Through Shakespeare



So to answer the question to me being apart of Shakespeare means, I get a Chance to be apart of Something bigger. I get a Chance to dive into another Character and be Someone else and portray a Story to an eager audience. It also allows me a Chance to express myself in ways that I thought I wouldn't be able to do.

(Stephen, Participant)

Participants reported Shakespeare's words as speaking to or for them. The language of Shakespeare, as earlier considered, is widely acknowledged to be difficult but the meanings within it are also widely used in a variety of contexts verbatim, over 400 years after they were written. Participants repeatedly reported a sense of Shakespeare saying what they needed to hear or Shakespeare saying what they were trying to say. Participants shared with the group:

> "**He (Shakespeare) taught me how to say things,** things I can't say on my own. That's what I want you guys [the younger men] to get…**Shakespeare could be a voice you don't have yet"**
>
> (Harley, Participant)

> "**Shakespeare gets me**; **I can say the things I'm trying to say with him.** He says it into that funky way or whatever but **what he shows people is what I'm trying to say**. I can take some **words from Shakespeare** and I can be like yeah this is how I feel, I might not have been able to put it into words myself for a long time and he's like there, **there's the words you need**. "
>
> (Roger, Participant)

> "Therein do men from children's nothing differ. Act 5, Scene 1. Leonato's brother was saying that you're a grown man stop acting like a child having a [temper tantrum]. We as men must put away childish ways in order to mature and grow… **A Man is the individual who is able to shape his character.**"
>
> (Michael, Participant)

A key example of this emerged in casual discussion with Cameron. Cameron particularly enjoyed the play *Richard II* for its powerful reflections with emotive imagery. Crucially, he shared his interpretation of the line "I wasted time and now doth time waste me." For him, this line best explained his position in prison to himself. He explained that he needed to get out of the prison, not physically as such, but rather in his own mind. He, too, was blinkered by the restrictions of his own mind, and mentally he could not see beyond this. Where time in the prison could not be avoided as he had no choice but to be there as a direct result of his actions, this individual explained a need to escape his own mindset and realise that time could either destroy him or he could use it. He now does the latter, reaching beyond his original limited ideas to better understand and overcome

the issues he faces. This does not mean a shorter sentence, but it does mean that he feels he can use his time effectively.

Several participants reported the application of this newly developed voice as a transformative methodology through which they had been re-enabled to communicate and connect with family members, friends and others damaged by their criminal behaviour. Carey, a veteran participant of his Shakespeare group, shared ideas about his use of Shakespeare for self-expression with members of a similar group targeted at younger members. He shared:

> "**I have been sat where you are now**, and it makes me mad to see you all not putting in everything. But I know too that I didn't either...we need to learn if we're ever going to change. Before my **matriculation, I thought I could just breeze by but by the time it came around it was everything to me and I wanted to do it, do it well and share about what I had done**. It's kind of like to be or not to be, what you want to do, who you want to be. Listen I know it's not normal here to get all girly and cry or whatever…If you got real emotion you must share it; it is that simple. Take your feelings, get them on that paper or find them in that book and tell us all how you're feeling, or even just tell yourself. Where would we be without the pyramids, we are building in a desert in the middle of nothing. You know this, if you get it, if it's personal, get off those papers. This is for us, throw down. "
>
> (Carey, Participant)

Further, figure 12 (overleaf) was presented by Carmine, a participant who has directly adopted Shakespeare's language and utilised it, from a range of plays, to express his own meaning:

Figure 12: Prisoner writing: Annotated with Shakespeare as Vocabulary Expansion

(Carmine, Participant)

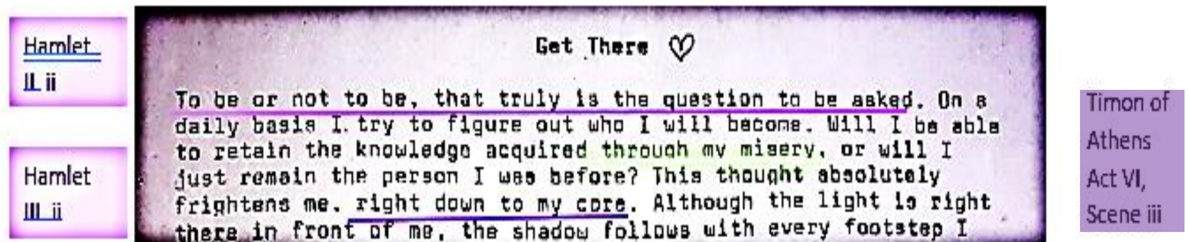
Carmine draws on Shakespeare's message, his teaching through his words and adopts his language to express his meaning. This is a two-page speech drawing on Shakespeare's

texts such as Hamlet (I, iii) "to thine own self be true" and well-known speeches such as Henry V's (IV, i) "For he that sheds his blood with me today shall be my brother," adapting them appropriately to express his meaning. This young man, I was told, had initially struggled with the group and was known as a "knucklehead." He could not show emotion, was quick-witted but struggled to engage with the group. Now he was matriculating, after proving himself, from a group targeting young people into the main core group of older members to continue his Shakespeare journey. He commented about those who formed his community prior to incarceration and states:

> "**Soon my destructors will beg for the utterance of my tongue** as though they never wanted me to suffer the sling and arrows of outrageous fortune. **Knowing all the time their intentions were cruel."**
>
> (Carmine, Participant)

Carmine uses Shakespeare's language to demonstrate his shifted view of those who encouraged him to engage in behaviours that had kept him incarcerated for the last seven and a half years. I do not know when his release was due, however, he presents one clear example of Shakespeare being used as a dictionary or phrasebook through which new language or vocabulary can be acquired and emotional expression is enabled. He is not alone. For many offenders, Shakespeare's specific words offer men the language they cannot find to express meaning and explain themselves:

Figure 13: Prisoner Writing: Shakespeare Content



Hamlet II ii

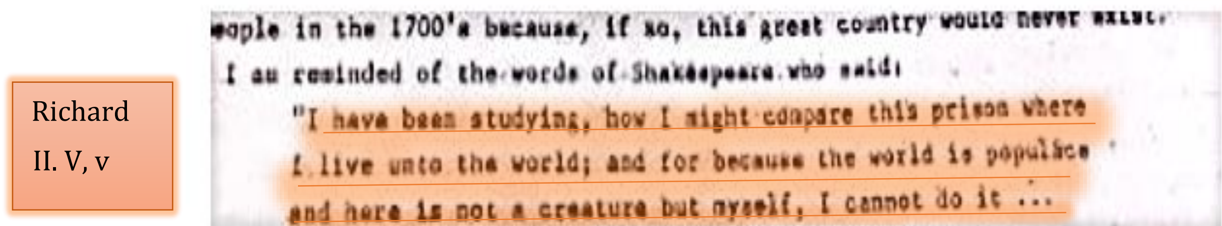
Hamlet III ii

Get There ♡

To be or not to be, that truly is the question to be asked. On a daily basis I try to figure out who I will become. Will I be able to retain the knowledge acquired through my misery, or will I just remain the person I was before? This thought absolutely frightens me, right down to my core. Although the light is right there in front of me, the shadow follows with every footstep I

Timon of Athens Act VI, Scene iii

(Safa, Participant)



Richard II. V, v

eople in the 1700's because, if so, this great country would never exist.
I am reminded of the words of Shakespeare who said:
"I have been studying, how I might compare this prison where I live unto the world; and for because the world is populace and here is not a creature but myself, I cannot do it ...

(Arthur, Participant)

"**These are the words that I was unable to say**."

(Andrew, Participant)

It is a recurrent finding throughout the research, that Shakespeare's stories, ideas and characters, coupled with the language he uses to express it, offer a new vehicle for the understanding of the participants in the programme groups. This power is discussed often in terms of theatre and the potential it can have on humanity, but for these prisoners, it is a deep and specific relationship through which Shakespeare's writing reflects their emotion and gives them the words through which they can explain themselves. Jonathan, a veteran participant, wrote;

> "My favourite quote from *Richard III* is 'Look what is done cannot be now amended. Men shall deal unadvisedly sometimes which after hours gives the leisure to repent' Act 4 Scene 4…. **The universal truths behind my favourite quote are; we all screw up, when we screw up, we regret it and then we repent and sometimes our screw-ups can't be fixed.** "
>
> (Jonathan, Participant)

He, too, uses Shakespeare's words to express his frustration at his mistakes, but also an acknowledgement that his mistakes cannot be easily fixed. What he can do, however, is

be remorseful, repent his action and work towards successfully rehabilitating himself, both as a person and in the eyes of society around him. This closely relates to Shakespeare as a source for internal validation (see 6.4) and being able to identify the self as human and valuable, another key finding of this research. As practitioner, Will explained:

> "If we do not consciously work to transform our unresolved pain, we will pass that pain on to others, for most assuredly, hurt people do hurt people. **Many incarcerated human beings suffer deep trauma and shame, for which they have no language. Trauma and shame without language can cause immeasurable suffering.** That suffering can lead to addictions to try to manage it or make it go away. It can lead to mental illness, violence, and death. "
>
> (Will, Practitioner)

Not only a tool for enabling prisoners a vehicle for articulating themselves, the adaptation and appropriation of Shakespeare's language may enable them to be listened to, as well as heard. Here I am returning to the idea of the capital, and therefore authority attached to Shakespeare's language in society at large (Guillory, 1994; Shellard & Keenan, 2016; Swift, 2016; Hopkins, 2016 and others). This may be a space where Guillory's (1994) notion of 'Linguistic Capital' (p.63), coupled with Hopkins' (2016) consideration of appropriating Shakespeare's language applied to the ordinarily marginalised prisoner voice. Society at large not only has access to the words of prisoners, but they may give them credence or value because of the Shakespeare connection. Participants in turn hold an awareness of this authority and utilise their claimed 'trust' or 'belief' in Shakespeare's words to combine his language and their own to bring authority to their own works too. This authority in appropriation is a well-known practice throughout a range of contexts due to the perceived 'unimpeachable source of cultural capital' (Hopkins, 2016, p. 8) in Shakespeare's works, and the attached authority this brings, as appropriated by voices in lots of avenues including crime fiction (Baker, 1995; Hopkins, 2006) and other literary genres (Sanders, 2015), and in turn here prisoners.

6.4 Shakespeare as Internal Validation: The impact of feeling valuable, capable and part of society.

Shakespeare specifically is perceived to be a key catalyst in internal validation, meaning here self-identification and acknowledgment as human by participants and

practitioners, where Shakespeare is described as a vehicle for self-realisation and re-humanisation. Whilst the programme groups' structure and content are described as conducive to this (see 5.0), many participants cite the works of Shakespeare specifically as the vehicle that "got me to where I needed to be", meaning that Shakespeare enabled some individuals to understand themselves as human, and the impact of their actions from the perspectives of those involved or affected by their behaviours.

Though many offenders describe Shakespeare's works as aiding them to "meet myself," "see me" or "find me", one offender, David, credits Shakespeare with helping him to not meet himself but "kill the myself in myself", that is to remove his self-destructive tendencies. Another individual, Chad, cited a similar phenomenon when initially trying to find himself in Shakespeare, stating:

> **"I just have to ask myself if I can't see it,** where I can find myself in that bit. Then seeing different stuff happen but the same person making mistakes and that [sic] just like me or other people in here."
>
> (David, Participant)

Many participants shared a consensus that, prior to experiencing the programme groups, they perceived Shakespeare as a higher knowledge or culture that would be hard or difficult. Whether this was tied to perceived cultural status and capital, preconceptions of language or social attitudes to Shakespeare, participants recurrently expressed this view. It is not a surprise, however, given this attitude is coupled with negative educational histories associated with prisoners (See 2.2). Participants across groups and states reported an internal shift when they made the realisation that they could read, understand and apply Shakespeare. The application of self-belief in the prison context is rare in relation to the positive activity. Many prisoners shared a collective sense of being "wasted," of being "useless" or of feeling that "there's no point trying good stuff, I've always fucked it up", participant, Callum, shared:

> "**Just a few years ago I resigned to the idea that I was a broken person. I made a complete disaster of this life**…then a friend of mine offered to sponsor me for Shakespeare … **And with a look or a word you've [the group] shown me something I've only heard about but thought I'd never see, a better version of me."**
>
> (Callum, Participant)

By engaging with and successfully navigating, exploring and applying Shakespeare's works, those participating shared a belief in themselves as able and intelligent again connecting to a consideration of Shakespeare's "Linguistic Capital" (Guillory, 2013). Though some had participated in other education programme groups, and achieved educational qualifications within the prison context, for most the ability to succeed in an area generally held in such educational esteem was an entirely new experience.

> "**When I went to school when I actually went, they didn't have the time for me**. I spent more time out of school in the real world than I ever did in class. That was tough looking back, I feel like a kid now, but I was for sure a kid then. They didn't think I'd be anything, some **teachers tried, one put in a lot, I couldn't see it then, but I'd like to thank him**. I was a lost cause, they thought it, I knew it, and **I could never have done Shakespeare or any of this deep emotional shit. Must have been in me somewhere though, we found it, I found it here**."
>
> (Doug, participant)

I spoke with five men across the programme groups that cited participation in different projects prior to Shakespeare. Martin, a long-term participant, shared:

> "I have done so many things I can't even count, I have completed things and got the rewards. But they don't compare to this. They were things I've got, I've earned them because I've finished something. **But this is learning about myself, this isn't learning about nothing else and saying I can do it, this is making changes to me…. I usually do things out of selfish motives, I know if I do things that look good, they're not going to move me away. Usually anyway. I guess Shakespeare might look good, but you don't get stuff in the same way"**
>
> (Martin, participant)

These ideas are explored in greater detail in chapter three, however, by making Shakespeare not only available, but available in its original form, for exploration, performance and use, many participants believed that the programme shows them that they are "smart" and can achieve through education.

It is not just the realisations that have been drawn out of Shakespeare that are significant here, but that these realisations were able to be drawn. The participants revel in the fact that they and their peers have been able to engage with the texts, draw meaning and develop ideas. Participant Neil explains a prior life living under negative

philosophies, however, he found that Shakespeare allowed him to find a belief system that could instil in him a new way to live and a new way to see the world. Fellow participant, Zack, talked about the "pride" and "excitement" he felt seeing others make discoveries and breakthroughs. They believed that every individual participating was intelligent but hasn't had the opportunity to show it or even work it out:

> "I would have never thought I could get this Shakespeare before; **I'd have been like what is that. Sometimes I still am, but I go away, and I read**, and read, and curse and read and find out what on earth he's trying to say. And then I think man, that's really something. **He's got it right there and me, I worked it out. Yeah, me. [Laughter]"**
>
> (Neil, Participant)

In conversation, Charlie, a long-term member of his Shakespeare programme group, talked of having enjoyed "exploring the stories", though "not so much poetry", but he particularly relished the opportunity to develop, create and share his own writing. He was also keen for me to take a selected sample that he believed was pertinent to the research study and consider it as part of my data set surrounding his personal journey of involvement in the programme groups. A considerable number of participants either shared previously written pieces or wrote specific statements, poems and quotations surrounding their perceived outcomes of the programme groups in this way.

The concept of knowing or understanding themselves through the programme groups was recurrently reported and was frequently connected to Shakespeare's themes, stories and the complexities of character identities. Throughout my time in the programme groups, participants shared that engaging with Shakespeare's texts facilitated their ability to identify or explore who or what they are, beneath what they commonly refer to as "the mask" or "my covers." For the men involved in the programme groups, the activity styles and use of Shakespeare as a subject matter for these activities combined, encouraged them and validated them to feel able to reassess and explore their identities and capabilities.

> "**Unlike Richard III, I underwent the kind of soul searching that led to my being able to forgive myself**. Regretfully, forgiveness is not a universal truth, even though should be!! **A good friend of mine eloquently states that those who need forgiveness most deserve it least. So, I choose to move forward. "**
>
> (Charlie, participant)

In the verbal discussions, contributors explicitly expressed this experience, with no such contribution ever being met with disagreement by other members of the group. Mostly nodding or quiet statements of "yes" or "for sure" in agreement were shared. Two other participants, Carl and Gary, explained:

> **"Shakespeare took my mask off,** out there I used to have lots of masks, depends on who I'm with and what they want to see."
>
> (Carl Participant)

> **"I still do, but that's out there…**Well, you don't get it, but people expect things. They expect there, and, on the outside, **they just expect you to be a certain way or speak or whatever. You have to show up to them, or you think you do."**
>
> (Gary, Participant)

Many in the group talk about this in a collective sense, praising their peers, friends and mentors for collaboratively stripping away the walls as a community and the further effect that this has had on a reduction in violence within the prison. Prison officials stated this was a key to the success of this programme group where the ethos of the prison has changed through more and more groups engaging with Shakespeare, their emotions, and the way the offenders choose to address disputes both between themselves and with those in authority. This expanding change, or ripple effect, is a crucial finding reiterated across the data sites considered in this thesis.

In a discussion, participant Charlie explained that if one acts as though they believe they are expected to, rather than being the person they should be, essentially if someone behaves criminally for wrong reasons, they must stop finding reasons to justify that behaviour and instead, understand the reasons why it is not the correct course of action. This is reflective of dramatic projection practices (Jones, 2006) where the purpose of projection-based therapy is to encourage the client, in this case, the offender, to form a personal identity with a character. This concept is evident throughout programme practices, as described in the previous chapter, however, many offender claims go beyond the initial identification.

It is the state of recognition amongst others reported here that is critical to the development of the original practice. As neurological research supports, there is the capacity for genuine change in terms of brain functioning and experience (Galesse et al, 1999; Wicker, 2003). Through relationship both personally with a character, and identification beyond specific actions of others, the offender is enabled to understand

themselves and their peers beyond surface perception and stigma. This arrival at the identification of offenders as equally human in comparison to any other human being beyond their life course or actions, is at the heart of the largest outcome reported by offenders and practitioners.

> “What does [Shakespeare programme] mean to me?... In **prison, people wear a mask, [Shakespeare programme] give me a chance to shed that mask** and become somebody completely different and leave this insane asylum I currently reside in.”
>
> (Zack, Participant)

The principle of life-drama connection (Landy, 2006) is key here as, although it is important to highlight again that therapeutic process naturally emerges through activity in these programme groups, making these connections is vital for the development of peer relationships. It does not differ far from a process that would be needed to alter the societal perception of offenders altogether, where the creation of offender-human connection and a de-villainising understanding of offenders would need to emerge. Now, however, in most societies, offenders are identified as villains, the stereotypical bad guys.

> “There’s them that fuck with people and don’t care, and there’s them that have their reasons. Not good reasons but whatever. But them that make their bad choices, are suffering every day for it and actually do something about it”
>
> (Darren, Participant)

> “Yeah like Iago, I’m like what the fuck dude, but then Othello. It isn’t right, but it still makes sense, how it got to where it did.”
>
> (Dean, Participant)

The fact that participants had done something wrong that in many cases negatively affected another person is not disputed in any of the conversations I had with the men. But what the men have begun to identify amongst their fellow offenders, is that there is often a difference between the crime committed and the person who committed the crime. To be an “Iago or Othello” is different, even though they are both in many ways’ “criminals” in different parts of the play Othello.

6.5 Shakespeare for External Validation: Leaving a positive legacy and reintegrating with society at large

Leaving a positive legacy to humanity is both a motivator and point for motivation for many offenders. For them to consider their legacy in their current position, means that they must understand that their legacy to humanity is what they will be remembered for, and that may well be their crime. At the moment, several participants explained that they had little to no knowledge, perception or, in many cases, care for the larger implications of their actions. This question, however, forces them to identify what they will be remembered for and unless their intention was notoriety, which no participant to date has claimed, their legacy will only be negative if they do not work proactively to change that.

Participants consistently reported seeking constant external validation, acceptance and recognition beyond their criminal histories. Validating the self as human, capable and able to positively contribute to society are ideal outcomes of rehabilitative programming, however, upon release this holds little value in terms of the way a prisoner is received by society at large, their own communities, and their families and friends. Reflecting on public performance, Darren, a participant wrote:

> "To restore one's dignity from a failure is always in the forefront of the individual's eye. To be thought of in a good manner by your family, as well as your community, are things most of us were taught by our parents… [Shakespeare] teaches me that I can overcome my present situation and be thought of by my family as a good person who is doing right"
>
> (Darren, Participant)

Studying, reading and performing Shakespeare has offered many participants opportunities to demonstrate their capabilities to the wider community. Where negative perceptions surrounding prisoners include a supposed lack of intelligence, prisoners in these programme groups share their capability through public performance, academic and non-academic publishing and talks aimed at both academic and non-academic audiences. This means that prisoners are given an opportunity to demonstrate their true capabilities and the world outside gets to see that prisoners are not the beings that mass media, popular television and historical stereotype suggest.

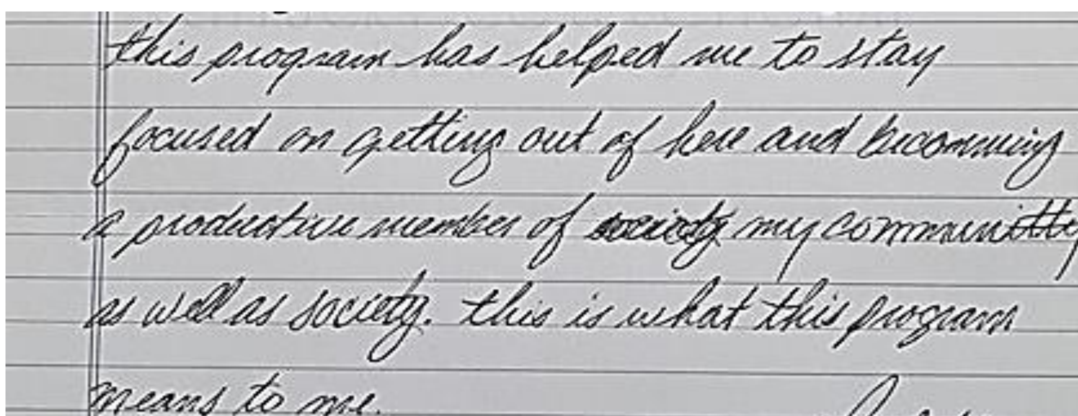
Here prisoners both get the opportunity to identify themselves as more intelligent and to show their local community that they are capable of more than expected. Not only are they putting on a play or writing a report, but they are doing this

with Shakespeare, a high culture, high class and universally recognised as difficult subject matter. Prisoners are seen beyond their conviction as actors, scholars and, most crucially, they can be seen as intelligent people.

> "Our legacies, our time on earth, will be defined and remembered by the choices we make before we die"
>
> (Ian, participant)

An impact of the prison Shakespeare programme groups is that their activities can be made tangible to society at large. Through performances, writing and publishing opportunities, and completions of milestones, participants can demonstrate to people beyond the prison what they are capable of. Those involved receive opportunities to be recognised and remembered for something other than their crime. How a prisoner appears to the outside world recurrently was raised as a powerful outcome, and indeed a reason for participation in the prison programme groups.

Figure 14: Prisoner writing: Intended Legacy



this program has helped me to stay
focused on getting out of here and becomming
a productive member of ~~society~~ my community
as well as society. this is what this program
means to me.

(Oscar, Participant)

Participant Oscar writes: "This program has helped me to stay focused on getting out of here and becoming a productive member of my community as well as society. This is what this program means to me." Participants were constantly encouraged to consider their input in line with their role or contribution to the future they see for themselves. Aspirations varied but were usually related to restoring family relationships and becoming a positive role model, supporting peers or deterring future people from finding themselves incarcerated, and leaving a positive legacy to society beyond criminal activity. Many participants articulate this:

> "**Can you be what you see yourself wanting to be right now**? Can you be it right now? Ask yourself, you don't have to answer"
>
> (Connor, participant)

> "**I come over here to contribute to the destruction of our attitudes**. In big circle, I'm more of a witness I guess, its different, but here in our circle, it's different. If anyone needs assistance, I'm here."
>
> (Raymond, participant)

One prisoner, Harry, was due to be considered for release from prison shortly after my visit, but he has spent a significant portion of his adult life incarcerated. However, the prospect of an indefinite sentence did not deter him from pursuing aspirations to change himself and make an impact on society. He, therefore, used his time to support and encourage fellow inmates who may be released well before him to join in with the Shakespeare programme groups and work towards self-improvement. This is not unlike the mentorship role undertaken by volunteers at another prison, where there are more groups available for participation and varying levels on offer.

Active participants who have spent a significant amount of time participating in their own Shakespeare programme groups, volunteer additional time to mentor and support either those who are in the sub-group programme groups or programme groups for younger participants to encourage them to engage. They do this by sharing their own stories, engaging newer members. They also volunteer their time to listen, to ask questions and to guide participants through their individual journeys in their Shakespeare programme. Arthur, a prisoner, wrote to the governor on this topic:

Figure 15: Prisoner Writing: Mentorship

My point is that, on average, no one influences a prisoner more than the other prisoners around him. Right now, this is mostly a bad thing ... but it doesn't have to be. If you can identify certain prisoners (which isn't hard to do) you can train them (just as they did with the mediation class) and have the trained prisoners run classes that act as a "supplement" to the primary classes - which means it will not introduce new subject-matter or advance new principles but simply expounds on the subject-matter given in the principle class; and, because it's being ran by another prisoner, the subject-matter will be able to be communicated and expounded on in a way that will be more understandable and relatable to the prisoners in the class - while also allowing them to run other positive classes (i.e. an associate and I did a

(Arthur, Participant)

Most criminal rehabilitation initiatives focus heavily on reducing recidivism or attempting to address specific issues such as alcoholism or anger management. The Shakespeare programme groups, however, prioritise considering your legacy to humanity post-incarceration as a critical practice principle. This means that they actively combat negative perspectives and existing legacies that dehumanise them.

> **"People leave traces of their greatness whatever they do**. "
>
> (Carey, Participant)

In connection with the research question surrounding the practices of these programme groups, the practical element of this goes beyond the specific activities detailed in Chapter 5. Every participant is consistently reminded by practitioners and mentors that their families, peers and society have a perception of them when they engage with them and they are asked to consider both how they live and what they want to leave as their legacy to the world. Participants across all sites shared that the most crucial outcome they perceived from their participation and engagement with Shakespeare's works, was that the programme groups had given them the opportunity to consider how they want to be remembered. The legacies that characters have both within Shakespeare's texts and in the audience's mind beyond them, reflected reality for many participants and specific characters hold resonance with different individuals as not only reflective mediums, but mediums through which they can demonstrate and articulate that they are more than their offence committed to society beyond bars. One participant, Earnest, shared:

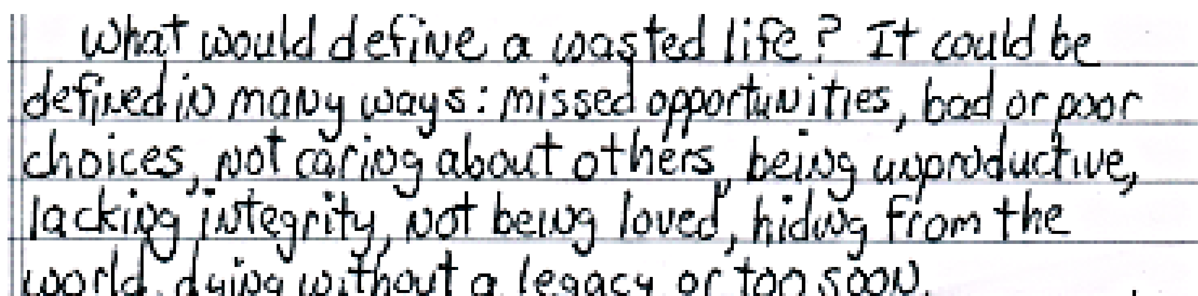
> "Othello was a soldier, right? **So, he was like honourable and he was a good man. Now, good men, they can act like bad men in circumstances but then when you talk about Othello, someone's like ain't he that guy that killed his girl. Damn, a whole history lost in one, horrible, but one action**"
>
> (Earnest, participant)

Much like Othello, I heard several similar stories frequently relating to Shakespeare's tragic protagonists and their wasted potential or thrown away success. Hamlet returns from the university for his father's funeral for the events of the play to unfold and Macbeth is on a seemingly successful trajectory before the obsession with the witches' prophecies, yet both are remembered for the darker actions that followed. Regardless of their pasts, it is the negative and damaging aspects of their behaviours that these men are recognised and remembered for. For participants in these programme groups, this

resonates with their own experiences, where regardless of their achievements and lives prior to prisons, their offence becomes their defining feature.

Participant Alfred responded in writing to these ideas, exploring the concept of what may be considered a successful or wasted life:

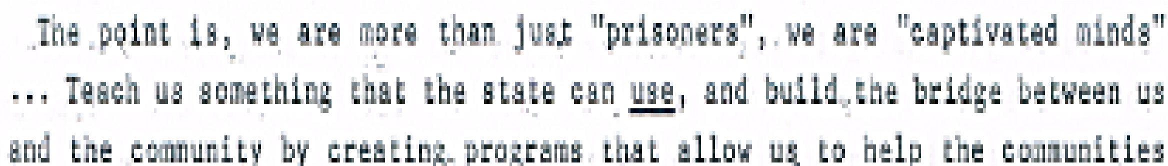
Figure 16: Prisoner Writing: A Wasted Life



What would define a wasted life? It could be defined in many ways: missed opportunities, bad or poor choices, not caring about others, being unproductive, lacking integrity, not being loved, hiding from the world, dying without a legacy, or too soon.

This negative legacy is what society essentially expects from prisoners, but through the Shakespeare programme groups they are encouraged and enabled to challenge this and plan for successful and positive futures, making a positive impact on society. This connects closely to prisoners understanding their impact on society. Recognising their role in constructing the initial negative perception through understanding the impact of their behaviours, offers them food for thought and avenues to explore in making amends.

Figure 17: Prisoner Writing: Community Impact



The point is, we are more than just "prisoners", we are "captivated minds" ... Teach us something that the state can use, and build the bridge between us and the community by creating programs that allow us to help the communities

(Arthur, Participant)

To change their legacy so drastically, there is significant personal, practised, emotional investment required on the part of the participant. The journey is the critical focus for many participants, reporting that they are offered genuine opportunities through the Shakespeare programme groups to evidence their learning thus far and identify their aspirations and intentions to impact their futures. Whether this future trajectory is motivated by identification as valuable, worthy and capable human beings to society at large, their personal communities or themselves in a future beyond imprisonment. They are demonstrating and working towards positive legacies surrounding being remembered for more than their crimes, which are at the heart of programme outcomes. I asked both participants who were due to matriculate one year of their programme

group and longstanding participants what they saw this "legacy" so frequently spoken of to be, what they desired it to be and how they may achieve it.

A large part of an individual's legacy shift is claimed to surround personal choice. Prisoners talked consistently about their choices, and their decisions to commit their crimes. This was a critical principle underpinning the programme groups whereby prisoners, though often coupled with additional external blame and context, referred to and accepted their crimes as "life choices." The freedom to choose is a privilege for prisoners, not a right afforded to them in most aspects of their life. Although criminality or behaviours are choices made by participants that led to their incarceration, there are factors however that interact with and influence their trajectories and decisions. Several prisoners offered insights into their motivations for past behaviours, many of which were grounded in structural inequalities (see 2.1) including;

> "**I believed I couldn't win.** I believed that I had no opportunity to, so **I might as well just keep doing what I'm doing."**
>
> (David, participant)

> "**I still kept seeking approval for stuff that isn't good, and nothing ever changed**"
>
> (Samuel, participant)

> "when I tried to do better, **the things I did were worse**"
>
> (Dean, participant)

Participants are given opportunities throughout the programme groups to identify their role in decision making, the bottom line of criminal law is that a perpetrator is responsible for their own actions. This is no different in the Shakespeare programme groups, whilst empathetic and willing to listen and explore issues, facilitators make it explicitly clear that individuals are expected to take responsibility for their own behaviours, holding the potential for significant change in future decision making. Practitioners across programme groups shared that encouraging participants to take responsibility for their choices or at least remove or overcome blame of others can scaffold them to reassess and reconsider their attitudes in turn.

> "It is all about choices. We do not permit anybody to tell somebody else how to think, feel or behave. Instead, we guide and encourage them to think and choose for themselves. We share stories from the I; stories that we feel hold experiences

> in our lives that might be of use or interest to another one of the guys, but we cannot make those connections for them and we cannot tell them what to feel."
>
> (Will, Practitioner)

Much of this work is grounded in perspective, encouraging participants to continually question their experiences, decisions and perceptions, connecting to the development of empathy and emotional engagement (Jones, 2006) through the applied drama and drama therapeutic processes of interactive audience and witnessing and empathy, distancing and life-drama connection (Jones, 2006; Nicholson, 2005). Participants, through the activities detailed in chapter 5, have learned to reflect and consider their histories, applying that to their futures and building on this learning to demonstrate their true capabilities to society. For many participants, this process was essential to their legacy if they were to make a positive contribution to the lives of themselves, their communities and society moving forwards.

For most participants, their conception of legacy was personal change and a large part of that was learning how to consider the implications of their behaviours, select proportional and appropriate responses to conflicts or issues and to make better choices in future. In terms of legacy, many participants shared that their legacy would be making positive choices that are not detrimental to society at large, post-release. One participant, Sol, talked at length about his intentions, post-release. He believed he would be released soon and was hoping to travel, expand his education and reach out to people who need intervention and support. For Sol, making good choices was his legacy, and the best way he could impact society at large:

Figure 18: Researcher Diary: Prisoner Legacy

> *"Sol (Participant): So, I will get out of here soon I hope, and I really want to continue this theatre and education and learning, I think although in my case my time doesn't necessarily fit these guys, I know I could do some really well*
>
> *Moe (Participant): Yeah, I like what you do because you always speak about things that maybe are from some other place to the life I've had, about the meaning is the same, and when I think about the choice that you make, I can still see situations where I would need to make those good choices too*
>
> *Sol (Participant): I don't always win by making good choices, but for me, I at least decided the right thing, a unit is not on my mind at night that I made a bad choice.*

> *I made a good choice, a moral choice, and whatever the consequence of that I am not at fault*
>
> *Me: So, are you saying that the most important thing is to make the right choice, even if it doesn't benefit you the most?*
>
> *Moe (Participant): Ha-ha, yeah that's some self-control most of us need in here ha-ha, you can corrupt me for the right price and I'm not proud of that.*
>
> *Sol (Participant): I can't tell you how to feel but, I don't carry guilt for the good choices I've made in life. Regret maybe missed opportunities or things I should have seen coming where I lost out but not guilt. "*
>
> (Research Diary)

Many such participants had long sentences still to serve or had already served significant portions of long sentences. Those contributing to discussions of legacy were predominately from the mainstream programme groups that have engaged in such work for up to 22 years. Criminal activity is considered to be a choice, even where there are circumstantial factors that imply no other option. Making better pro-active choices to change is, therefore, arguably an essential step in combatting a history related to crime.

Although many people join the programme groups blaming anybody else possible for their incarceration, the programme groups intend to share the message that regardless of circumstances and reasons, choices made still fall within the responsibility of the person enacting the behaviour:

> Will (Practitioner): "Can you, do it? Did you choose the right thing? What were your other options? Was it worth it? These are all good questions,
>
> Zack (participant): But they keep asking and I keep telling them and they don't like my answers, or they call bullshit
>
> Will (practitioner): Well that's their job, to ask you questions. Your job is to ask yourself. They don't have to like your answers, but you need to know it's true."

One common way prisoners demonstrate or validate external validation is through their successes and markers of their success. Success is a sensation few participants have experienced prior to participation in this research project and certainly not success in the positive light of academic or vocational achievement. Although traditionally prisoners proportionally hold limited educational and vocational histories, through the

Shakespeare programme groups they are presented with opportunities to achieve in both their academic and skills development regardless of their starting point.

Literacy is one area where prisoners traditionally fall behind their peers as explored earlier. This stands to reason when 42% of British adult prisoners report having been excluded from school and 70 % of US prisoners failed to complete a High school diploma prior to incarceration (Western and Petit, 2010; Harlow, 2003; Prison Reform trust, 2015). Although all prisons are, in theory, expected to offer educational provisions, participants reported that across the board provision was patchy, the different programmes had different agendas. Several participants reported disengagement with formal education or an assumption that it just wasn't for people like them:

> "Honestly, I don't remember the last time I went to school, and when I was there it wasn't a big deal to me, **I didn't get it and I didn't like a bunch of people**. My friends weren't really into that stuff **and nobody told me at home you got to get your education because nobody really got theirs.** It's just how it was."
>
> (Corey, Participant)

Holding no educational levels and qualifications to compete in modern society carries further significant pressure for participants in the programme groups. As prisoners, they leave prison carrying a criminal record which, regardless of their crime, inhibits employment opportunities and opportunities to realise potential and aspirations. Education is a fundamental human right and although, as explored in chapter two, Shakespeare features as a fundamental part of education virtually everywhere (Coen, 2011), most participants reported limited previous engagement with it. Some reported that this was because they were not given the opportunity, but many shared that this was a choice, they didn't understand the importance of literacy and they didn't necessarily trust the model of mainstream education.

Many participants share employment aspirations and express hope that by sharing their new-found capabilities in the context of Shakespeare they may be perceived to be equally capable of a job. They want their Shakespeare-based knowledge and skills to counterbalance their criminal history in what employers recognise about them, beyond release. This is not an uncommon theory and their motivations concur with many who choose Shakespeare-specific postgraduate study as a career-boosting activity (Nicklin & Olive, 2013).

Looking at the "School to Prison Pipeline" (STPP), participants highlighted being rejected or feeling incapable at school because they didn't connect or relate with what was being taught or the methods used. Many shared that they do not see the Shakespeare programme groups as school, which it technically is not, but even as a project it is an undeniably educational intervention. To overcome the STPP it is argued that more flexible and supportive programming needs to be introduced at the point of school refusal, rather than harsh approaches to discipline and zero tolerance exclusion policies. By giving disengaged pupils, as with disengaged prisoners, new routes into exploring and learning, what may then follow is an earlier more impactful change in life trajectory. The feeling that it was "too late" or "beyond" for prisoners to develop or change was something many seasoned group members were willing to share; they believed, prior to participation and having experienced several types of prison intervention, that it was simply too late for them to change what was always going to be a negative track for them. They are not entirely correct, but this raises interesting questions surrounding the potential impact of earlier intervention grounded in change and education, rather than just punishment. Bruno, a younger participant at his matriculation, shared;

> "**They do this too late.** This has helped me really think about my life and how I think. I know that I can do more than I thought I could like I never believed that I was dumb but now I know I can be smart. **I wish I could have known that before I got this far**. When I think of lifers, **like imagine a lifer does this and then thinks shit I could have been or done something"**
>
> (Bruno, Participant)

Unknown to Bruno, there are juvenile programme groups now intervening earlier, engaging young people at the brink of early sentencing with similar Shakespeare programming (Nicklin, 2017); however, his point is powerful. When a student in a school doesnot behave, much like an action resulting in prison, it must be questioned what is being achieved by penalising the individual. There are in any school environment those who attend detention as a serial activity that plays no part in improving the future trajectory of a young person. In prisons, people are put in solitary confinement and leave with severe mental health and wellbeing issues, only further exacerbating their current situation. For participants in these programme groups, they are being treated as capable human beings and being taught something that they did not see themselves as capable or worthy of. They are receiving an educational and supportive course of programming that enables them to demonstrate educational success, enhance their academic and vocational skills and it is hoped to enhance their employment. Community sentence and

educational initiatives are statistically more successful in reducing recidivism (Ministry of Justice, 2011; 2013; Coates, 2016) yet prisoners still face significant stigma trying to gain employment opportunities following their release.

One successful graduate of the programme groups works for a factory now but in his spare time visits exit programme groups to meet with prisoners about to be released. For him, giving back with education in thanks for his education created his legacy to humanity.

> "The [Shakespeare programme] changed my life and I learned how important it is to give people that boost of guidance. I met my current employer through that work and the guys that come here [exit programme] if they've done Shakespeare could take so much of that learning and really show society what they are capable of. **I never want to go back, but I'd do Shakespeare every single day** and I will keep coming back here and sharing that message. I'm not Andy the criminal, my legacy right now is Andy the success that makes his family proud and tells people like him that it's possible." (Andy, Graduate)

Several participants and practitioners support Andy in his perception that there is a significant benefit if a legacy can be provided by those who have successfully benefitted from educational intervention and improved their life trajectories, based on this learning. Many participants cited a future of education and employment to be their legacy aspiration. For some, this legacy was about wider social impacts, like Andy supporting others in his situation as his vocational impact. For others, this legacy fell far closer to home, seeking a lasting positive legacy in the eyes of loved ones, and children or siblings:

> "I want to get a good job and provide for my boy. I'll do anything they'll let me do**. Do you know how hard it is for someone like me to do that?** I can't even imagine, but I'll do it. I'll show them that I have learned, and I have grown, and I am smart."
>
> (Gonzalo, Participant)

> **"I can write, like really write. I wasn't dumb before but the things I write mean something. I want to use that to do some good**. I'll share with you some of my writing, I want to share it, to help people like you understand people like me, ha, to help people like me understand people like me"
>
> (Joey, Participant)

> "I could barely read or write when I got picked up and now, I take every opportunity to educate myself. **My legacy will be what I found when I cracked my shell, the better person that can-do things I didn't think were for me. I'm not going to be president or whatever, but I want the world to give me a shot at being something more than a number**."
>
> (Samuel, Participant)

Many participants were keen to prevent future generations from ending up in the same position as they are. Across all prisons, although there were educational initiatives occurring there was no doubt that the prison environment was tense, in many ways dangerous and absolutely a destination no individual would choose to arrive at. Regardless of provisions, prisons are restrictive, punitive and, as discussed throughout, are a key facilitator in the dehumanisation of offenders, even post-release.

Legacy and impact do not have to relate to outside of the confines of the prison environment; a fact which is worthwhile to remember when many sentences were at least a decade. Within the prisons, several prisoners already work closely with younger people housed within the prisons, supporting youth-focussed initiatives using Shakespeare specifically with younger men. They volunteer their time to teach, guide and support these young people working to encourage their engagement with the Shakespeare programme groups and to share their experience to deter them from future crime.

In some programme groups, there are sponsorship or mentorship schemes when participants who have significant programme experience can select individuals to support in engaging with the programme groups from the wider prison population. This is particularly interesting in relation to life-sentence serving participants, or participants on undetermined sentences. One practitioner shared:

> "with lifers, I can make them leaders, and they can become artists for change within the prison environment"
>
> (Scott, Practitioner)

There is a growing community of prisoners who dedicate their time in this way, not knowing whether they will ever be released but choosing to positively impact the environment within the prison. At the time of data collection, one 20-year veteran participant was eligible for parole after being denied several times before. Throughout his time on the programme groups he has developed his role from group member to

mentor and asset to the group, publishing, speaking publicly and sharing the value he has gained from participation. He is not alone with several other long-serving participants working towards similar goals, changing the environment that is their home, and working to improve the lives of others within it.

In terms of future generations beyond prisons, it depends on the organisation how much outreach they can undertake. Some prisons allow the public to come and watch performances and matriculations, enabling participants to demonstrate the work they have completed as a positive example. Others welcome college students to visit and trial or watch their programme groups, again, allowing those who have participated in the programme groups to engage with young people to disseminate a positive message. I was witness to one such visit, whereby fifteen nervous college students filed into the chapel where we were rehearsing for the next group play. Initially, they bunched together quietly whispering but the participants made a clear effort to interact and communicate with them as equals. They shared not only their activities but short conversations about themselves and their lives, their programme groups experiences and fielded questions in the discussion from the young people. They were as open to these fifteen strangers as they had been to me on my first day, willing to share their experiences and advice. When asked what they would advise young people, they shared several points illustrating the commitment of some to deterring others from engaging in the same risky behaviours;

> "Don't go to prison"
>
> (Chip, participant)

> "Think about what you're doing and listen to people when they need to talk. And talk to people when you need them to listen"
>
> (Seth, participant)

> "Buy yourself some Shakespeare, there's a tonne of advice right there [Laughs]"
>
> (Jonah, participant)

Participants with children or siblings invest particularly in the role they can play in that child's life, either in physical presence or more abstract ways. Most ideas shared, connected with being a good parent or a responsible example, making those they care about proud or more broadly deterring future young people from reaching the point they have done. There are several initiatives that work to support parent-child relationships,

however, the damage caused by initial imprisonment and criminal action can mean that significant discord between them is embedded in their everyday lives. One member of the programme groups lost all contact with his child following his crime, and works through the programme groups hoping to be able to reconnect with them eventually:

> "I hope for the day I will see my kid again. I will keep working to show that I am a better person, that I am so much more than what they [society] call me."
>
> (Gonzalo, participant)

For others, they may still have contact or communications with their children, but they will not be released from prison until after that child has become an adult. With limited contact, and with children knowing that their parent is in prison, there is an imperative for several fathers, brothers and uncles that they conduct themselves in ways that project positive lessons for their children.

> "What is my kid going to say about his daddy. I'm not out til [sic] he's a man. Ok so he got to say yeah, my dad is locked up, but what if he can say, yeah, my dad's a great actor, a teacher, a leader. I don't want my kid to be like I was, but I'll be proud if he's anything like who I want to be"
>
> (Aaron, participant)

Practitioners are sensitive to these issues, incorporating them into the way they deal with such sensitive material, whilst also capturing that motivation and encouraging participants to develop with it. Many participants also did not want their children to think that they were not loved or cared for by them, and they didn't want them to forget them or be written out of their lives.

> "Remember me, isn't that one of the biggest fears of every living person, to be forgotten"
>
> (Will, Practitioner)

The Shakespeare programme allows participants to identify themselves as part of, rather than external to, humanity at large. They can be scaffolded through a process of empathy, emotional and academic development to reach these conclusions. In turn, engaging in a programme group with publicly shareable outcomes such as matriculations or performances, allowing society at large to identify offenders as part of, rather than separate to, them. In doing this the frequently identified 'us and them' mentality decreases in momentum where the common ground, rooted in the qualities of humanity,

may be achieved. If this as a process is successful, long after the offender is released, rather than remaining metaphorically separated although released into society, the offender could be embraced by their community, recognised for their efforts in moving towards change and changing their behaviour towards society at large. If a prison sentence is not a life sentence, it is crucial to question why there are lifelong implications of such an experience that continually contributes to reported motivations for recidivism.

6.6 Why Shakespeare?

For participants who reported Shakespeare-specific programme outcomes, Shakespeare undertakes a number of roles within their experience. For some, his works become teaching texts with lessons and morals to be applied to their lives. For others overall, participants have described Shakespeare, via his texts, as a teacher, a counsellor and, crucially, a voice-giver or mouthpiece who provided texts through which they have been enabled to learn lessons relating to their own lives. Shakespeare is claimed to teach lessons about "morality" through the examples he demonstrates, "family," "relationships," "emotions," and "impact," to list some of the strongest reported learning themes.

Through his construction of character, participants and practitioners alike claim that Shakespeare captures the complexity of human beings, demonstrating opportunities for individuals to reflect on themselves, identifying those with similar traits to their own situations or behaviours and using this as a springboard for reflection, through reflection (Jones, 2006; Thompson, 2009), dramatic projection (Prentki, 2013; Landy; 2006) personification (Jones, 2006) and embodiment.

Shakespeare's plays as a whole were then reported to provide the rich source material that has enabled participants to explore personal, emotional and societal implications of their behaviours on both themselves and those impacted by them through the wider context of witnessing the plays.

> "**Shakespeare has helped me to look deep into my soul to unleash so many pains that I have been hiding from myself for so many years;** pains that I have felt and the **way I lessen my pains by projecting them on to other people and all the hurt that I have caused** so many others"
>
> (Gary, Participant)

In giving individuals an opportunity to read, explore and witness not only their own character but the whole picture, participants report that through a combination of programme practices and Shakespeare's texts, participants are offered new perspectives and lessons about life to alter perceptions of their situations and in turn, take responsibility for their behaviours. Participant, Phil, shared:

> "**I am a victim of the prison system, but I am not a victim of crime**. **I see that now.** What **I did hurt a lot more people than I though**t and although I figured I wasn't doing any harm that doesn't really matter does it. I was, I did, and **there are more than myself and my [direct victim] that was hurt by me**…."
>
> (Phil, Participant)

Phil has now reconnected with his family after several years engaging in a Shakespeare programme group. He also continues to seek to make amends and no longer blames others for his imprisonment. He does however also argue that all prisons should have this opportunity that they should offer educational, valuable and, in his case, Shakespeare-focussed support for prisoners.

Participants describe Shakespeare and his works as a "force" for educating and empowering them to identify and perceive themselves as human, as part of the rest of humanity, and how this transition, particularly for those who have spent significant time in prison prior to participation, was entirely new to them. There was a common attitude or perception reported by participants that prior to participation in their programme group they identified themselves as separate from those their crimes impacted, a subgroup external to society at large and for many, this fuelled their "us and them" mentality, considering the enhancement criminal action would have on their lives not how the consequences impact others. Thieves, for example, saw those they were stealing from as a separate entity, rather than people being impacted as part of a shared community. In turn, societies external to prisoners often identify or treat them as less than human, making them "other" than mainstream society.

Shakespeare is described as the vehicle for self-realisation and re-humanisation. Whilst the programme groups structure and content have been thus far described as conducive to this, many participants cite the use of the works of Shakespeare specifically as the vehicle that "got me to where I needed to be," or "made me understand me." They imply that engagement with Shakespeare's specific works opened doors for some participants to identify themselves as capable members of humanity and to explore the

impact of their actions as members of the wider community, not as individuals operating on an exclusive, self-contained basis.

The next chapter will outline the overall outcomes of the programme groups where the Shakespearean content and programme practices are combined to produce a set of reported programme outcomes. It will consider the key outcomes expressed by participants and endorsed by practitioners to fully understand the potential impact of this programme.

7.0: Programme Impact and Defining Success

I have been studying how I may compare
This prison where I live unto the world:
And for because the world is populous
And here is not a creature but myself,
I cannot do it

(*Richard II*, V. v)

Research Question 3: What were the perceived and intended programme outcomes reported by and for practitioners and participants?

This chapter explores the reported outcomes of the Shakespeare programme groups as a whole, from the perspectives of practitioners and participants, following the overarching thread of this thesis from dehumanisation to rehumanisation. It is important to consider both the intended and the perceived outcomes of the project in order to establish how these outcomes feed into the larger rehumanisation project outcome. Each practitioner holds intended outcomes at the heart of their project design; however, holding an objective does not guarantee its achievement. A teacher may design a lesson plan to teach a class about a concept, but the only true measure of what has been learned can be taken from the learner. It is for this reason that participant voices are the strongest throughout the data set and indeed this chapter. This chapter explores the outcomes identified from analysis which practitioners and participants considered to be critical outcomes from the projects, attained through the combination of subject matter and project delivery. These outcomes specifically related to the prisoners' personal, social and emotional development:

1) Prisoners being acknowledged, and identifying themselves, as human
2) Prisoners developing community, interaction and trust
3) Prisoners being permitted autonomy, authority and choice
4) Prisoners engaging in self-expression, self-exploration and self-reflection
5) Prisoners making progress and completing milestones

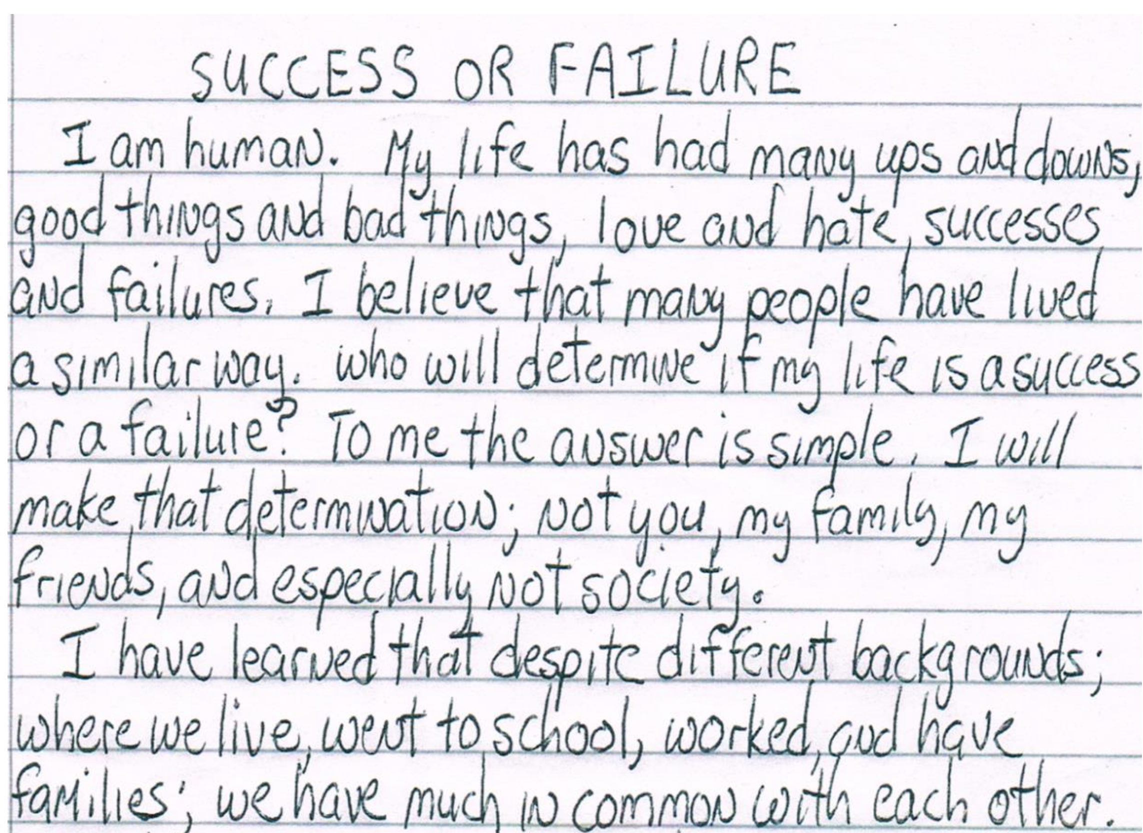
These five programme outcomes are described as occurring through a variety of practices, activities, texts and programme elements by participants and practitioners

alike and relate to both personal, independent successes and its collective successes recurrently reported across participant groups.

7.1 Prisoners being acknowledged and identifying themselves as "humans"

As identified in chapter one, "being human," and "being seen as human" feature heavily in participant articulations of their experiences, where the programme was reported to treat prisoners, and make prisoners feel that they were being treated, as human beings. This is particularly interesting where common discourses in the public and media surrounding prisoners is heavily dehumanising (see 2.0) In this research "being human" and the concept of prisoners as human beings was the strongest and most widely reported outcome of programme participation, both through the construction and delivery of activities and the specific use of Shakespeare. One participant, Alfie, articulated this point through his poem "Success or Failure" (fig 19). This piece of writing was given to me as Alfie's response when asked what he had gained from participation in his Shakespeare programme. It presents a polar view of the earlier explored public perception of prisoners as lesser than or separate from humanity.

Figure 19: Prisoner Writing: Success of Failure



SUCCESS OR FAILURE

I am human. My life has had many ups and downs, good things and bad things, love and hate, successes and failures. I believe that many people have lived a similar way. who will determine if my life is a success or a failure? To me the answer is simple. I will make that determination; not you, my family, my friends, and especially not society.

I have learned that despite different backgrounds; where we live, went to school, worked, and have families; we have much in common with each other.

(Alfie, Participant)

Figure 20: Research Diary: Response to first reading participant text

> *"I am reading about being human, from the words of a prisoner. This poem explores his identification both to himself and the public as a human being. I am moved. This is the response he has chosen to offer to explain the benefit of his Shakespeare circle, and for him it is being identified as human. Not only is the message clear, it is incredibly well articulated. The line "despite different backgrounds, where we live, go to schoolwork etc., we have much in common with each other" resonates closely with my experiences of these programme. Every person in the room is a human being, they treat each other as such and have included me in that community. I am ashamed to say I am surprised by the quality of writing in these pieces, but that says more about me as an outsider than it does about the prisoners as any written material I have, offered similar quality and a message that we could all learn from"*
>
> (Research Diary)

For myself, like society at large, to see these words from a prisoner articulating a truth, that all people are human, in such a powerful way offered me an opportunity for epiphany in my understanding of the prisoner predicament. The prisoners participating in this research are housed institutionally and not permitted the same freedoms as others; however, through their Shakespeare programme, many articulate that they have learned or discovered that they are as much a part of humanity as any other individual. Participants frequently described the key outcome of their Shakespeare programme to be that participating in the Shakespeare programme has "restored," "brought back" or "allowed" their humanity and therefore enabled them to both identify themselves as, and be perceived to be, human beings.;

> "What I want people to get out of the play? **That yes, we are locked up but there is so much more to use are more than just numbers and statistics**. **We are human beings who are alive and ever changing.** We are **trying to become better people**, so we can one day be productive members of society. "
>
> (Roger, Participant)

> "[Shakespeare programme] means something different for each person that has been involved throughout the programme … [Shakespeare programme] has had an effect on everyone that has been involved… **they have an opportunity to take ownership of something that has the ability to touch the lives of people**

> **worldwide which if you think about it is a pretty awesome feat considering we are stuck behind this fence.**
>
> (Justin, Participant)

> "**The compassion you see when someone gets out of their self and into their character is truly amazing. I am still fighting to become fully engulf**ed, but it is hard sometimes but like [leader] says, let the text work on you, through you. Then you will feel it take over you and then that is truly acting."
>
> (Seb, Participant)

Foucauldian ideas of power and the institutional removal of the essence of humanity translate heavily to this conception of humanity removed within or by the practices of the prison environment. According to Foucault (1977), the prisoner is remoulded by those in power, to fit and fall in line with accepted norms and behaviours. This kind of reshaping is not, however, true rehabilitation; as Foucault points out it is, in fact, coercion through power, whereby the individual is pushed through the incarceration system, coerced into actions by those with power. In doing this, criminality may be controlled in theory, but if this were truly the case then prisoners would theoretically be "fixed" by such a process upon release. In fact, as explored in chapter 2, most prisoners once released from the confines and structures of the prison reoffend soon after.

The Shakespeare programme appears to create opportunities to empower the prisoners by giving them knowledge, and therefore power, independent and transcendent of the powers being enacted on them. Through this, they can choose to behave differently, based on their own explorations of themselves and their behaviours. Where the traditional prison exercises strict regimes and mechanisms of control, oppression and dehumanisation (Foucault, 1977), the Shakespeare programme encourages participants to expand their knowledge and empower themselves through self-exploration. Though they do not encourage participants to maintain all their individual behaviours, they empower the individuals with the knowledge to reform and reconsider their own perspectives and change their actions by choice rather than by instruction. The Shakespeare programme, rather than telling participants how to behave and enacting sanctions when they do not choose to do so, permits and encourages participants to explore and evaluate their behaviours for themselves with emphasis placed on a necessity for prisoners to choose their future actions, rather than being coerced or forced into a behaviour model that does not align with their deeper intentions.

As several participants claimed throughout my data collection, being labelled as a "prisoner" or "inmate" classifies and stereotypes individual participants into a role within a community of others with that label, removing any individuality, differences and indeed humanity. Though this is an arguably intentional feature of the prison process, in attempts to create the docile bodies conforming to the shaping and moulding from the prison process (Foucault, 1975) there is a wider impact of this dehumanisation. Participants recurrently reported feeling that they were seen as "less than human" by their friends, communities and society at large beyond the prison confines. Practitioners recurrently described a desire to change that perception through the Shakespeare programme. They reported three separate reasons for this:

1) To enable prisoners to understand that they are part of, not separate from the society upon which their criminal behaviours had impacted.
2) To encourage participants to identify themselves as human beings who hold value and were able to contribute or leave a positive "legacy to the world."
3) To foster positive social behaviours encouraging reintegration post-incarceration into society at large.

The dehumanisation of prisoners is recurrently linked to their disconnection from society, either where society rejects them under the collective derogation of "criminal", or they behave in such a way that has a negative impact on their communities and situates themselves as other than society at large. This again links to critical social justice issues surrounding demographics, familial and socio-economic circumstances and structural injustices that are undeniably rife throughout the prison demographic (see 2.0). In fact, many prisoners reported feeling that although they lived within their communities or were part of their families biologically, they did not feel like they "belonged" to these groups, or that they held any opportunity to progress within their societies. In turn, many sought a sense of belonging elsewhere through channels connected to criminality, for example, gang cultures. Participants explained this disconnection from their communities in the context that they were worth less than their peers, that they did not feel they fitted in or mattered as much and, essentially, they were able to disconnect from society. It is no surprise then that they also recurrently report or demonstrate an inability to identify the impact of their crime beyond their consequent imprisonment.

As mentioned throughout, in many public cases beyond the completion of their sentence, prisoners have significantly limited employability and progression prospects. Society at large does not want to have ex-offenders in the streets where they live, in their workplaces and with their communities. Within the prisons this type of hierarchy of people is overwhelmingly evident, where prisoners literally become a number and are, as I witnessed, rarely called by their first name, rather summoned as "inmate" or in some cases by their surname. For many, such rejections and dehumanisations were also present in their lives prior to incarceration. Participants who shared information about their lives prior to prison detailed social rejection due to race or social class and engagement in criminality out of a perceived need rather than desire.

In contrast to this kind of common rejection, participants reported a key programme outcome to be the encouragement and development of connection with individuals as human beings, beyond their crime, on a personal level. They reported being able to build community with people they perceived to be totally different to themselves, as though not of the same community, type or person or, to some extent, species. In the Shakespeare circles, no individual was treated as a number, isolated or discouraged from participation and progression within the group's activities. Every practitioner and almost every participant explored this, identifying this sense of shared humanity as an essential part of the groups impact. A key example of this was the greetings practices and talking circle teaching styles adopted by the programme (See 5.0). The requirement was that every individual within the space was required to check in or greet one another. These practices acted as a compulsory, formal acknowledgement of respect within groups. As though an access key to participation, greeting or checking in were compulsory in all programmes considered. Several practitioners considered the impact of this approach to inclusion, exemplified by Will and Scott:

> "We use the handshake as a ritual form of **greeting human being to human being.** The ritual brings **each human being from the day to day world of the prison yard through the portal of "For Real" where the facade of faking it is released to reveal the inner light of authenticity as each human being steps into the sanctuary** of safety and trust where the pursuit of truth is held as a beacon of true centre**. The ritual places hand on hand to connect each individual's outer self; eye to eye contact to connect each individual's inner self; and the inhale and exhale of breath to connect each individual's deeper self."**
>
> (Will, Practitioner)

> "Saying hello or how are you is so simple that we do it every day without giving it a second thought. It doesn't always happen that way in a prison."
>
> (Scott, practitioner)

This exemplifies an element of "uniqueness" to the space where participants become a part of the community through interaction and are permitted to be honest and genuine in their representation of themselves. Participants frequently reported feeling unable to talk to anybody, and being able to, by choice, disengage from the prison around them prior to participation in the programme, as well as disengaging from society at large and humanity. The practice of greeting forces them into basic communication every session. Ross, a long serving adult participant shared;

> "For me it gives me a vessel of expression, lets me express myself. I never been [sic] or never thought I would be sitting here talking to nobody. I'm not so nervous now to the point that I shake and can't talk anymore…Your friends in your circle leave an impression on you, they show you how to apply or disassociate from yourself and walk a mile, like really walk a mile with everyone there to walk with you."
>
> (Ross, Participant)

According to participants, once open, the circle becomes a physically separated space where they are broadly unrestricted. This is in direct contrast to the rest of their time within the physical prison environment, identifying the circle itself as a space separate to the prison it was housed in:

> "It's this space, it gets me outside of what I am doing and where I am doing it… I'm not locked up right now, I'm in Shakespeare. I feel that."
>
> (Carl, Participant)

This indicates a perceived value of the physicality of the space and the community fostered within it, as contributing to positive outcomes. For many participants, this group environment becomes a new space that, though housed within the prison context, transcends it. As the circle rules differ heavily to those of the prison, participants report a sense of flexibility, spontaneity, freedom, and choice in their engagement with it. Prisoners get little opportunity to make choices in the prison context, with freedoms and liberties directly removed, so the practices of this space operate in a way that is so far

different from the rest of the prison, new rules, expectations, and activities can be permitted:

> "Ha, Cam [Participant] does like to share the bull crap, but **we get him every tim**e. He's coming around now; he should know **you can't lie when a whole circle is listening"**
>
> (Jacques, participant)

> "People keep looking for that inside your head guy, but we can **get outside our head here** and this is a **different** place to the rest."
>
> (Dominic, Participant)

As a participant researcher, I was physically able to experience and witness this where, although every day I walked across yards surrounded by razor wire and towers, I felt when I had joined the circle like I could have been anywhere, with people who shared an interest. As participant Harry explained;

> **"This circle place, it's another place**. It's not just some class or whatever, it **takes you somewhere safe and different** and for just a short time we're **not locked up anymore**"
>
> Harry (Participant)

Harry, like all of the other prisoners in the project groups is still physically imprisoned, however figuratively he feels free, safe and within a community. Practitioners ensure the provision of intentional opportunities for acknowledgement between all group members on a one-to-one basis. Each adult Shakespeare programme does not begin sessions until every person has personally greeted one-another. One practitioner explained their insistence on this to be "life changing", offering the context that:

> "An absence of human connection is destroying. Imagine **nobody asking how you are or caring whether you're there or not**. Is there anything that could make **you feel more alone?"**
>
> (Scott, Practitioner)

The complexity of a simple one-to-one greeting or handshake for participants is exemplified by Nick, participant who asked when I greeted him:

> "Ain't you scared, shaking hands with all these men who are in prison. It would scare me if I was you, not because we scary [sic] , but just cause that's how they see us out there."
>
> (Nick, Participant)

Nick was not alone in questioning my feelings on the greeting requirement. As time passed, I knew the crimes of some, but it made no difference to the greeting I was required to make. I was not afraid, but upon first meeting my first group of participants the almost instant dissolution of fear or concern I experienced upon greeting the group was startling too. I felt with each personal greeting I was recognised and welcome within the group.

It is important to recognise and reflect on my position as a participant within this space, as at my introduction point it is likely that I would have been perceived as an outsider, although treated as an insider. I cannot claim my experience to be equal to that of incarcerated persons experiencing such powerful isolation, however, the experience exemplified its potential power. Adam, a participant, sat down near me and questioned my motives, not for attending, but specifically being willing to "shake hands";

> "You a do gooder then or something else? What young girl, no offence, gets up and says I know I'll go shake hands with a bunch of prisoners?"
>
> (Adam, Participant)

I asked Adam why I would not shake hands with a "bunch of prisoners", and he laughed and said if he were me, they were not people he could imagine wanting to connect with. This exemplified the way prisoners acknowledge their perceived social value, assigning this value to themselves and making assumptions about how those outside the prison would choose, or not choose, to interact and engage with them. Adam, like many participants, identified these opening rituals as a point of connection, and that society at large may not typically desire to connect with prisoners. The handshake, or check-in, is deemed important from the perspective of many participants but it is also difficult, at least initially. Many participants report this conflict between awkwardness and significance. Aaron shared:

> "Some dude comes in and says hey man can you just shake hands with every single person here and see how they're doing. I don't like people in my space, I keep myself to myself and only talk to people if I must. Can you imagine doing this in life? I'm not saying I don't think it's good, but it is sure as hell

> uncomfortable"
>
> Aaron (Participant)

This was an interesting statement which highlighted a discomfort but also a perception that is was somehow "good," further elaborated by Christian, another participant:

> "Somebody knows I'm here, and they asked me how I am today, and it don't matter if they're [the leader] or another inmate or whatever they are. You know who asks how you are in prison? nobody, cause there's probably only a handful of people that might bother and a few of them that give a damn what your answer is. In here though, people want to know, and if they missed you, they feel bad and make the effort to connect. That's real care."
>
> (Christian, Participant)

Within the prisons themselves, participants report opportunities to have people "care that you exist" as rare or non-existent, leading to reported feelings of "resentment" of the outside world or participants feeling "like a different species" from humanity at large. For some the only place they report receiving such care is on their Shakespeare programme. In addition, beyond greeting and acknowledging existence, participants within the prison context frequently report difficulty in trusting others, heightened by the connotations of peers being convicted criminals. For many participants, sharing or divulging personal feelings is initially foreign to them, leading often to it being unpopular in the first instance. This is recurrently identifiable across the programme groups, where distrust and fear of repercussion is rife amongst participants embarking on this programme for the first time. Being able to identify these feelings may also be new to many, as Maurice, shared:

> "I have my sponsor, like my mentor. He encouraged me that I could do this and helped me see what I was feeling and what it was about. I knew I was angry; anger is all I knew I felt but there's a lot in that that I didn't know was there or I couldn't see. Every day I'm here I talk about my feelings or hear about others and I feel like somebody hears me."
>
> (Maurice, Participant)

Participating in a Shakespeare group allowed participants such as Maurice to build a positive and supportive relationship through which he felt supported to explore and work on his issues and engage with the issues of others, constructing opportunities for empathic and emotional development through human connection.

7.2 Prisoners developing community, interaction and trust

Participant feedback has outlined 'friendship', 'trust,' 'care' and 'support' as favoured outcomes in line with the intended outcome of developing trust and community through positive activity. A prison is a difficult place to trust peers, where, as in any society, ulterior motives and agendas are ever-present, and such issues are amplified within the condensed context of the prison. The programme groups separate the action and the person that committed it, or, to directly quote Shakespeare, they "condemn the fault and not the actor of it."

The practitioners that lead the programme groups placed the key questions (see 5.0) at the heart of discussion and practice, identifying self-worth and the value of others to be crucial for successful reintegration of offenders within wider society upon release. The programme is founded on the basis that all participants, regardless of their past behaviours, can contribute value to humanity. Andy, a successful graduate of the programme identified the four talking point questions of the programme as igniting epiphanies in him:

> "The first question on my programme was huge for me. Who am I? It was right then that I realised that I did not know who I was …Shakespeare was the first time I looked at myself in myself. Who was I? Who am I?"
>
> (Andy, Programme Graduate)

By establishing a community of trust, participants are equipped with skills to resolve issues and conflicts with the support of peers. The following passage exemplifies the style of conflict resolution that is applied to disputes or disagreements within the group context:

Figure 21:Research Diary: Conflict Resolution

> "*Today an individual called out the practitioner that he and a peer were promised an opportunity to perform at the volunteer dinner that year and was angry that other people got the chance disregarding earlier promises about himself. He also stated that he was not speaking for his peer, who would need to share any grievance they had for themselves, but simply stating his own feelings. Each person had an opportunity to share perceptions and questions to resolve the conflict. Rather than an argument, the practitioner dealt with it through asking and responding to a series of questions to establish the issue. Ryan, the disgruntled participant, shared that he felt betrayed as he believes he had sacrificed the opportunity for other group members, on the proviso that they would get their chance the following year. The*

> *practitioner asked clearly for an explanation of the issue and sought input from Ryan directly around what he believed would be an appropriate solution to the problem. The situation causing tension across the group was resolved through calm discussion, and consistent placement of decision responsibility on the person hurt. Presented with the proposed options they discussed the options openly and honestly to decide what the best route to resolution would be. Interestingly, there was a conscientious awareness in the disgruntled participant that he didn't want to take away the opportunity from a fellow group member who had now been offered the opportunity, who was at no fault and equally deserved the opportunity to perform their work. They self-concluded to work collaboratively combining the material of both groups into one performance."*
>
> (Research Diary)

In this example, the practitioner acknowledged his unintentional wrongdoing, encouraged the participant to take responsibility for expressing his own feelings and reasons without judgment and encouraged collaborative decision making to establish the best outcome. The practitioner both acknowledged and responded to the disgruntled individual's feelings and established the best outcome for the group. At no point did the practitioner tell the individual what the outcome would be or dismiss the individual's feelings. In turn, the individual considered the impact of his feelings on the rest of the group, keen to see that his fellow participants did not lose the opportunity in favour of himself as his fellow participants were not considered to be at fault. Instead, a conclusion was reached as a group, through the asking of relevant questions and allowing input from those impacted by the decision-making process. The individual was allowed the space to share his feelings openly and be heard, he then listened to the response of the person that had caused grievance and sought an appropriate solution as a collaborative effort, whilst limiting damage to others. Ryan, the disgruntled party, later discussed this style of resolution with me, he shared:

> "We don't do it any other way here… We either let it go or deal with it as part of the circle. We're a group here and problems within the group affect all of us. I knew he would be ok with me raising it here, that's what the circle is for talking about stuff and dealing with it not letting it get in your head. We solve problems where we can as a group."
>
> (Ryan, Participant)

Prisoners identify that outcomes enhancing problem solving, developing positive strategies and deterrence from negative reactivity are crucial reasons that the community is essential. Due to prisons facilitating high levels of social isolation (Cochran & Mears, 2013; Liebling & Marina, 2013; Nurse & Woodcock, 2003), a common strategy for prisoners is to self-isolate from prison communities (Cochran and Mears, 2013). Some participants reported this to be their "biggest hurdle" within their groups, as they feared presenting weakness to people; they were unsure whether they could trust.

> "We all need friends, everybody does. But we all need people we can rely on too and even in this space that isn't an easy thing. Would I trust these guys with my life, some of them well sure I would now, others maybe not? But would I trust them to be there to pick me up when I fall and to call me out when I'm making the wrong choices 100%"
>
> (Sheldon, Participant)

There is no claim here that all members of the group are automatically trustworthy by virtue of group attendance; however, the group itself is fostered and maintained as a space for trust and honest sharing, and both participants and practitioners consistently report that programme groups have successfully maintained such parameters of confidentiality for up to and over twenty years, group dependant.

Participants report enjoyment and appreciation of combined approaches, and the offer of recurrent opportunities to engage in a space they feel able to break silences the prison environment may impose on them. Where prison environments tend to have high levels of mental health issues among inmates (Birmingham, 2010; Metzner & Fellner, 2010), the Shakespeare programme groups offer an outlet for many that they have been unable to find elsewhere. Where participants constantly report fears, regret and barriers to progression, this combination opens opportunities for participants to work at a rate that best suits their status of capability in the moment. Participants therefore engage at their personal rate of comfort and though pushed and supported to progress by the group, they report feeling able to take time without missing opportunities permanently. This second chance approach reflects the ethos of the programme groups, all holding a collective attitude that people deserve chances to change, develop and reintegrate, regardless of past behaviours. This is reported as a key appealing factor of the programme where participants desire or require a new approach to life, post-incarceration.

Practitioners argue that their approaches offer opportunities for personal development, community acceptance and redirection through constant engagement in a positive group; things that participants and practitioners reported as rarely present within the existing prison context. Geoffrey, a long serving participant, explained;

> "I spent four years running away from the Shakespeare programme. I didn't like the look of them [group members] and sure I was racist. I had to look beyond their looks and their actions, making friends and doing weird things, being accepted here was big. Shakespeare was the very last part for me. The best and first is that it broke my comfort zones and opened a door for me to not be so closed minded or by myself all the time. People out there [the wider prison] don't understand us coming here [programme] but I do now, its family past whatever you did before, your family now."
>
> (Geoffrey, Participant)

Geoffrey assumed that the group would not accept him, just as he was irrationally rejecting them. He also assumed the activities were "weird" because they were outside of his comfort-zone and he did not feel capable. Joining the group however taught him he could capably engage within his own time, as a part of a supportive non-judgmental community. It is not surprising, but it is significant to discover that participants place such heavy emphasis on the role of community for their perceived success, particularly when correlated with existing research that dictates that community-based sentences are continually demonstrated to be more effective than any significant incarceration approach (Ministry of Justice, 2013; Halliday et al, 2001; Armstrong & Weaver, 2013, Prison Reform trust, 2015).

In addition, when participants find approaches with which they feel they can engage, or when they create a way to express their thoughts or feelings, participants have a maintained space within which they are free to engage in that way. Participant, Sam, explained;

> "I am not much of a reader, but I love to write. I do now, and I write stuff all the time. Sometimes it is about just writing it for me and sometimes I want to share it with everybody. But for sure I know I have the choice and when I'm ready my brothers will want to listen and talk about what I have to say."
>
> (Sam, Participant)

For others, the range of activities allowed them to break out of their comfort zone, like Zack who explained:

> "I don't always want to speak to somebody in here, there's them that I just don't want to. But I do it cause it's important that this world is more important than any of the other stuff, it's bigger"
>
> (Zack, Participant)

Participant, Nick, shared similar feelings explaining;

> "I don't like getting up in front of people, I feel dumb when I'm thinking about it. But then the times I do it, **I get to have everything that comes after it.** The **conversations we have in here from one single bit of something one of us performed or shared can be important**. And I can say as little or as much as I want to, or I can just listen and take it all in**. I can do this however I feel fit** and that is how it is supposed to be."
>
> (Nick, Participant)

Though participants report personal discomforts with certain types of engagement on offer, they maintain an appreciation of them, reporting enjoyment of flexibility and opportunities to work on a solo or group level. Furthermore, they share a collective gratitude for both permitted independence and the supportive community, fostered by the programme groups. By allowing various routes, practitioners acknowledge the personal needs and comfort zones of others, providing opportunities to both operate within and extend the comfort zones of individual participants, as part of the whole group. This connects heavily to the ethos and practices of process drama and the therapeutic performance process (Jones, 2006; Baim, 2004).

The physical act of engaging in the activity, performance or sharing offers the participant an opportunity to express issues in a space that doesn't normally permit them. The key principles of this process; offering participants a means through which they can express themselves and facilitating them to utilise these means are at the heart of all activities across Shakespeare programme groups, and participants identify the opportunities for this to be essential in their personal development journeys.

> "Shit **I need my circle**; I am not going to lie to you. It **takes me away** from all the bull shit in here [prison]. My Shakespeare circle is my new comfort zone."
>
> (Toby, participant)

7.3 Prisoners being permitted autonomy, authority and choice

Autonomy, authority and validation are powerful outcomes participants report as being given exclusively on their Shakespeare programme. Having choice in whether to participate, how much they shared and being allowed to do so without fear of repercussion or restriction are foreign within the ordinary prison environment. Participants report adopting personas and only being able to share or engage in particular activities within the group, as both institutional and socio-cultural restrictions within the prison environment usually prevent such freedoms.

As my initial statement to every group, I presented my research questions and the purpose of my study, including their rights as participants in line with best ethical practice (AERA, 2015; BERA, 2015). Every subsequent visit I reiterated their rights as participants, specifically their right to withdraw or not have input from them recorded as data. Initially this amused some men, whereas others were intrigued as to why I was asking their permission to take information from them. I inquired about this, learning that in American prisons, incarcerated individuals are not permitted the majority of standard constitutional rights permitted for non-convicted persons, with recent debates including the right to democratic participation in voting, for example, or on a more micro level the freedom to choose when to eat, sleep, have access to outside spaces or decide when the light is off or on. The sub-text of this, the prisoner beside me informed me, is that they consider this "signing away their lives" as human beings.

Many rights are withdrawn from prisoners' levels one to five (see appendix A) with more level-dependant freedom permitted within the confines of potential prisoner entitlements. In a current global culture of litigation, signing a contract and accepting terms and conditions has become a process people are very much used to. However, it became increasingly apparent to me as I passed between groups and research sites how aware offenders were that they are institutionally stripped of this and to be asked their permission was a rarity.

My consent forms, designed to fit the varying permissions and policies of the research sites, were a mixed experience for those permitted to sign them individually and even broader, even those asked for verbal consent to participate (all of them). I was often met with statements such as "no lady, it's cool, we signed away our rights the day we came in", participants being astounded that I was offering them a choice.

> "yeah, they can do what the fuck they like with us."
>
> (Barry, Participant)

These are examples of consistently repeated commentaries across each group who were in turn surprised that they had any choice at all. I was perceived as mistaken for asking their permission to study them, as though I was confused and didn't realise that they were not permitted choice. Prisoners are told when to eat, where to be and must be accountable to somebody else always. This is not a surprise as, by definition, prisons exercise this level of control. But the concept of having choice opened into a much wider context in terms of the provision participation in their groups has provided them. Each programme member is a participant by choice, and as the programme is underpinned, in part, by learning how to make better life choices, it is a recurrent theme. I gave them explicit choice in whether they wanted to participate in my research, offering no incentive for doing so, just as the programme offers none, yet recurrently participants in every group explained that by participating they had the opportunity to share with even just one person their capability and humanity that society does not expect them to have. Becoming a prisoner has removed the opportunity to choose heavily from the lives of prisoners, however the Shakespeare programme reintroduced such opportunities and freedom of choice.

Within the groups, participants hold equal and shared ownership of their circle spaces, giving them consistent opportunities to comment, contribute and question with no chance for negative consequence in doing so. Issues and achievements are always engaged in as collective groups, if the discussion of one single statement takes multiple sessions, it does not matter if all involved feel they have had their opportunity to contribute, and their contribution valued. Similarly, the decision about anything that affects a whole group is made by all the members of that group, with appropriate community consensus. Scott, a practitioner with juveniles in the same programme, shared;

> "they are always being told what to do or think. So, they're going to act out. Simply, they need to take their opportunity to be heard. When that manifests itself in a negative way, there is no point responding with more of the same thing they are so keen to get away from. Let's, for a minute, ask them how and why and what they are feeling and see then what can be achieved"
>
> (Scott, Practitioner)

These words highlight the practitioner-perceived importance of participant consensus and voice, allowing participants the space to speak for themselves. Almost all

participants placed personal value on the opportunity to speak and be heard and have input on decisions impacting them.

> "This stuff was so **far out my comfort zone**, if you had said to me even six months ago or twelve months ago that I could sit in this circle and say how I feel, **shit I'd have said you were high**."
>
> (Barry, participant)

Practitioners consistently argue the intention of these programme groups as being not to "fix'" participants or "give those answers", but to equip them with, and permit them to have, the voice to find the answers for themselves, consistently highlighting "self-reflection," "seeing themselves" and "developing empathy."

7.4 Self-expression, Self-exploration and Self-Reflection

> "Selfish, that's what we are by nature. W**e do not always look at the bigger picture.** Sam [a prisoner] focuses always on them, what about me, I'm the victim. **He needs to say what I did and what did that do to others"**
>
> (Will, Practitioner)

Across the programme, practitioners held self-reflection, self-exploration and self-expression as critical to programme success. Many prisoners hold complex and psychologically challenging behavioural histories that contain complex and diverse life experiences. Participants are dealing with the consequences of potentially life-changing situations. Practitioners argue that participants must understand and acknowledge their role in these situations to move past them. Such perceptions are not uncommon in criminal rehabilitation practices, with many modern initiatives undertaking some form of this approach (Pratt, 2015; Stevens, 2013).

> "There is a need for them, even for themselves, to deal with the history. They need to know that yes, that is what I did, and this is how it got me here. They need to know yes, that is on me. And then they need to work on it and grow."
>
> (Scott, Practitioner)

There are rarely only two people impacted by a crime, at its minimum impacting the perpetrator and victim, rather there is a wider impact reaching connected communities that needs to be acknowledged. The programme groups foster opportunities for exploring multiple perspectives consistently through the provision of opportunity in

sharing personal stories and reflections, and enacting scenes from Shakespeare with the opportunity for application to personal experiences.

A large part of this process surrounded self-expression (see 5.4; 6.3). Writing, sharing stories or creative activities were particularly highlighted as impactful therapeutic outlets undertaken by many participants to articulate emotional events or personal stories. Participants claimed that these kinds of activities, offering an alternative method of expression to verbal communication, enabled them to "find" or "share" their voice, thoughts and feelings, outside of their capacity to vocalise them. Participants engage in creative expression either within or as external parts of programme sessions and this too was highlighted as a valuable outcome of the programme model, as one participant explained:

> "This group doesn't stop when were not here, I am thinking about it, reading writing. What we do is in my mind all the time"
>
> (Kevin, Participant)

Texts including poetry, diaries, and letters are written by participants, and where they are willing, shared with the group, whereas others choose to perform learned texts, or vocalise personal stories, experiences and needs. This adds another dimension to the process moving from personal writing to sharing it with fellow group members, families and friends, and in some cases, the public.

Participants of many Shakespeare programme groups reported writing letters and poetry or sharing performance pieces surrounding their personal experiences. In many cases, the message of these pieces is directed towards somebody familiar, although there are circumstances by which the intended recipient will never receive it. Participants may write letters or poems hypothetically to or about people and experiences from whom they are estranged with no means of contact, or whom are deceased and therefore uncontactable. Many write to or talk about things they would want to communicate with their victims, that their victims either cannot or will not ever receive. These texts could express words unsaid, taking the form of an apology, an emotional outpouring or a making sense experience to others connected to the participant. The writing of such texts arguably offers the only opportunity for participants to communicate any unfinished business with those they may never contact, impacted by or blamed for their actions. There is a wealth of evidence promoting the formulation and process of creating such texts as a therapy (Neimeyer et al, 2009; Neimeyer, 2012; Degroot, 2012; Pennebaker, 2012; Kress et al, 2008). As a common

technique of grief therapy, participants create a letter to the individual containing anything they wish they could have said, in a way that bears no potential repercussion. Grief is a particularly relevant concept to consider when working with prisoners as it holds vast relevance. For example, prisoners may grieve for the people hurt by crime, they may grieve for themselves and the change of direction their life now follows, they may grieve for the impact of this on their families, friends and communities and they may grieve for their life in the 'free world' they have now lost.

The intentions of practitioners in encouraging creative writing across the programme groups is debatably twofold, with two categories of response; literacy and resolution. For some, encouraging participants to write is heavily about improving functional literacy skills, including communication, as statistically many prisoners have low levels of literacy or limited means by which to express themselves; in turn frequently resorting to frustration expression through violence. For others, it is about providing a vehicle for emotional sharing that does not require communication beyond the paper. Practitioners report that prisoners often have much to express but they do not know how to, or feel unable to, due to fear of judgement, ridicule or response. For many, it is a combination of these elements whereby they can develop their literacy and better articulate their feelings, with the freedom that it may never be read by others, but they will have at least had the opportunity to potentially identify and explore their feelings themselves.

As identified in chapter 2, a high proportion of criminal offenders hold a poor educational history and US prisoners are reported to have low reading and writing statistics on entry into the prison system (Kena et al, 2014). The Shakespeare programme considered offered resources, support and or opportunities for participants to read widely and develop their writing abilities, giving them frequent opportunities to share their own writing and gain feedback and developmental support.

Practitioners encourage participants to write down what they are trying to express to: "get it out," "shape their ideas," "find clarity," and "work out exactly what they are trying to say and the best way to say it." Practitioners in this context identify the prevalence of negative emotion in the prison space. Blame and emotional difficulties, for example, are ubiquitous throughout prison communities, as some blame others for their incarceration; the influence of family or geography, for example, operate as large influences on prisoner perceptions. Some prisoners are also imprisoned due to plea deals and circumstances beyond their control eliciting anger. Practitioners express a desire for participants to work towards sharing within their communities, through

applying Shakespeare's words to the context of their own situations (as explored further in chapter 8) as a first step toward expressing their own situations. Writing offers them the opportunity to do this, initially, on a personal basis, as one practitioner explained:

> "They can think very little of the activity when they start writing or thinking about the person, they're writing about…But by thinking for themselves and writing things down they have then already started focussing on themselves and that is who this writing is for. Them. "

In a separate US state, a juvenile practitioner reiterated the power of the written word in offender communities

> "Writing it down is getting it out, even when they don't think they can say it. It is saying something that they might not have said before or learning how to say it better so that they are saying what they mean."
>
> (John, Practitioner)

The written word is hailed as an interim step between identifying personal emotions or issues and being able to express or share them with others. Writing acts as a scaffold for clarification and expression as participant's progress toward being able to express themselves. One practitioner also explained the role of space and time in this matter. Time to consider and express these emotions differed largely between individuals and there is very little requirement forcing them to complete something at the same time. For example, if a participant needs to spend years of the programme working out what they want to write this is completely acceptable and results in no repercussion. Though there will be opportunities throughout the programme for them to present such items, if they do not feel ready, they will be supported and encouraged until they do. This relates closely to the practitioner ethos of facilitating rather than teaching, and equipping participants with the tools to fix themselves rather than fixing them. The participant is here given the guidance and scaffolding to reach their personal goal, without giving them the answers or forcing them to arrive at snap conclusions.

Communication skills and interpersonal skills are identified as lacking across incarcerated communities by existing literature, practitioners and participants. There are many barriers to this, so writing is introduced as one way through which these can be overcome. In some participant groups, participants are enabled to publish a personal message in a playbill to be seen by all attending a group production. These pieces range

in length, detail and focus. Some write two short lines, introducing themselves whereas others take this as an opportunity to share their experiences that year, what they have learned and for some what they have struggled with. Everyone is given equal opportunity to do so regardless of the size of their part or their time in the programme, and as playbills progress over time, participant contributions become longer, more detailed and, crucially, more reflective. Practitioners identify this as a vital opportunity on both individual and public levels;

> "It gives them a chance to connect with people who don't look on them in a positive way. To the outside you know the guys are murderers or monsters or whatever and that small section gives them that moment to say hey, this is me and I have real feelings. Anybody could see that, family, friend or someone who has never seen that side to the guys at all"
>
> (Scott, Practitioner)

Practitioners hope to foster opportunities for wider society to see prisoners on a human level rather than defining them by their offence, as society so often does. Through opportunities for expression beyond the group, practitioners seek to enable participants to demonstrate their capability, understanding, empathy and humanity beyond the offence they have committed.

Participants report the experience of writing or vocalising their stories as opportunities to talk both "with" and "from" themselves. When asked to explain their perceptions and experiences of the programme many chose written expression over verbal communication, offering poems, letters, reports and even quotations on torn corners of documents. It became clear that the written word was at the core of this programme for many. For myself, this was surprising as noted in my research diaries. I did not expect so much written content from participants, and additionally I did not expect the quality and depth at which it was written. On reflection, this mirrors a social stereotype of prisoners, their education and their literacy that were unconsciously biasing my assumptions of low education and poor literacy.

For outsiders, participants use a similar process of sharing their writing where possible or targeting individual relationships or individuals to share their message. For several participants, the written word has offered a vehicle for, first and foremost, opening up within and beyond their communities. Within their communities, being given an opportunity to present and discuss their writing had given them a way to connect with other group members and contribute to wider conversations.

> "The friendship I get there is great. Sometimes I don't want to hear that it has happened in the past as I just wasn't ready to hear what they had to say. I get people say, who are you trying to be or calling me out when I say things that are either not true, not like lies but like things I still need to work through, and they will make me step back and think. But when I write stuff down or work out what I'm going to say, it is good that I get that response that makes me think am I actually being true to myself."
>
> (Barry, Participant)

For some, the notion of public sharing remains difficult and daunting, particularly where relationships are damaged. There are those that cannot or will not make direct contact with those involved in emotional disputes, but still have things they wish to say to them or share with them. Writing for these individuals provides a surrogate space where texts can be aimed at a group or individual though they may never receive it.

> There are guys in here that write stuff to people who can't ever read it. But I have realised that that is not the point. The point is that they write it, they got to say what they wanted to say."
>
> (Colin, Participant)

Though it is important not to claim that this is enough to entirely eradicate emotional conflict and issues, it is identified by participants as one approach through which steps toward this may be achieved. Later, participants may choose to share it with the intended recipient if it is possible or share it with others. Many have support networks such as parents or siblings who encourage their engagement in this activity. Some write knowing that they will be able to share it with people outside of the prison environment:

> "I read my stuff to my mom every week, I call her after every session and tell her what I've done and read to her stuff that I've written."
>
> (Kieran, Participant)

For Kieran, this is a way for him to demonstrate to his mother that he is learning and capable and his mother has been active and encouraging in receiving this. For others, they write for themselves as a mechanism of personal release and clarity:

> "My pen makes the thoughts in my head free, like when they're out they're out and then I can take the time to make sense of them and read them. When I read

> them to others, and I've worked on them I can explain how I actually feel without just being put on the spot and trying to put the words together."
>
> (Darren, Participant)

Whatever the reason or intended audience, participants who write unanimously identify this element of their activities as vital for their emotional development, educational progress, and ability to articulate their issues. Writing offers opportunities for re-establishing and re-humanising participants as a community beyond prison sentences. Programme participants and practitioners identify creative and reflective writing as a widely applicable and popular tool for exploring emotional issues, developing empathy and dealing with fraught, damaged or disconnected relationships.

Practitioners as facilitators maintain the rules of the spaces, introducing activities and ideas for discussion. They do not lead or control the group, which is an important distinction; in this context leadership and facilitation are very different. All practitioners identify themselves as facilitators rather than an authority figure. This also applies to appointed mentors, who are active, long-serving participants who use their experience to enhance facilitation. This encapsulates shared authority, maintaining peace and freedom of input within the groups that the circle approach provides.

All programme groups ban participants from telling peers how to feel, enforcing speaking from the self, whilst encouraging them to share their own feelings. It is acceptable, for example, for an individual to share personal experiences they feel peers may find relevant to their situation, but they can only offer this as a standalone example, not as a moral lesson instructing the peer to imitate in their own situations. The example below, figure 22, details one such intervention made by a practitioner in discussions between one adult male participant, Paul, and his peers. Paul's relationship with his mother was affecting him and he had chosen to share this.

Figure 22: Prisoner Discussion: Speaking from the I

> *"Paul (Participant): I was left out at thirteen. I haven't dealt with the rage and fury to my mom and it's building grief. Grief never goes away; I'm just learning to live with it*
> *Will (Practitioner): So, you're saying you're not over it, but you're dealing with it. I have grief about things, and I don't want to get rid of my grief, but I do want to handle it*
> *Paul: I want to get over the grief, it doesn't serve a hell of a purpose, but forgiving, no man*

Will: I had issues with someone and in the end, I could say three things; I love you, I'm sorry and I forgive you.
Paul: Can you have that conversation with yourself even if your mother is alive and could hear it. Do I have to say it to her?
Will: Only you can answer that for yourself. That is simply what I have said, I am not telling you what you should say
Paul: But, I'm not sorry for thirteen-year-old me. My actions were just a reaction to her actions.
Charlie (peer): Hey now, kids can't raise kids, didn't you tell me she was a mom at 13/14
Sam (peer): Yes, man, she probably thought keeping you out of whatever was happening was the right thing to do, you must forgive her because…
Will: No. Stop. We don't tell each other what to do, you can't tell him whether to forgive her. He has to work that out for himself."

(Research Diary)

Here common practices can be perceived. The practitioner demonstrates sharing from the I; "I had issues with someone and in the end, I could say three things; I love you, I'm sorry and I forgive you." Here a story is told that a peer may find relevant, but the connection is not made for him. Yet we can also see the participant makes that connection for himself, questioning how to apply that to his own discussion. "I-statements" or "speaking from the I" are widely applied to therapeutic practices such as conflict resolution, mediation, and counselling (Hope, 2009; Burr, 1990), supported by a wealth of research the personal voice is an essential tool for issue resolution (Davies, 2006; Sheafor, 2001; Budd & Colvin, 2008; Gee, 2000; Burr, 1990). Reichstein (2014) considers the practice of "speaking from the I" specifically in the context of a Shakespeare programme, explaining that it is a valuable tool used in the circle when an inmate is talking, as the use of "I" encourages their individual responsibility within the group. Each individual story is made significant to add a personal depth to community interactions.

Hierarchy is at the root of many barriers to personal expression within the prison context. It is common for a prison environment to operate under a strict hierarchy. In one form this is official, with prisoners holding few rights and liberties, under the requirement that they must comply with the instruction of prison officials and other persons of authority such as education providers or religious leaders. This is the function of prison, where the loss of rights and liberties is the punishment received (see 2.1.2). In another form, social hierarchy holds sway in the prison contexts. All participant groups

highlighted both kinds of hierarchy as a barrier to personal expression, and crucially many highlighted the equality provided by the circle facilitated but not controlled by the practitioners, as the reason they felt able to contribute. This is also highlighted as one of the first lessons learned by many participants, sharing similar sentiments with the following participant statement:

> "Equality means to be equal and share. But the most supreme equality is persevering to reach the best part of yourself. If you are not loyal to yourself how can you be loyal to anybody. Learning to trust and be loyal here helps me be honest with myself."
>
> (Jeffrey, Participant)

> "Through being guided by [practitioner] to think about myself, I worked out that I don't want to be what my behaviour says I am."
>
> (Sam, Participant)

By learning to identify themselves including their self-worth's as separate from their crime through guided activities, participants report understanding that others are in the same position; all human beings' actions do not have to define them as people. They can engage with what Jones (1999) terms interactive audience and witnessing, whereby the individual receiving therapy is encouraged to understand what it means to be an audience to one's self and to others, and to engage with both to understand the whole perspective of the issue at hand. Though consistently highlighted as a difficult experience, participants state, as practitioners intend, that the structure, support, context and activities of the circle design and application here provide a space within which such epiphanies are enabled.

All disputes and conflicts are raised within the group context and problems are discussed in detail to encourage expression and management of these problems. Onus is put on the individuals to be honest when such issues arise as an expectation of group involvement;

> "If there are **problems, they are ours to overcome**, it's our task to discover the truth in the text and within ourselves. "
>
> (Jeffrey, Participant)

Again, this shift in attitude is drawn out through reflection, with techniques deployed to encourage participants to apply their behaviour on stage or in the group to their

behaviours in life. Many participants report how their participation has directly impacted their behaviour outside of the group. Gary, shared:

> "Last year I saw an **innocent young female** who was pushed into bad situations due to rumours and gossip. That is something we could all learn from; gossip and rumours lead to nothing but trouble"
>
> (Gary, Participant)

Jed, a participant in a different group in a different state, shared almost identical ideas connecting his learning to his daily life, specifically during my visit;

> "You know people not in here making up all kinds of stories about you just because they've seen a woman on the yard. Yeah well gossip and making shit up doesn't do anybody any good now. Have they never heard of Shakespeare"?
>
> (Jed, Participant)

Life outside of the Shakespeare programme, for many, means consistently living behind the metaphorical mask the Shakespeare participants have described. Though the men in the room were thankful, respectful and showed genuine interest in my life beyond my gender or appearance, the wider requirement or expected response to my presence would be judgment. For me to hear about such a stark difference offered me a reflective opportunity for deeper understanding of the environment outside the Shakespeare circles. Many participants explained their achievements within the context of changed attitudes and perceptions, but this exchange demonstrated that, beyond the group, there was a wider prison environment that had not shared the same opportunity for reconsideration.

Participants explain that it is through being taught how to reflect by being put into situations and activities within which they must do so, that they have learned to understand their role and how they need to move forward to make amends for past behaviours and progress beyond that which their history dictates.

> "Outside we are, I, am the bottom of the barrel as a prisoner, or so they say. Outside I am not even good enough to be in the barrel. I just don't exist."
>
> (Codie, participant)

Participants reported not seeing themselves as human beings and part of society at large, rather perceiving themselves to be separate from it. The quotation from Codie, above,

not only identifies where he felt society perceived him, but also where he positioned himself in the hierarchy of humanity. This statement alone is a powerful representation of society and the way an offender feels when labelled as such, but this was not the whole statement. He added "I just didn't exist. Now I know that I do and that means something." This statement brought agreement from those listening to the discussion, evoking other commentary and statements such as:

> "This thing we do gives me the person to function in life, to actually be"
>
> (Spencer, Participant)

> "This programme gave me something that I have now, now I exist, not just to me."
>
> (Les, Participant)

This concept of realisation of existence seems beyond comprehension, how one now knows that they exist, but the type of existence one is living varies greatly between even the closest of people, and as one participant articulated:

> "I can exist without living, and I can live without existing"
>
> (Paul, Participant)

Exploring personal identity and identifying the self-change in terms of life perception he believes himself to have experienced through participation in the programme.

> "*Alfie (Prisoner): "I found a better identity here that I needed... I'm here reintroducing myself to myself and no other place really allows that. Most of the people out there [other inmates} don't care about that shit. Just being better criminals when they get out. Not me. Here. Then there. Appreciating the better parts of me, different faces of myself. I have moved other people, appreciating the better and different things about myself. I didn't know shit about Shakespeare, but I see shit happen with him. I want that change; I wish that for everybody. Getting too old for the same, well, shit.*
>
> *Me: What does that mean, that you've seen shit happen with him?*
>
> *Alfie: Gets me outside of what I'm, I was, doing. The problem is doing what's comfortable, not what's real. Putting stuff outside my head and seeing how it bounces off other people. Yeah Shakespeare gets me where I need to be.*
>
> *Me: Where do you need to be?*

> *Alfie: Just better, knowing myself and people knowing myself."*
>
> (Research diary)

Offenders identifying or finding the true human that they are beneath what they commonly refer to as "the mask" or "my covers" is a recurrent principle throughout the data set. Knowing who oneself is or finding one's own identity external to one's peers or one's history is a difficult concept, regardless of background or experience, but the men involved in this programme do not overlook it. In verbal discussion, over a fifth of verbal contributors explicitly expressed this experience, with no group member ever being met with disagreement by other members of the group, who mostly nodded or made quiet statements of "yes" or "for sure" in agreement.

Another participant simply stated, "[Shakespeare programme] took my mask off, out there I used to have lots of masks, depends on who I'm with and what they want to see." Another adds "I still do, but that's out there." I am careful not to draw meaning from claims without a certainty that that is what they are expressing. For me, this is a key part of placing the participant's authority on the same level as my own as a researcher, therefore after any ambiguous statement I asked, "what does that mean", sometimes multiple times, as necessary. The participant, Gary, responded:

> "Well, you don't get it, but people expect things. They expect there, and, on the outside, they just expect you to be a certain way or speak or whatever. You have to show up to them, or you think you do."
>
> (Gary, participant)

Many in the group talk about this in a collective sense, praising their peers, friends and mentors for collaboratively stripping away the walls as a community, and the further effect that this has had on a reduction in violence within the prison. Prison officials identified this as a key to the success of this programme where the ethos of the prison has changed through more and more groups engaging with Shakespeare, their emotions, and the way the prisoners choose to address disputes both between themselves and with those in authority. This expanding change, or ripple effect, is a crucial finding reiterated across the data sites considered in this thesis

7.5 Prisoners making progress and completing milestones

> "Shakespeare helped me to put the pieces together for myself. You hear so much negative stuff and you make bad choices and then you come here, and you don't. In here I learned to be myself, to be better when I want to say no, I can."
>
> (Cam, Participant)

Feeling proud and intelligent has internal and external potential for personal and educational development (Caldarella et al, 2011; Burnett, 2002; Boler, 1999; Cain & Dweck, 1995), and there is a school of thought aligning self-esteem and self-belief with educational achievement and attainment (Brown, 2014). Families, friends, and associated communities alike consistently report low expectations of offenders, and in turn, prisoners report feeling isolated, rejected or disowned (Codd, 2013; Naser & La Vigne, 2006; Harvey, 2005). These experiences of isolation or perceptions of separation from families are not, however, always accurate, either where a lack of communication creates and exacerbates conflicts or divisions that both sides feel is coming from the other. An ex-participant, Andy, shared heavily on this issue where, after his release, he went on to reconnect with family who he thought had turned away from him:

> "I went to my mother's funeral and there are all these people there and I get up and I speak. And then after everybody is saying to me hey man where have you been. And they don't mean which prison, they mean why I cut them off. All that time in my head they didn't want to know me, but they cared and wanted to know that I was doing ok."
>
> (Andy, Graduate)

Participants recurrently report feeling separate from, or judged by, their wider communities, but the programme groups offer opportunities for these connections to be re-established through demonstration of positive activity and communication development. Milestones are a crucial way to recognise and offer opportunities for this. Programme participants can demonstrate their capabilities beyond convictions. Practitioners encourage participants to recognise themselves and all others as capable humans, regardless of their history, and demonstrate this capability to society at large.

Many participants share a poor history of commitment and, particularly amongst younger participants, there is a shared apathetic disregard for commitment upon undertaking their programme. Throughout the history of the project, participants and practitioners alike have endorsed a crucial outcome to be committing to and completing

something positive. When asked what he thought participants stood to gain from a Shakespeare programme, one practitioner shared:

> "Some of the most powerful moments are when the guys for the first time in their life complete something. And it's a lot about what the programme is about to."
>
> (Will, Practitioner)

Adult programme groups have expanded and developed significantly since their introduction over 20 years ago, with original programme groups now so oversubscribed with committed participants that additional sub-groups have been implemented. A crucial motivation for this is the wider application of the lessons learned through the process to the wider prison community.

Unless dismissal becomes essential, practitioners work to ensure whole group involvement and inclusion. They strive to see achievement, success, and pride within all in the group, where to be proud of a positive activity is foreign for many participants. Global education systems are frequently reliant on the achievement of milestones. For mainstream UK students, the progression to at least GCSE level, gaining at least 5 A*-C / 4-9 grades are hailed as the minimum ideal standard. For the US, the GED, or General Education Diploma is the equivalent qualification. Traditional behavioural psychology has placed heavy significance on milestones in behaviour learning, from early conditioning and reward experiments (Skinner, 1935; Pavlov 1902), to models of educational psychology and common classroom practices of reward and discipline (Moorhouse & Trapp, 2016; Bartholomew, 2007; Skiba et al, 2002).

Many prisoners hold neither GED nor GCSE qualifications (Justice Centre, 2013; Prison Reform Trust, 2015), yet studies show that amongst those who achieve these educational milestones, recidivism is far lower (Kim, 2010; Cronin, 2011). Not having achieved such standardised educational milestones correlates with the likelihood of reoffending (Justice Centre, 2013), low self-esteem and negative self-image (Garner, 2014; Booth & Gerard, 2011; Milburn et al, 2014), and can contribute to mental health issues (Hart & Green, 2011). These are all issues prisoners report experience of, prior to programme participation. One shared;

> "I didn't think I would make it a month. Tell you the truth I wasn't even planning on it. But now I did, and I have done my shows and I'll keep at it and achieving things and learning things to be proud of every single time"
>
> (Frankie, Participant)

With most participants reporting a lack of previous opportunity for success and a feeling of incapability, programme practitioners actively fight against labelling them as 'risky' or 'difficult', but rather 'capable' people. One practitioner explained;

> "Everyone has their problems, sure I do, but labelling them just makes them feel like they are limited by that thing. They're not here for that, they're here to see they can be just as good as any other."
>
> (Will, Practitioner)

This approach seeks not to trivialise past behaviours, but to transform them into learning experiences. By presenting participants opportunities to achieve, they have a real opportunity to demonstrate to the public their unexpected capabilities. By demonstrating that they can achieve, perform and understand Shakespeare, and offer valuable and insightful contributions, they are offered a fresh chance to change perceptions.

> "I used to be on the programme, and now I advocate for it. That's not just for me, the guys on the programme must know they're cared about and that there are people who value and care for them. Prisoners are not trash; they are people; they are not a waste."
>
> (Tommy, Graduate)

Practitioners and participants alike identify milestones to mark achievement, demonstrate success and cement learning, both for the prisoner themselves and to the wider community, and within and beyond the bars within which the Shakespeare programme groups are held. All use milestones as a vehicle for recognising success, but crucially, not as a reward for it. Due to the continual nature of the project there are consistent milestones and opportunities to cement learning but there is never a "final" completion whereby the offender leaves the programme having completed everything, as there is with traditional education programmes that celebrate their milestones with the completion of some form of assessment. All participants who had been involved with a milestone performance shared that they were "proud," "shocked" or "moved" by it and in addition, they all shared that they have learned through it:

> "So, the villainy you teach me, I will not execute for I will give you the right instruction being an exemplary example by becoming and doing this [Shakespeare programme]. If I am marked to die, I will be enough to give my loss purpose. I hope there will be others who carry on for he that matriculates with

> me today shall be my [Shakespeare Programme] brother, remembering this above all, to thine own self be true."
>
> (Carmine, Participant)

Matriculation is reported to be a profound turning point, as many have never committed to something through to completion before. One explains:

> "I didn't even finish high school, hell I don't always finish my meal. Committing to something and finishing it or even just celebrating finishing a part of it, that's a big deal."
>
> (Jimmy, Participant)

Participants indicate milestones to be a moment of epiphany in their experience. Andy, a successful graduate of the programme talked extensively about the inability to cheat to receive reward;

> "I could short-cut everything in my life. I had a psychiatrist once tell me 'man you have no chance of shortcutting everything' and I said, 'show me one aspect of my life where I haven't.' Work, relationships, school and home, I have shortcutted everywhere to the extreme. But when I stop with the question "who are you?" I realised I couldn't work out who I was because I had been everything and stuck with nothing. So, I decided to define who I wasn't…being around a group of guys who are so dedicated was life altering."
>
> (Andy, Programme Graduate)

Like many participants, Andy shared his expectations of the programme in relation to success:

> "My motives for joining, well honestly they weren't all true, I figured if I looked like I was doing this good thing I wouldn't get transferred and I would be able to stay at this prison, locally. But I figured pretty quickly that I couldn't get by like that, this wasn't that kind of programme. When I saw how much time the people involved in this programme put in to make it great, I knew how disappointed in me they would be if I was caught letting them down. At that point I started to change."
>
> (Andy, Programme Graduate)

Andy, as with the reports of many participants, assumed he could feign successful completion whilst not having to genuinely progress. However, like many others, he

discovered that there was nothing to be gained by undertaking this approach. Those who have not experienced a programme milestone often report a similar inability to understand this prior to experience. Carey, a long serving adult participant, shared:

> "Matriculation is big, like speaking is your state of the union speech. **People leave traces of their greatness whatever they do**. Matriculation is your moment to do it. If our teachers and supporters are investing their time and belief in us, then it's a change to give back and show them how far we have come…Forget the history but were in the middle of life and our circles build us. **This is personal, it's yours.** My father or past isn't gonna affect my matriculation. I want some recognition, I want to show what I've got to show and hell they aren't just gonna say alright, they're gonna say great. **I won't mess it up man, this is my moment**. "
>
> (Carey, Participant)

In the prison context of mistrust and fear, matriculation is described by many participants as a confirmation of community, with opportunities to share in and support others with their personal sharing. One participant, Carmine, shared his matriculation speech with me as his demonstration of value, it stated:

> **"I will not be stopped; I will not use my obstacles as a crutch.** Rather I will shine light on my darkest days and make sure to absorb the nutrients and grow after the rain. When my opportunities arise**, I will do good things,** and nothing will grieve me more heartily indeed if I cannot do 10000 more."
>
> (Carmine, Participant)

Throughout his speech Carmine credits his experiences to the Shakespeare programme as teaching him that he can change toward positive behaviours. He holds a lot of blame towards those involved in his crime, identifying those involved as destructors explaining:

> "Soon my destructors will beg for the utterance of my tongue **as if they never wanted me to s**uffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. Knowing all the time **their intentions were cruel**."
>
> (Carmine, Participant)

In combining Shakespeare's words with his own, Carmine used the language as a vehicle to express his own fears and future predictions. In his wider speech, he shares a sadness

for their actions, and a claim of certainty that due to his participation he will not return to them, post-incarceration. For Carmine, this programme has taught him that although others influenced his behaviour, ultimately, he chose his actions and it is his response to these external influences that can reshape his future. Carmine actively, like many prisoners on this programme, claims to be "finding himself," and "working out what I'm about." Many offenders associate their behaviour with themselves and their identity, just as society conflates the crime with the individual that committed it. However, the programme offers opportunities to identify a different life route that does not make their criminal behaviours an unavoidable inevitability. The following quotations are taken from others who reciprocate Carmine's programme experiences exemplifying his learning:

> "This **Shakespeare it helped me to see how I was**, **who I really was** and that wasn't what the **prisoner tag made me look to be**. I had always thought that I was my thoughts **but that was wrong, I was thinking wrong,** I can be and think and change whatever I want to. That's why I live my life now. I have a job and my lovely wife, and I miss the Shakespeare guys but I'm never going back."
>
> (Andy, Programme Graduate)

> "**What I put in, I got more out.** I am proud of me, instead of ashamed of me and my family were too. They were there and proud of what I was doing and who I had been able to be."
>
> (Tommy, Programme Graduate)

There are two key issues at play here that successfully achieving the programme goals addressed. Firstly, the self-identification and perception as outlined here, whereby participants describe finding their identity through these programme groups and the second surrounds the perception of others, identifying that judgement of any individual based on behaviours is not a productive lens through which to observe society. Mack, a long-term adult participant, shared:

> "There are **certain types of people I didn't want to know**, especially people that have hurt kids or whatever, man I **thought they were the lowest**. I got past that in here, people care about each other and take the time to check-in and see that you're alright. **It doesn't matter if you're a murderer, thief or whatever the hell you are, you're all the same**."
>
> (Mack, Participant)

Humanity is cited as the core motivation through these programme groups, and participants identify milestones to be opportunities for making these experiences explicit and recognising the connections and achievements made. The culmination of these circles in identity and the importance of the milestone associated success found in these programme groups is articulated by Ian, who explained;

> "Yes. The criminal justice system is imperfect, it has forgotten how to be humane and that we are human. But we forget that too and it's important to remember that there ain't no us and them, were just one big collective society and our actions will cause a reaction. We are doing something great here and when we are successful and good, we can show that off to each other, ourselves and the outside. It's like proof that we can all be just as good as each other. This Shakespeare gave me a chance to show that for sure."
>
> (Ian, Participant)

Across all programme groups, there is a key focus on enabling participants to think, or rethink, their life choices and decisions in the context that they are worth and capable of more than their crime. What milestones offer are crucial opportunities for self-reflection, recognition from external sources, and collation of the work conducted to reach this point. For practitioners and participants alike, milestones provide markers through which participants cement their learning and progress.

To conclude this section, I want to use the words of Carmine, a participant whose matriculation speech offered a detailed list of every individual who had visited the programme, offered support or treated them well, including myself. In a ten-minute speech he listed every person, explaining what role they played in his journey to matriculation. His final note was a thanks to each of these individuals for motivating him to reach a milestone he identified as beyond his reach;

> "To all the guests … [list of names] and Laura. **Thank you for sacrificing your time and seeing me and us as human beings."**
>
> (Carmine, Participant)

Milestones offer opportunities to change the way participants think or perceive the world and their role within it, and the way they are perceived; each element crucial to rehabilitation and reconnection with society beyond bars. This is best articulated by the participants who experience it, with consistent dialogues surrounding the event as "life-changing," "moving" and "affirming" surrounding participant perceived outcomes. There

is no doubt, however, across both participant and practitioner testimonies that milestone completion holds many purposes for the progression of participants, but it is not by any means a reward that can be assumed or expected.

7.6 Programme impact and defining success

This chapter has sought to answer the research question: What were the perceived and intended programme outcomes by and for Practitioners and Participants? Further than this, it has served as a detailed discussion of the potential this programme holds to challenge behaviours, personal beliefs and social structures, to work towards rehabilitation from the voices of those most impacted by it; the participants.

Here we have explored the reported outcomes of the Shakespeare programme groups as a whole from the perspectives of practitioners and participants. As outlined in the introduction to this chapter, beyond the best intentions of any teacher or practitioners, the intention or objective of sessions and programme groups may be designed, but the only true measure of what has been learned can be taken from the learner. In this chapter, I have given voice to critical outcomes from the projects uncovered by this research, through the combination of subject matter and project delivery. Humanity is at the heart of this; participants being treated as human, seeing themselves and human and being able to demonstrate their humanity to society at large is a crucial outcome of the combined approaches seen here. Such humanisation is argued to be largely foreign within the prison system and according to my findings, participants are in turn further othered from, and rejecting of, the confines placed upon them. This implies a need for rethinking in the way prisoners are treated. This is not to suggest that prisons should be nice or homely places: they are a punishment, but they should also be productive places where change can be nurtured and supported, rather than negative behaviours and attitudes being further embedded in a place supposed to resolve them.

Throughout the programme, participants are permitted autonomy, authority and choice within the scaffold of a positive environment. As such, they do not feel dictated to, and therefore do not reject such education the way many report having rejected schooling. The participants feel they have a choice and through this are equipped with the skills to critically assess their way of thinking and shift their perceptions toward positive behaviours. Though this may not be a unanimous change, many participants from all groups reported such freedom as a motivator and driver for their personal change. Shakespeare can be key in this, (as considered in chapter 6), where Shakespeare provides them with resources and source material from which to make these

considerations, but crucially, it is the format, set up and ethos of the programme groups that enable such learning to occur.

Being able to express themselves as participants without fear of judgment or repercussion is fostered by the project to provide useful and productive outlets for issues and dilemmas. By encouraging and facilitating reflection, the programme helps participants to reflect on their actions. It is expected that by being placed in prison, prisoners should think about their actions and engage in this kind of reflection. However, according to participants this rarely happens organically. The programme provides a structured yet free space, where participants have the freedom to engage but also the support to scaffold and facilitate progress. By marking this success and acknowledging this also, prisoners are given a number of reflective opportunities to consolidate their learning and consider their shifts and changes, calling for them to express explicitly developments and learning from the process. By receiving a qualification, participants in a traditional education programmes feel they have achieved once the course is complete. For these participants, this course is never complete and therefore they are encouraged by this feeling of success, but also equipped structurally to engage in a continuous journey of learning and change.

The next chapters will synthesize the data and arguments from these three findings chapters and conclude this thesis, considering the implications for society, the criminal justice system and this field of research drawn from this study.

8.0 From De-humanisation to Rehumanisation

If you prick us, do we not bleed?

(Merchant of Venice, III, i)

Returning to the opening quotation of this thesis, the question Shakespeare himself proposed, if we should "condemn the fault and not the actor of it?" (Measure for measure, II, i), this chapter draws together the preceding findings chapters and synthesises existing discussion throughout chapters 5, 6 and 7, to determine how the programme may contribute to tackling offending behaviours. Thus, the findings discussed in this chapter may contribute to ongoing social, academic and political debate surrounding what punitive sentences, such as incarceration, are specifically condemning: the fault, the offender, both or neither. This chapter considers the dehumanisation of 'The Prisoner,' then explores the dehumanised human: key findings. Then it considers how programme practices reportedly enabled the discovery of prisoners as human beings both to themselves and to society at large, followed by an exploration of the implications of this, to rehumanisation and beyond. Finally, the chapter concludes with Shakespeare: Playwright, character, member, which consolidates this discussion chapter. This discussion chapter considers how perceptions of the programme groups considered here could provide insight into a potential way to condemn the fault, i.e. crime, while also working on the actor of it, i.e. the offender. If the aim of the criminal justice system is truly to reduce crime (see 2.1), I argue that this programme has potential to facilitate real change, based on insights heavily drawn from those who claim to have been directly impacted by it: the participants.

This chapter emerges from an overwhelming connection grounded in the concept of "humanity" or "being human" underpinning the individual practices and outcomes discovered. It explains how, through engagement in the programme, prisoners navigate dehumanisation and rehumanisation pre-, during and post-incarceration. This thesis thus far has detailed various potential programme impacts, drawn from the perspectives of both practitioners and participants. However, underpinning each of these findings was an overarching thread relating to the notion of prisoners as human beings, from the dehumanisation of offenders to a need to rehumanise them to themselves and to society. Here, this is perceived to be the opportunity to be seen as, to

identify oneself as, and to identify with being part of, not separate from, humanity, thus facilitating opportunities for their rehumanisation in the eyes of society at large.

As explained throughout, the public perceptions of prisoners and the value of educational prison initiatives, including Shakespeare programmes, is heavily weighted towards negativity. Such negative comments appear about prisoners and initiatives for them in the media, often linked with the low esteem in which they are held by society in general (Drake, 2012; Nicklin, 2014). The programme works to subvert these preconceptions, enabling prisoners to demonstrate to others, and to themselves, that they are human beings and part of the wider community. Participants are scaffolded through developing, self-expressing and acquiring new lenses through which to identify themselves as human beings and to demonstrate to society at large their humanity beyond their conviction. It must be reiterated at this point that the programme does not claim any ability to resolve all criminal behaviours; it is not a one-size-fits-all approach to ending crime. Rather, it demonstrates the ability to offer crucial skills equipment, emotional development opportunities and alternative education to support and scaffold individuals in making personal change. Crucially, the programme groups enable participants to be treated as human and to explore themselves and their peers as part of humanity.

The data illustrates the perception that the participants are enabled to demonstrate this identity to society at large; the same society they perceive themselves as, and are perceived to be, 'othered' from (see 1.2). As discussed throughout this thesis, before the commencement of this project the majority of information available consisted of media articles and the self-professed impact on recidivism in states where recidivism can be over 70% . However, this thesis, and indeed practitioners, have suggested recidivism to be an unhelpful and limited measure of success that does little to illustrate the true impact of the groups. This is particularly true when considering that many participants are incarcerated for lengthy sentences, and some current participants have been involved from programme commencement, almost 25 years ago. The programme in advertisement, publicity and, to a very limited extent, publication usually in the media or online, was claimed to be "successful" but this research has provided a vital exploration of the meaning of this "success" from the perspective of the insiders, shifting the perception away from prisoners as statistics, to prisoners as individuals with their own life stories and experiences to be heard, explored and engaged with. The research documented here has contributed a transitional, qualitative insight into a field of

research heavily dominated by generalisation and quantitative statistics, by illustrating individualised, claimed successes and giving a voice to the often-unheard incarcerated population.

The following sections will serve to consolidate the overall arguments of this thesis. The previous findings chapters 5, 6 & 7 have detailed data surrounding each specific research question, with multiple practices, motivations and outcomes emerging as discoveries. However, the perception of prisoners as human, or indeed less than human, was a recurrent motivation, issue and outcome for the programme participants considered. The key finding of this research is drawn from a combination of individualised and collective outcomes, based on responses to programme practices and the subject matter. The programme participants detailed significant potential to challenge behaviours, personal beliefs and social perceptions to work towards change, reintegration and overall, rehumanisation.

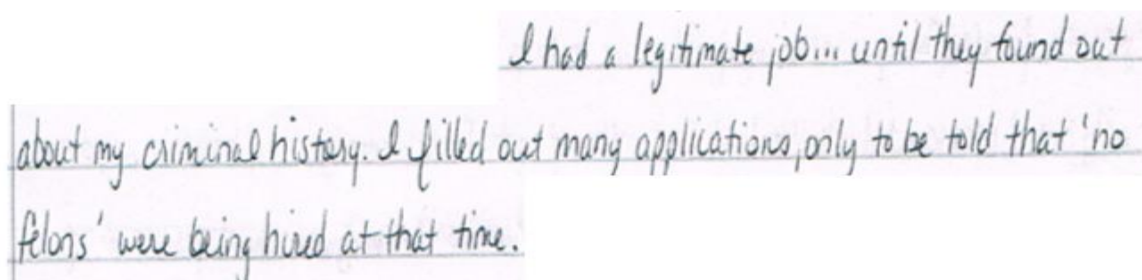
8.1 The dehumanisation of "The Prisoner"

As highlighted in the literature review onwards, it is well documented that prisoners, by virtue of the "prisoner" label, are placed in a position of dehumanisation across mainstream society and throughout the experience of incarceration. They are deemed to be less than human; seen as a lesser being than the supposedly non-criminally convicted members of society at large. Though there is significant academic research demonstrating this as a false construct, the binary 'good guy, bad guy' perspective, is heavily embedded in society. Regardless of significant research, there remains little evidence in policy and practice attempting to challenge or overcome such perceptions (Werner, 2017; NCJRS, 2013; Vasiljevic & Viki, 2013; Codd, 2013; Goff et al, 2008; Werner, 2007.)

Not only are prisoners placed in this position in society, they reported an active awareness that this is how they are seen, building up a counter-prejudice, equally based on assumptions about how society sees them upon release. Further, more often than not, opportunities for employment, housing and progress are impacted by the possession of a prison record (Schneider, 2018; Bell, 2014; Pager, 2003) . Thus, the prisoner, regardless of the fact that they have served their sentence in line with the requirements of the appropriate criminal justice system, cannot easily integrate with society as they are expected to.

Due to a wide variety of factors, prisoners are placed in a position of dehumanisation during, after and even before their conviction (see 1.2; 2.1; 5.4). This was well explained by a participant who did not profess to be innocent and was also on his second prison sentence. Upon release from prison, despite having operated by the rules, due to his felon status, he lost his employment and was unable to gain more, which led him, he argues, back to his criminal behaviour:

Figure 23: Prisoner Writing: Employment Options



I had a legitimate job... until they found out about my criminal history. I filled out many applications, only to be told that 'no felons' were being hired at that time.

(Dean, participant)

There is little space for nuance, individual appraisal and shifting perspectives of the typical "prisoner". This may be through societal stereotype and collective misunderstandings (Chapman, 2013), structural injustices (Pettit and Western, 2004; Western, Kling and Weiman, 2000; PRT, 2019; NCJRS, 2017), and segregating and isolating discourses (Codd, 2013; Naser & La Vigne, 2006; Harvey, 2005) that dominate both societies beyond prisons and communities within them (see 2.0). In this research, being "human" and the concept of prisoners as human beings was the strongest and most widely reported outcome of programme participation. This was true in relation to all three research questions conveyed through the construction and delivery of activities and the specific use of Shakespeare. This chapter will now connect the outcomes reported in the previous findings chapters, illustrating the overarching outcome of "rehumanisation", thus presented as the dominant finding of this thesis.

Rehumanising prisoners means seeing and treating prisoners as human beings and though it is the most widely reported practice of the programmes, it is heavily absent from modern society. What is more frequently connected with society at large is an explicit dehumanisation of prisoners and ex-prisoners. Specifically, the ability for prisoners to feel as though they are equal to other members of society at large and be

able to identify themselves as part of the community beyond bars was perceived by participants to be significantly lacking . The first is the initial treatment of the offender, whereby the first step in this programme appears to be the impact of a drastic change in the way the prisoners are treated within the group. As part of the prison at large, they are controlled in every aspect with most rights freedoms and liberties removed and little opportunity given for individual self-expression, prisoners are arguably dehumanised by the prison itself. By nature, it is dehumanising as it removes even basic rights, liberties and freedoms experienced by adults to choose when to eat, sleep, wash and function. Even recreation time reportedly felt like an element of this routine, as this is heavily limited to the confines, restrictions and will of the establishment. To an extent this is understandable, as the role of the prisons is to remove rights, liberties and freedoms that prisoners would have otherwise had, living a free life in the wider world. However, the extent to which they are dehumanised may be seen to move beyond punishment, arguably towards segregation and isolation from society and the world around them. Prison, according to the data, appears to exacerbate, not placate, these issues. Though prison may serve to isolate prisoners and protect society in the short-term, the long-term implications are far more challenging to overcome for both prisoners and society.

On a basic level, prisons demonstrate control, confinement, and de-individualisation. When entering the prison, prisoners are mostly expected to wear certain clothes, stick to a certain structured timetable and follow the regime. According to the participants and witnessed by me, there appears to be little space for nuance and individualisation in the current prison setup. Prisoners report losing their name, their identities, and being assigned with a number that in many prisons becomes their predominant title. Most frequently, from my own experience while collecting this data, I heard guards refer to participants as “inmate” or “you” rather than calling anyone by their actual name. The prison creates a caricature of the prisoner that we all learn to understand and recognise in popular culture. They become images that we see in newspapers every day; what it means to look like, sound like and be branded a prisoner. This is a message that society is taught as children. To reiterate from the introduction (see 1.2) it is rare that anyone enquires about Scooby Doo’s latest costumed ghost or Batman’s latest capture after the police have taken away the so-called ‘bad guys. For prisoners engaging in the programme groups, the individualised approach undertaken by the programme was something unique and significant that was foreign within the prison environment, demonstrating the prisoners’ ability to identify something that is argued to be absent within the larger prison system.

This is a powerful outcome that participants, practitioners, graduates and stakeholders in these programme groups consistently reiterate as a key process in criminal rehabilitation. As a researcher, I do not necessarily find that joining the Shakespeare programme has become the answer to breaking gang culture, prejudice or any other flawed mentality for all prisoners, and this, I am told, does still exist within the culture of the prison. Most of them are not suddenly model citizens, and according to themselves, their peers and practitioners, they will continue to exhibit negative behaviours as a mechanism for survival. That considered, one member of senior management in one prison claimed it has reduced its average rates of violence; the atmosphere of the space has changed, and I was told much of that is born out of a respect culture reversal, moving from respecting trouble, violence and negative behaviours, to a culture where what is respected is the fraternity of brothers, as they describe it. This has spread and multiplied throughout several of the prison environments, with every housing unit in one institution holding a circle of its own at the time of data collection. This is not true for all, but for many there is a shared expression of understanding of oneself, and an acceptance without strings attached, with the previous lessons they are taught from their society or culture, family life or faith having been removed.

> "I have learned you have to carry yourself how you want to be seen. If I play the dumbass nobody got good expectations of me, but that's not what I want people to see."
>
> (Carmine, Participant)

Nevertheless, these assertions and discriminatory behaviours are just as common within prisons as they are throughout society at large. Inter-member prejudice, relationships and self-perceptions are challenged daily within this programme and significantly deconstructed as appropriate. Where typical societal attitudes toward offenders reflect an attitude of dehumanisation, it is important to consider the impact knowledge of this has on prisoner experience, and how participation in their Shakespeare programme has helped them to understand, respond to, and work towards altering these perceptions.

The rehumanisation does not have only to impact life beyond incarceration, with many participants serving significantly lengthy sentences. It is questioned what value offering such a programme has to those unlikely ever to be released from prison, or likely to spend many more years in prison before consideration for release. However, long serving participants, once overcoming their own issues, adopt roles for positive change housed within the prison environment. They are able to use the status that comes with

being a long-term prisoner to work with prisoners who are younger, on lesser sentences or are at earlier phases in their journeys toward change. Instead of criminals inspiring other criminals to commit more crime, ex-offenders are able to inspire positive change and engagement. As one practitioner stated,

> "If you spend long enough in prison, you'll gain a PhD in criminology – and that is not a good thing"
>
> (Will, Practitioner).

A prison is a space with captive minds and an environment within which the predominant mindset is likely to be inclined towards criminality. By equipping those who make the prison environment their long-term home with the skills as fostered by the programme, a different type of peer-to-peer mentality has the potential to emerge, focussing on more positive futures.

Participation and engagement in social issues helps to develop and facilitate the connection between marginalised communities and wider society (Prentki & Preston, 2013). By developing a sound identification of the issues causing divisions and exploring them to not only identify them, but to consider strategies to challenge or overcome them, participants are enabled to establish strategies and approaches to reconnect with society at large.

Participants in these programme groups work to offer demonstrations and proof to society that they are human, holding much more value to society than a mere criminal sentence. Through their Shakespeare programme they are enabled to demonstrate to society at large that they are indeed human. For some, this means reaching out to family to restore damaged connections. Family, friends and the wider community may be invited to performances or sharing events, allowing the participants opportunities to share a glimpse of their capabilities beyond what is expected of them within the prison context. Many prisoners apply their learning to further projects such as contacting the outside world through written or verbal communications, peer mentoring within the prison itself and seeking avenues to demonstrate and share within both practical and emotional domains that they are indeed part of humanity.

The programme considered in this thesis holds the potential to rehumanise prisoners to the public eye, but more than this, to themselves, using Shakespeare as a starting block for reintegration. The spectacle of punishment is not a deterrent to criminal behaviour, but the spectacle of Shakespeare, crucially, of participants willingly

and openly demonstrating personal potential, achievement and change, has helped to facilitate both prisoners and society at large reaccepting each other. These programme groups change perceptions to both show participants and demonstrate to society, the humans they are, facilitating reintegration with the wider world. The range of characters and emotions in Shakespeare's works springboards reflection across multiple perspectives, that can be applied to the participants' life experiences. Responses to criminality should, by all means, provide punishment commensurate with the crime but they should also serve to challenge behaviour and make a change.

If people on both sides of the prison walls learn to treat the other with humanity and dignity, prison may successfully fulfil its intended rehabilitative purposes, whilst still facilitating a consequence for criminal behaviour and protecting society. This connection holds the potential to be achieved through this exemplar approach. In turn, the offender must become an ex-offender and therefore a member of society at large, treating fellow humans in line with the laws, accepted behaviours and humanity that they expect themselves. For many of the voices in this data set, though they acknowledge that this is seemingly obvious and straight forward, the need for rehumanisation both for themselves and from the outside world is essential for true rehabilitation and genuine change to occur.

Many cite participation in their Shakespeare programme as "a good choice", "the best option" or in one case "the first good decision I have made in my life". In his creative input, one prisoner writes "What would define a wasted life?" A powerful question in this context where there is a repeated feeling from the offenders that they made a bad choice and "ruined", "wasted" or "ended" their lives. This is an attitude reinforced through institutional pressure and convention. Prisoners are lesser than the guards, and lesser than other human beings in society, due to their status as an offender or because they are incarcerated. An prisoner read to the group "All the world's a cage," a play on Shakespeare's original "all the world's a stage" (*As You Like It*, II, vii) referring to the world at large, but also identifying the prison as a microcosm of the reality of society. Though choice is important, more frequently than this was the impact of knowing how those exerting the control over prisoner choices perceive them, and a profound awareness of the labels that society places on them, the offenders, as a collective group to be regarded and treated as such. Many prisoners explain that demanding being treated humanely or with any degree of equality is like demanding

respect, it is not guaranteed. It is useful to consider the input of Frances Crook (in Roberts et al, 2010) here, who stated that:

> "For too long it has been easy for politicians to treat certain sections of the population as 'other', implying that they are less than human. Insulting labels that define the action or illness as if it defines the whole person inhibit that individual from confronting the problem and moving on; just as importantly, the label prevents us from understanding as it becomes all we see."
>
> (p.30)

Though this specifically referred to the impact that institutional dehumanisation has, Crook also identifies clearly that to label an individual may inhibit the way they are self-labelled, self-depreciated and become incapable of further progression. Therefore, where many of the offenders participating within these groups now identify themselves as human, articulate their reasons for this and state they have drawn it out of their programme experience, it is vital to discuss these reasons in detail.

8.2 Exploring the De-humanised Human: Key Findings

Participants' reported outcomes connected to both programme practices and the use of Shakespeare as a subject matter, with differing programme elements impacting participants on a case-by-case basis. For some, their reported outcomes had very little connection to Shakespeare as a subject matter, but rather the programme practices and ethos undertaken by the programme were that which they reported to be most impactful. These outcomes were varied but continually related to personal development goals, educational gain, emotional exploration, progress and, critically, rehumanisation. For others, it was specifically the use of Shakespeare as a source material on the programme that was deemed the most impactful, with responses surrounding Shakespeare as a teacher; engagement with Shakespeare characters as mentorship; Shakespeare texts as moral directors and Shakespeare as a reflective source, from which personal reflections and explorations could be made.

Some of these ideas can be seen in existing prison Shakespeare literature. In Laura Bates *(2013) Shakespeare Saved my Life* she quotes prisoners from segregated housing who discussed Shakespeare's relevance to real life. Her participants articulate parity between Shakespeare's characters and stories as providing vehicles for insight, guidance and personal reflection:

> "Straight up! Shakespeare seen this essence of life. He put his plays how the world really is. You read his play and you're like 'Wow, this stuff is going on! This Stuff is for real!'"
>
> (Bates, 2013. p.42).

Further Bates' participants identified Shakespeare as a vehicle or tool:

> "And now we want Shakespeare to work for other people as it's worked for us, as a tool for use, not just a compilation of great stories"
>
> (Bates, 2013. p.245).

These articulations are not dissimilar to the words of my own prison-based participants as they make connections between Shakespeare's works and their own pasts and express this perception of Shakespeare as both the creator of relevant and relatable stories and characters, and a vehicle or tool for rehabilitation (see 6.0). However, the iteration of Shakespeare as a "teacher," "brother" or "equal" was largely absent in existing prison Shakespeare literature but has emerged powerfully through this data. Similarly, articulations of Shakespeare's learning potential were present in existing literature, particularly from the perspective of practitioners, as can be seen in the work of Bates (2013), Pensalfini (2017) and Trounstine (2001), previously explored in Chapter 1 Shakespeare, Society and Systems of Criminal Justice. However, the unique articulations from participant perspectives unveiled a new dimension of educational embrace and respect from individual prisoners experiencing the programme, previously underrepresented in existing prison Shakespeare literature. Further, Shakespeare for rehumanisation is at times alluded to or touched upon, including a very brief section in Pensalfini's (2017) examination of prison Shakespeare; however, the detail and depth to which this has been uncovered and explored remains unique to this thesis.

This thesis has drawn out such individual stories and determinants of success to establish what the programme groups do, how they do it and several ways through which the programme practices lead to the reported outcomes of participants within them, leading to an overarching outcome of rehumanisation. Shakespeare, for some, was ultimately the tool which supported and enabled them in their rehabilitative journeys, with suggestions that Shakespeare's language offered a vehicle for expression, his stories and characters provided material for reflection, and engaging with him through reading, witnessing and performance enhanced literacy. Further, the capital his works carry offered a route to both personal validation and validation to society beyond the prison

confines that the participants were capable of, more than their offences suggested. For others, Shakespeare specific content was not their main reported outcome, rather a supplementary element to the broader programme practices, ethos and style of the programme that taught them lessons about community, responsibility, communication and overall humanity.

The programme adopted the specific treatment of participants that purposely treated them as "human beings", transcendent of their prisoner status. The Shakespeare programme groups used Shakespeare as a subject matter vehicle for doing so, coupled with selected attitudes and approaches to participants in order to offer an educational, active and personalised learning experience to each individual participant. Participants were treated as independent people rather than just "prisoners" whereby they are given autonomy, voice and value beyond their shared classification as prisoner. By enacting discipline, Foucault (1977) argued that prisons create docile bodies to be controlled and contorted to the will of higher ordained powers due to the threat of constant surveillance, control and removed freedom in behavioural choices. The programme operated in direct subversion of that deliberately fostering autonomy and choice and thus creating the very opposite of Foucault's docile bodies. Through this, rehumanisation is achieved not by discipline and forcing them to comply with normalised expectations (Danaher 2000), but through the provision of personal choice to enable them to feel truly human.

Further, Foucault's notion of human surveillance, where Foucault supposed that prisoners, or indeed people in general, were less likely to misbehave if they believed they were being watched, is again subverted, whereby the programme somewhat removes this surveillance by enabling the prisoners to speak freely without control, judgment and the same kind of limitations fostered within the prison environment, such as emotional expression and freedom from constant judgment. For some prisoners, when their background, life experiences and history before their offence is considered, the experience of being treated as an individual, valuable human being, considered to be able to contribute to society, was reportedly foreign. Many participants shared experiencing or perceiving themselves to be segregated or treated differently due to assumptions made about them, their families and youth experiences, both within and outside of school settings. Just as explained by Elliott and Dingwall (2017), as a result of such disengagement, young people may be less likely to acquire and develop skills needed for participation in society, including empathy, cooperation, communication, groupwork

and emotional and behavioural control, in turn becoming more likely to become marginalised. Many prisoners reported this throughout our interactions, explaining that such treatment is not only absent within prison confines but also amongst society at large beyond prison spaces.

As part of what participants and practitioners identify as being treated as human, participants enhanced their communication and collaboration skills, developing a positive "micro-community" (Anderson, 2006), housed within, but reportedly transcendent of, the formal prison environment. Factors such as compulsory and intentional personal greetings and interactions, and a combination of solo and collaborative working informed the development of positive peer relationships, leading to participants perceiving the programme groups as examples of "brotherhood," "family" and "community" (see 5.0; 6.0). The introduction of community and collaboration, such as that introduced to restorative justice models, opposes othering and becomes a strong force in encouraging integration of prisoners within prison, and eventually beyond prison into wider society (Roberts and Stalans, 2004; Western and Pettit, 2010). This learning holds the potential for transfer to life beyond prison, building on the new life skills developed and honed by such an approach, including communication, empathy and trust.

8.3 Programme Practices: Discovering the Human

The research question sought to be explored here was: What are the specific programme practices and how are they delivered?" This question of practice specifics was a key research question for this project, revealing a largely underreported approach to criminal justice practices that has attracted little academic attention until the past half-decade. However, further than this, it was not understood before this research study, due to a gap in existing literature, whether it was the programme practices adopted or specifically the use of Shakespeare that produced positive outcomes. I questioned what the drivers of impact were for participants involved, exploring what Shakespeare adds to the intervention and whether Shakespeare was the sole driver of success. It is the specific practices that the courses employ and the way that they are delivered that appear to have the biggest participant impact, for some as stand-alone practical techniques and for others specifically when combined with Shakespeare.

Throughout all programme practices it was discovered that facilitators adopt an ethos which encourages styles of interaction and activity, reported by participants to be reportedly foreign within the prison environment, to encourage and educate prisoners.

The hostility of the prison environment compared to that which positive programming frequently aims to overcome is heavily cited throughout literature (Wexler & Williams, 2012; Viggiani 2007). As earlier cited Viggiani (2007) explains:

> "Offenders sent to prison enter a complex social world of values, rules and rituals designed to observe, control, disempower and render them subservient to the system."
>
> (p. 115).

The ethos of the programme, however, actively challenges and seeks to subvert such conditions. The programme ethos instead included treating prisoners as autonomous human beings rather than a collective subordinate mass, understanding and acknowledging their personality differences, their histories and their individualities. The groups focus upon fostering positive relationships, better communication, as well as conflict resolution understanding and strategies which would later be applied beyond their life in prison.

As discussed throughout, the specific practices of the programme serve separate functions to the subject matter itself in the broader picture of programme impact and outcomes. The programme groups are reported across groups and states to treat participants as human beings, permitting them choice, voice and value, beyond their shared classification as prisoner. Participants from low socio-economic or working-class backgrounds for example, shared their frustrations that they felt society "rejected" them; that they were "born to fail" and that their life trajectories, though they acknowledge making choices, were determined for them by their situations and the communities within which they naturally fell, either by their housing situation, familial attitudes and behaviours or educational experiences. Again, to reiterate this point I return to participant Greg's text:

Figure 24: Prisoner Writing: Structural Predetermination

We were Kings once...
Trapped in the war of circumstances
Badgered by bad choices and worse options, predetermined fates
Boxed in by poverty and dreams, love and hate

(Greg Participant)

Cole (1999) argued that the “criminal” demographic could not be expected to respect a criminal justice system and society that did not respect them. This ideology may be compared to modern arguments which suggest that: “Despite a veneer of neutrality, race-based and class-based double standards operate in virtually every criminal justice setting, including police behaviour, jury selection, and sentencing” (National Criminal Justice Research Service, 2017). The overrepresentation of those from minority ethnic backgrounds and low-socio economic backgrounds being othered from society and ending up incarcerated is startling and in sharp contrast to the equality which the groups aim to foster. This dehumanisation is further highlighted in the US, as recurrently demonstrated throughout statistics and academic research (Pettit and Western, 2004; Sinyangwe, 2015; Western, Kling and Weiman, 2000).

Through a combination of activity style, practices and structure, the programme enabled participants to increase their personal confidence and social interactions. This formation of positive communication and relationship development strategies was reportedly applied to rebuilding relationships beyond the confines of incarceration with families, friends and victims affiliated with the crime an individual had committed. Whether a person in the circle is a prisoner or a practitioner they are placed on an equal standing to all others, with every physical body spaced and positioned as equally as the activity within it. By adopting this practice, participants remain a part of the group, whatever their level of interaction, and they are treated as physically part of the whole, never situated outside it.

A physically manifested example of this equality was the circle classroom format adopted by all groups, which alleviated the hierarchy that prisoners face on a day-to-day basis in the prison environment. The principles of circle practice in therapeutic and educational contexts can be clearly seen in these programme groups, whether intentionally introduced for that reason or related to them less formally. As discussed in chapter 5, practitioners and participants make claims of impact connected to the identification of circle methodology. From the data, key functions of the circle methodology relate closely to the treatment and inclusion of offenders as equals within a whole. As circle practice dictates, participants and practitioners alike report the equality provided by the circle structure as essential in the development from being individuals, to integrating and acknowledging community. The development of the greeting’ ritual was recurrently cited as powerful and useful in the process. Greeting or acknowledgement are simple human gestures that participants explain are often taken

for granted in society and are infrequently experienced by many within the isolation of prison environments. A greeting or acknowledgment serves the function of a starting ritual into the world or community of the Shakespeare circles. This gesture enabled participants to feel welcomed, to feel valued and to feel recognised within the space as a human being. This again relates to how programme practices are used to rehumanise prisoners as nobody is a stranger within these spaces and nobody is left out because they hold a particular status, background or position.

Additionally, activities encouraging connection, reflection and exploration of human motivations are implemented to scaffold an exploration of empathy and emotional investment to inform alternative understandings of personal impact. Therefore, where the aim is to elicit an emotional connection or response to the situation in hand, an opportunity to look at the bigger picture of action and impact is fostered through exploring and performing material, such as Shakespeare's texts. For participants in the Shakespeare programme, such practices are intended to focus on the individuals, their histories, experiences and behaviours, encouraging them to connect Shakespeare to real-world events, personal and impactful to themselves. Through this life-drama connection, Jones claims that a participant may be enabled to overcome the distance they have previously been able to build between themselves and the reality of the reenacted world, assuming the dramatic world created to be alternate rather than reflective of their own experiences. This is both unproductive and "counter-therapeutic" (Jones, 2006; Thompson, 2006). In addition, Sue Jennings' (1998) consideration of the role of dramatic projection, i.e. opportunities for individuals to project their own experience onto theatrical portrayals, connects to this wider therapeutic process, reiterating early notions from Antonin Artaud that "theatre is the double of life and life is the double of theatre" (Artaud, 1968) and demonstrating the potential for prisoners to use such theatrical interactions to deepen a personal viewpoint on their criminal behaviours and challenge their mindsets.

For offenders, if behaviours are not directly challenged rehabilitation, or rather the prevention of reoffending, is unlikely, hence the adoption of offence-specific programmes of rehabilitation. Shakespeare is claimed to serve this function in the programme groups considered in this thesis, whereby participants are encouraged and scaffolded to connect the content of the plays to their own life experiences. Often reported by prisoners of all ages and criminal classification is an ability not only to recognize themselves within characters, but also their ability to apply their own

situation or actions into the characters of plays they are performing. I discovered from both practitioner and participant perspectives that this activity is not as straightforward as looking for a character or story that exactly represents the prisoner's experience but experiencing different roles and stories that make up a catalogue of different perspectives for reflection.

In contrast to the levels of collaboration the group provides, many participants highlighted opportunities to work alone as encouraging or fostering their self-discipline and self-reflection, enabling them to work on something in a supported way but that did not necessarily fit larger behavioural trends. They also reported this to be "a new thing for me," "tough to make yourself do something" and on the whole a challenging learning curve where there was no incentive for this commitment, beyond working towards personal growth. By taking responsibility and ownership of their own input within the groups through either engagement with plays, character selections and group input, or through independent work and contribution, participants are never given the answers but rather guided towards drawing their own conclusions. They take responsibility for their engagement in the programme, for their participation and learning and ultimately for how this engagement applies to other aspects of their lives outside of the programme.

As detailed throughout, many prisoners explain initially blaming their behaviour on other people or external factors such as their family histories, and backgrounds. This is an important dimension when considering prison demographics (See 2.1.2), however, the programme seeks to break this mentality by encouraging individual responsibility. Through the programme, participants learn to take responsibility and accept that whatever the reasons informing their lives to the point of criminality, they made a choice to act as they did, leading to their eventual incarceration. Participants of the Shakespeare programme report that they frequently write letters and poetry directed towards somebody familiar, however there are circumstances by which the intended recipient will never receive it. Though they write such letters and poems their intention does not necessarily have to be to send them to those they are addressing. The writing of such texts arguably offers the only opportunity for participants to communicate any unfinished business with those they may never contact. There is a wealth of evidence promoting the formulation and process of creating such texts as a therapy (Neimeyer et al, 2009; Neimeyer, 2012; Degroot, 2012; Pennebaker, 2012; Kress et al, 2008). As Niemeyer (2009) explains, articulating a negative experience into a coherent narrative enables an individual to articulate and explore the issues through their emotions.

Niemeyer, informed by Pennebaker and Seagel's (1999) claims that "writing about important personal experiences in an emotional way…brings about improvements in mental and physical health" (p 1243), states that the writer is enabled to derive meaning through the story, identifying and resolving associated conflicts as part of the process. Participants in the programme wrote reflectively for themselves and for others who may never hear or receive it. It is another level of enabling participants to have a voice, and to reconnect with the world around them on a personal, psychological level. Creative expression of personal stories, feelings and issues, unconnected to Shakespeare's texts, either through written or verbal communication, has for many participants become their primary outlet and the most important activity in their development.

8.4 Shakespeare: Playwright, Character, Member

Shakespeare is claimed to serve several different purposes for participants in the Shakespeare programme between his physical texts and his perceived presence and impact within the group spaces. Shakespeare's texts appear to provide a subject matter from which both self-identification and external identification as human is facilitated for the prisoners involved. Shakespeare offers a material through which individuals can identify themselves, their victims and the implications of their actions. Shakespeare offers a window into the human condition and the implications of human actions.

Participants describe Shakespeare and his works as a teaching force for educating and empowering them to identify themselves as human and part of the rest of humanity, and how this transition, particularly for those who have spent significant time in prison prior to participation, was entirely new to them. There was a common attitude or perception reported by participants that prior to programme participation, they identified themselves as separate from those their crimes impacted; a sub-group external to society at large and, for many, this fuelled their 'us and them' mentality, considering the enhancement criminal action would have on their lives, not how the consequences impact another's.

Prisoners consistently report Shakespeare's characters, including their situations, personalities and decisions, as vehicles for personal learning, emotional engagement and moral development. Many connections are explicit where a parity can be identified between characters and less directly where there are more nuanced and inexplicit connections that participants and practitioners identify as a crucial element of participant experiences. The language of Shakespeare, as earlier considered, is widely

acknowledged to be difficult, but the meanings within it are also widely used in a variety of contexts verbatim, over 400 years after they were written (See 2.3). Participants repeatedly reported a sense of Shakespeare saying what they needed to hear or Shakespeare saying what they are trying to say. For many prisoners Shakespeare's specific words offer them the language they cannot find to express meaning and explain themselves. Language acquisition and the ability to gain a voice through Shakespeare are recurrent themes, whereby participants reported the application of Shakespeare's words to their own situations. They report this engagement and connection as a vehicle for articulating their own stories, feelings and issues. Several participants reported the application of this newly- developed voice as a transformative methodology through which they had been enabled to communicate and connect with family members, friends and others damaged by their criminal behaviour. Through Shakespeare's scenes and characters, participants can explore and reflect on their life choices, histories and the experiences of others. This ability to literally hold a "mirror up to nature" (*Hamlet,* III, ii*)* appears to be one clear and consistent outcome surrounding why Shakespeare's works can offer opportunities for identification and reflection to such diverse communities.

Many participants were keen to prevent future generations ending up in the same position as they are, focussing on the idea of legacy, and some used their ability to engage with Shakespeare to address that. Across all prisons, although there were educational initiatives occurring there was no doubt that the prison environment was tense, in many ways dangerous and absolutely a destination in which no individual would choose to be. Regardless of provisions, prisons are restrictive, punitive and, as discussed throughout, are a key facilitator in the dehumanisation of offenders, even post-release. The Shakespeare programme allows participants to identify themselves as part of, rather than external to, humanity at large. They can be scaffolded through a process of empathy, emotional and academic development to reach these conclusions. In turn, engaging in a programme with publicly shareable outcomes such as matriculations or performances, whereby prisoners invite the public to share in these experiences, allows society at large to identify offenders as part of, rather than separate from, them. In doing this the frequently identified "us and them" mentality decreased in momentum where common ground, rooted in the qualities of humanity may be achieved. If this as a process is successful long after the offender is released, rather than remaining metaphorically separate although released into society, the offender can be embraced by their community, recognised for their efforts in moving towards change and changing their

behaviour towards society at large and, crucially, they may be afforded the opportunity to genuinely re-join or society at large for the first time.

The initial treatment of the prisoner appears vital, where the first step in this programme appears to be the impact of a drastic change in the way the prisoner is treated within the group. As part of the prison at large they are controlled in every aspect, with little opportunity given for individual self-expression. This links to self-identification and public identification of them as human, i.e. their rehumanisation. Everybody knows Shakespeare on a global level. Whether by his works or just his name, he is a universally recognised figure and his works come with universally accepted features. His works hold high cultural capital and to read them, engage with them and, importantly, understand them is identified as intelligent, at least in popular understanding. Whether entirely true or not, Shakespeare's language alone is widely perceived as difficult to understand and access, and therefore those able to access the metaphors, meanings and lessons that lies beneath his words, are considered intelligent. This was certainly the case in the USA during my data collection, where sharing the ideas around Shakespeare with members of the public was met with surprise and admiration for the prisoners engaging with the programme. Though these groups require people to engage as a community, as discussed in chapter 5, prisoners are not instantly transformed. As one incarcerated man, Dale, explained:

> "Dale (Participant): We're all selfish. You included. People just are and it's that simple. But some people can see that they are and see what other people need or whatever. I couldn't see that. I figured if nobody was looking out for me, I looked out for me and that was that.
>
> Researcher (me): And now?
>
> Dale (Participant): These guys, they're like a family. Fucked up and from all sorts of shit but family. Hell, I know what I did, and now I know how many people that hit. I know and when I knew, these guys had my back. I've done a lot of hurt and Shakespeare, well he doesn't hold back, he showed me what one bad action can do to a whole bunch of people, and if you're like Macbeth or whatever, it will bring you down too."

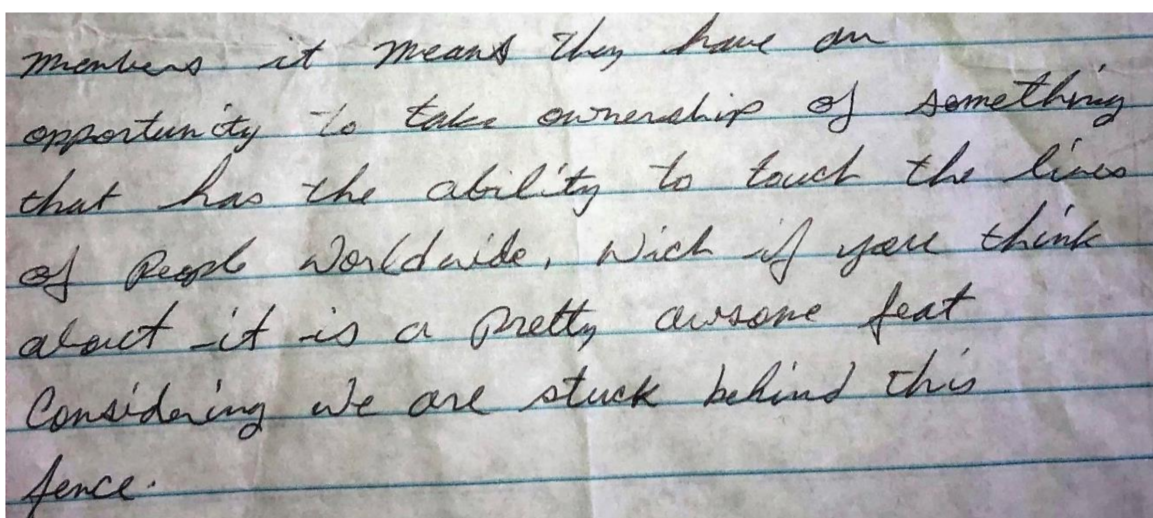
Shakespeare, according to participants and practitioners, is reportedly the steppingstone toward both self-identification and external identification as human and

thereby actively impactful on humanity, for the prisoners involved. He offers a material through which individuals can identify themselves, their victims and the implications of their actions. Shakespeare offers a window into the human condition and the implications of human actions. Validation of the participants as intelligent is a crucial element of this process of development. The belief that they are intellectually capable, can achieve, and can make an impact on the world, offers them both an internal and external validation as valuable human beings. Internal validation has given participants the self-belief that, through Shakespeare, they will understand on an emotional level their journey to crime, their actions and the long-term impact of that on more people than just themselves.

For external validation, they are enabled to show wider society their scholarship, their abilities and their humanity by performing both Shakespeare's works and their own personal works and selections based on Shakespeare. All the programme groups offer this in some capacity from performance to publication. And sharing their work provides a vital step towards the wider community identifying them as human beings. The programme therefore gives the prisoners the opportunity to share with the outside world an alternative perspective, set of emotions and, importantly, an image of the prisoner as being no different from any other neighbour or community member.

8.5 To rehumanisation and beyond.

Figure 25: Prisoner Writing: Humans behind this fence



members it means they have an
opportunity to take ownership of something
that has the ability to touch the lives
of People Worldwide, Wich if you think
about it is a pretty awsone feat
Considering we are stuck behind this
fence.

Transcript: "[For] members it means they have an opportunity to take ownership of something that has the ability to touch the lives of people worldwide, which if you think about it is a pretty awesome feat considering we are stuck behind this fence."

(Bruce, Participant)

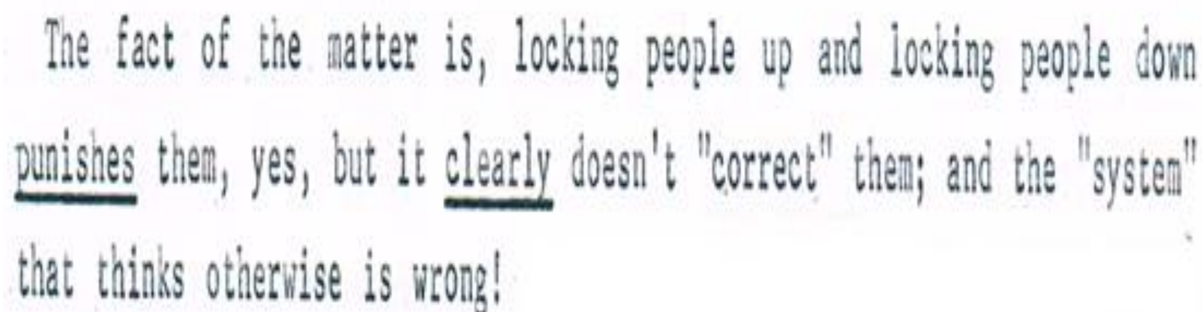
The criminal justice system, in order to be impactful, needs to do more than holding people to make a difference. I opened this thesis with an extract from my own life choices and experiences, in an attempt to highlight the similarities between my own past and that of my participants, and to serve as an example of how education, in particular theatre and literature can support individuals to make better life choices, shifting their life trajectories. For my participants, they have been 'othered' by society, they have faced adverse social assumptions and they have in many cases committed crimes. This has consequences but once they have served their sentence there needs to be a shift in relation to how offending behaviour is handled within prisons and beyond them, supporting both the offender and society in permitting successful reintegration post incarceration. If this does not occur, it is no surprise that prisoners fall back into the patterns of criminal behaviour when prison had only served as an interruption to their normal lives.

Throughout this thesis, the value of prison has been repeatedly challenged and, based on exploring my own experiences and those of my participants behind and beyond bars, it is clear to see the difference between a prison for change and a prison for segregation. For a mixed security prison, for example, to boast such drastic falls in incidences of violence posits such support for education, and for myself as a young woman to enter an environment rarely connected with respect and experience such humanity from inmates and guards alike, suggests that something is happening within the prison walls. It suggests that the programme is facilitating a very different community than the media and stereotype would lead the public beyond bars to believe. The incarceration system is punitive and reinforced by social goals and perceived political necessity to be tough on crime. It demonstrates the Foucauldian spectacle of punishment, removing the rights, liberties and freedoms of so-called rule breakers, dehumanising and othering them from the rest of the world (Foucault, 1977). This 'othering', although seen as proportional to many, having existed for centuries, has not yet stopped individuals repeatedly committing crimes.

The overarching message to take away from these programme groups is that prisoners, regardless of their behaviours, are human beings. They have responsibility for their actions and society has a responsibility to ensure justice is served. However, prisoners are also the responsibility of society long after they have served their prison sentence and are released from prison. The prison system that currently operates in the UK and USA claims that for a criminal action you will serve your time, i.e. serve your

sentence, and then you will be released and expected to be reformed. This was best articulated by long serving prisoner, Seb, writing about the issues he faced once released from prison after his first sentence. He says the fact of the matter is locking people up and locking people down punishes them, yes, but it clearly doesn't "correct" them and the "system" that thinks otherwise is wrong.

Figure 26: Prisoner Writing: Locking people down



The fact of the matter is, locking people up and locking people down punishes them, yes, but it clearly doesn't "correct" them; and the "system" that thinks otherwise is wrong!

(Seb, participant)

The structure of the society we live in, combined with issues of prejudice, structural inequalities and barriers, including employment and housing, means that the so-called "rehabilitated" individuals are more likely to fall victim of a reoffending cycle. For prisoners, even after completion of sentence their options are increasingly limited by a society that calls for rehabilitation, but does not recognise it, demands justice but perpetuates injustice, and does not allow for that which its own systems claim to facilitate. A prisoner must take responsibility for their crime but when this is complete, society should take responsibility for a member of their community.

We are all human, regardless of our behaviours; we all feel, eat and breathe. However, when society divides prisoners and society, people on both sides of the divide accept the segregation and categorisation of individuals as more or less significant or worthy of humanity. The Shakespeare programme works to equip prisoners with the skills to demonstrate to society their true potential, their abilities as human beings, and their ability to be rehabilitated, make changes, rethink their behaviours and reintegrate into wider society. It would be idealistic to assume that this approach would achieve such results for all individuals participating within it, but that is not the claim of this thesis. Of course, any criminal justice system would want their prisoners to be released with a truly rehabilitated outlook on life. However, the reality of these programme groups is

that there are successful graduates that continue to develop and grow successfully and experience crime-free post-incarceration lives. All those whom I worked with professed to have made such realisations using the Shakespeare programme as the springboard that led them to that point.

Rehumanisation is the key outcome highlighted from this research. There is powerful potential that such Shakespeare programme groups can be used to make positive contributions to criminal rehabilitation. These are useful conclusions and ideas that may encourage fresh discussion and debate but further than this, may encourage a reconsideration of what it means to be human and what it means to be a member of humanity. Perceptions of offenders need to change, and the perceptions held by offenders also need to change. There are significant achievements that cannot be overlooked as positive from the programme. However, these are isolated examples of excellent practice known to work in some groups, and function in specific settings. This is not a one-size-fits-all model for criminal retribution and rehabilitation. However, the introduction of humanity combined with a positive activity and a direct connection between the offender and the society, both impacted by them and judging them, cannot be overlooked. There are significant implications of these findings which translate into the inconsistencies and, some may argue, failures of the wider prison system. The following chapter will conclude this, considering the implications of the findings and recommendations for future research, as well as the overall value or contribution this research can have to the wider field of prisoner education and prisoner rehabilitation.

9.0: Conclusions: Shakespeare, Rehabilitation and Rehumanisation

"Condemn the fault and not the actor of it?"
(Measure for Measure, II. ii)

This final chapter presents the conclusions, implications and recommendations drawn from this research study. Firstly, I want to remind the reader of the research questions and research problem that has driven this research. I will then summarise the findings that prison-based participants, stakeholders and facilitators have offered as outcomes and impacts, making the programme a "successful" approach. Finally, I consider the impact the research findings contribute to existing scholarship in this area, considering the implications of these findings for the criminal justice system, prisoners, stakeholders and society at large.

9.1 Research intention

Embarking on this project I sought to address the following questions, opening doors into exploring this phenomenon, selecting the ethnographically informed case study of one programme that operates over several prisons, groups and states:

1) What are the specific programme practices and how are they delivered?
2) What was the impact of the specific use of Shakespeare?
3) What were the perceived and intended outcomes by and for Participants and Practitioners?

These were pertinent questions based on a consideration of existing literature in this field and an identified need for reform in light of a statistically failing existing criminal rehabilitation system. Further, there was a significant gap in existing literature both detailing the practices of these programme groups and also a lack of offender voice in existing publications. Much of the approach undertaken at present is focussed on a punitive model of punishment, grounded in an outdated model that undeniably reproduces rather than resolves criminal behaviour (see 2.1). Though there have been progressive planning and proposals surrounding policy in this area, in the UK in particular such as the Coates Review (Coates, 2016), there is as yet much to be desired in terms of policy enacted. The logic surrounding this model, I argue, is closely connected to broader social attitudes surrounding criminality, 'othering' offenders and withdrawing them from society at large, rather than tackling the behaviours themselves.

At present, responsibility for punishment in both the UK and US context sits with the state, and actually the responsibility for changing behaviours falls on the prisoners. The approach considered here claims to not withdraw responsibility from the offenders, but rather scaffolds them and guides them in making such change, rather than expecting it to be an organic product of the incarceration experience or an outcome from basic instruction. Essentially, these programme groups do not expect people to change their behaviour simply by telling them that they should, rather they elicit behavioural change through demonstrating impact in creative and individualised ways.

9.1.1 What are the specific programme practices and how are they delivered?

There were a number of different programme practices undertaken from specific activities, Shakespeare-focussed work and common applied theatre practices, to broader structural practices deemed equally important, such as the layout of the classroom, the style of interaction between practitioners and participants and the ethos of the programme. Some programme practices consisted of specific solo, group and ensemble activities, whereby at varying levels participants were expected to contribute or engage in specific tasks both alone and with others.

In relation to Shakespeare, reading, performing and interpreting Shakespeare's works was a common practice within the groups. As the group theme would suggest, engaging with Shakespeare was a primary activity style for the programme. Participants would read Shakespeare's works within or external to the groups and use this a source material for either a group performance, their own writing and performances or their own reflections, giving them a vehicle to explore personal experiences and issues. Though the cited theme, Shakespeare, however, was not the most significant element of group practices cited.

The groups work to foster a space transcendent of the wider prison environment. They use greetings and check-in rituals, set up the classroom or workspace in an inclusive, circular layout without hierarchy and introduce a new set of rules that is at odds with the ordinary prison environment. Prison is founded, for example, on the principle of judgment. People are judged for their actions and placed in prison. A fundamental rule of the programme groups is that judgment is forbidden. This is also the case with fixing or instructing. Participants and practitioners alike cannot instruct group members how to think, feel and respond. They are, however, facilitated through discussing such issues; sharing personal stories from which their peers might gain a different perspective, for example, is common.

The programme deliberately does not incentivise participants to participate in their practice. By not incentivising the programme with good behaviour time, food or rewards privilege, as many such programmes choose to do, the programme groups have a shared intention that the only thing to gain from programme engagement is personal success and change. This means that the focus is shifted from any ability to "cheat" the system, as explained by ex-participant Andy in 4.0, to personal learning and change. That said, success is celebrated. Matriculation and milestone activities, such as performances and sharing's within groups and to the public, are embedded within the programme practices. This is not to sell tickets or create a polished piece of work in the sense an ordinary drama group may do, but rather to give participants opportunities to consolidate, celebrate and demonstrate their progress thus far, before returning to the programme and continuing their work.

9.1.2 What was the impact of the specific use of Shakespeare?

A major research question underpinning this thesis was to explore the impact of Shakespeare's works as a source material brought to these initiatives. Investigated from the perspectives of participants, practitioners and stakeholders, several subcategories surrounding the specific use of Shakespeare emerged. Key findings considered a wide range of outcomes. For some Shakespeare was perceived to be a teacher, identified and somewhat exalted as a moral advisor and source of learning. For others Shakespeare held a deeper psychological role as a counsellor, attributing Shakespeare's characters and scenes with emotional connections and impact. Shakespeare was described as giving some participants a voice whereby participants identified Shakespeare's language and the activity they have conducted, using it as a vehicle for language acquisition and development of communication abilities. Finally, an overarching view of Shakespeare as a vehicle for internal and external validation, empathy development and emotional understanding through engagement with Shakespeare's texts emerged.

Through his construction of character, participants and practitioners alike claim that Shakespeare captures the complexity of human beings, demonstrating opportunities for individuals to reflect on themselves, identifying those with similar traits to their own situations or behaviours and using this as a springboard for reflection. Though the Shakespeare-specific content was not the key focus for most participants, those who did engage and connect closely with Shakespeare's works were able to articulate the perceived value of using them as subject matter from which learning, and growth was made possible. Participants describe Shakespeare and his works as a "force"

for educating and empowering them towards personal growth, understanding, exploration, expression and change.

9.1.3 What were the perceived and intended programme outcomes reported by and for participants and practitioners?

It was important to consider both the intended and perceived outcomes as part of this question as explained throughout, what the teacher wants a group to learn, and what they do learn may be significantly different. Also, participants cite their expectations from the group and the reality of its impact as different, therefore it was important to examine both. Andy, a programme graduate, for example, suggested that he had thought the group would be an easy way to cheat through a prison education programme to maintain 'good prisoner' status in the eyes of the institution. However, his experience of the programme subverted that with the realisation that he was unable to do so, eventually learning and engaging significantly more than he intended following his release.

In relation to intended outcomes practitioners want the participants to learn, experience and engage in a positive community of learning and development. Their aim is to empower and scaffold individuals as they work through their personal issues and experiences and deal with the influences and outcomes of their behaviours taking responsibility for their crimes and moving forward in a positive and supportive environment. As one practitioner stated, "If you spend enough time in a prison you can get a PhD in criminology and that is not a good thing." Where prisons are commonly known to become an incubator for exacerbating criminal behaviour, practitioners work to change what is learned within the prison environment through the Shakespeare programme, even working with participants serving lengthy sentences in order to foster positive work within the prison before release even occurs. Prisoners talked about how their experience was different to their expectation but did little to qualify these claims. They mostly explained a desire to do something positive, learn something new, and engage because friends who had previously engaged encouraged them to do so. They cite surprise at the varied range of learning and experiences they had taken from their programme.

The key themes surrounding outcomes that emerged were closely related to prisoners being acknowledged, and identifying themselves, as human; developing community, interaction and trust; being permitted autonomy, authority and choice; engaging in self-expression, self-exploration and self-reflection and making progress and

completing milestones, some completing something for the first time in their lives. Through the programme, participants are able to explore these areas within the scaffold of a positive environment. As such, they report that do not feel dictated to, and therefore do not reject such education the way many report having rejected schooling. The participants feel they have a choice and through this are equipped with the skills to critically assess their way of thinking and shift perceptions toward positive behaviours. Participants from all groups reported such freedom as a motivator and driver for their personal change.

9.2 Original contribution to knowledge

This thesis has presented a unique, explorative, ethnographically informed study which uses prisoner voices to look holistically at the programme. To my knowledge, this thesis is the first multi-site ethnography of a Shakespeare prison programme. It offers an empirical exploration of a growing, yet widely underreported, phenomenon. Rather than using the most common measure, recidivism rates, as a measure through which to understand programme success, this thesis shifts from examining the "prisoner" group as a statistical data set to the individual "prisoner" and their individual nuances, personalities and situations as independent and interesting individual members of the larger data whole. Most previous research has focussed on statistics rather than the individual and has grouped prisoners accordingly.

When commencing this research there was little in existing publication to explore the phenomenon of Shakespeare in prisons. Though there are published texts now in existence, e.g. the recent additions of Herold (2014) and Pensalfini (2017) to the field, my work complements these with a unique in-depth examination of the specific practices and functionality of the programme. I consider outcomes about the practice and the specifics are detailed here as expressed both by practitioners and participants who closely examine specific programme practices rather than just asking about outcomes, enabling a deeper and more connected consideration through the ability to draw links between activities and outcomes.

This programme operated over multiple states, sites, groups and establishments. By choosing to explore all these US sites and all groups operational at the time, this meant that I was able to gain insights into the consistencies, and indeed potential inconsistencies, between the programme groups. Overwhelmingly, similar themes were iterated across all groups I worked with, demonstrating the consistency and significance

placed on the key principles underpinning the programme, particularly the ethos and the groups intentional style of delivery.

I am also not writing this thesis from a perspective influenced by the bardolatry so commonly associated with Shakespeare on a global scale. Shakespeare is perceived or assumed to have value based on the cultural capital and status it holds. I did not want the selection of Shakespeare to be overlooked or merely accepted when considering the programme. Therefore, rather than taking Shakespeare as a given, I have interrogated his particular role and considered 'Why Shakespeare?' a question usually taken for granted (e.g. Scott-Douglass, 2001) or more widely found in general education and literature (e.g. Belsey, 2007; Bloom, 1998; Cox, 1991).

Finally, in order to ascertain and allow for prisoner voices to be heard and expressed in a way that was accessible and that they felt best allowed them to express their experiences, I used creative outputs from prisoners as research data (similar to McDowell, 2011), building on this methodology. By incorporating a range of data-types, I was enabled to invite richer input from a broader range of voices permitting them to speak out openly; submit writing privately; write formal answers to questions or submit poems stories and performance pieces that they felt were their best way to articulate the answers to the research questions I presented to them.

9.3 Implications of the research

9*.3.1 Contributions to existing scholarship*

This research study has contributed in several ways to exploring how a Shakespeare-based initiative operates and has made impacts on incarcerated people for over two decades. The findings within this research project contribute to existing scholarship in several different ways: contribution to the field of Shakespeare in prison, applied theatre and prison theatre, and scholarship surrounding prisoners, criminal rehabilitation approaches and the functionality of the prison system.

In this research I have identified the programme practices and delivery activities administered by practitioners in several prisons across two states, three prisons and multiple groups. I have explored the importance of these activities and their reported impact on programme participants, demonstrating several areas within which engagement in the activities, behaviours and communities within these programme groups can have individual and community benefits for participants. I have focussed on the meaning attributed to programme activities as articulated by participants, reinforced by participant voices and my own experiences as a participant researcher but never

eclipsed or overruled by them. Undertaking such an approach and placing such authority on a community that has very little authority in any other area in their life, the prison population, I have explored and indeed highlighted the importance of treating prisoners as individual and complex entities, rather than under the blanket definition of "prisoner". This kind of blanket labelling serves to achieve nothing more than dehumanising, depersonalising and further isolating these individuals who are brought together only by their shared label of 'prisoner'.

As a field of academic interest, the use of Shakespeare in criminal rehabilitation is a fairly recent development whereby Shakespeare has been used throughout history, but as a field of academic consideration it has gained popularity in use since the 1980s and academic interest within the past decade, with limited academic publication now available in this subject utilised and connected to this research (Bates, 2013; Pensalfini, 2017; Scott-Douglass, 2001; Herold, 2014). Though Shakespeare has been used in prisons for decades and has been undeniably present, these past practices have been largely under-reported in academic dialogues, discourse and publication until recent years, throughout much of this time I have been undertaking this research thesis. Conscious of these new developments, contributions to the field have been drawn into the research where possible throughout this time. The field of theatre in prisons is vast; however, this research project has contributed to the broad field, in addition to the niche area of Shakespeare-specific provisions used for this purpose. Though a full history of prison Shakespeare, and indeed prison theatre, was not provided here, significant documentation of such interventions was consulted from the conception of this research.

In this thesis, I have explored a long serving example of a Shakespeare-in-prison programme in a way no other existing publication I have found has done. Many texts have explored theatre in prisons with some inclusion of participant voices, however, most interpret these voices and embed them in the wider narrative of Shakespeare, performance, theatre practices and research that is *about* participants, not *from* them. This research complements previous publications in the field of Shakespeare in prisons, however much of the research thus far has not placed the emphasis on participant voice, transferrable outcomes and experience in the way my research has. Amy Scott-Douglass (2001) had published a short book, *Shakespeare Inside,* when this research commenced. This text contained a series of anecdotes and observations taken from her experiences visiting a number of men's and women's Shakespeare programmes in the USA. Though not a research project as such, this was my first insight into the accessibility of prisons, and indeed prisoners. Scott-Douglass reported a desire, for example, to be seated with

and get to know the prisoners and shared several anecdotes of conversations and observations she had made within their communities. This immediately challenged the image of the "prisoner" perpetuated by the media, popular culture and social constructs to which I too was subject. It is this kind of attitude to prisoner – civilian interactions that my research has developed further, identifying prisoner's individualities, personalities and individual histories. Though anecdotes have their place within my research study, in this inquiry I have demonstrated the importance of not telling the individual participants stories for them, but rather giving voice to *their* stories through research and demonstrating how the groups considered here give such autonomy and individuality back to the group participants, in a place where such personality and individual difference is foreign in all other elements of the prison environment. At no point in this research have I spoken for participants, rather deducing my findings through triangulating shared experiences, stories and inputs from my participants.

Though I was a participant researcher, this research was not a mere retelling of my experiences. Through this approach I have been able to interrogate not only the function of Shakespeare in the programme groups but explore the programme as a whole phenomenon from practices and content, to ethos and impact, through the eyes of those impacted by it. Laura Bates' *Shakespeare Saved My Life* was undeniably influential in my approach to this research and my research approach has built on and expanded her inclusive and individualistic approach to engaging with, and researching, the prison population. Bates reported her one to one experience with a segregated prisoner, Larry, exploring Shakespeare through solitary confinement. Her emphasis was to place authority on Larry's voice in this process, attempting to tell and share his story with him as part of, not separate to, the narrative. My methodology enabled a similar approach but on a much larger scale, triangulating the voices of many participants across several groups and states, allowing for individual stories and voices to be heard in order to explore the phenomenon and draw general conclusions, whilst also giving an authoritative voice to my participants. This research first and foremost has provided a means through which a positive and demonstrably impactful intervention project could be presented and explored from the voices of many people experiencing it, building on Bates' work of an in-depth case example of one individual.

Bates' (2013) approach gave a voice to a both socially but also physically isolated male prisoner, literally in solitary confinement. Though not in solitary confinement, my participants, too, presented a shared a sense of isolation, both prior to and within the prison system, with little to no opportunity to have a voice or find any person willing to

listen and act on it. This research has demonstrated how through a combination of such individuality and humanity in practices, coupled with Shakespeare as a source material, subvert the usual isolating, controlling and negative behaviours commonly found within the prison environment. These programme groups encourage personal autonomy and reveal how engagement with prisoners as individuals rather than branding them as an assumed collective community can be impactful. In this research I have demonstrated the importance of an individualised approach to prisoner communication and inclusion as a necessity within the prison confines. From these results I have demonstrated the perceived value of acknowledging the individuality and the humanity of offenders, not only to reintegrate them into society at large, but for many integrate them for the first time in their lives (see 8.0). The programme gives them a voice and a means of expression, whilst also engaging them in a positive, diverse community focussed on progress and positive engagement in a positive activity rather than united over a shared criminality, out casting and othering by society.

As explained earlier, two relevant texts were released throughout the duration of this research project, published post data-collection, by Robert Pensalfini (2017) and Niels Herold (2014) surrounding the use of Shakespeare in prisons, expanding the field of publication in this area significantly from what was a relatively niche area. These texts focus heavily on Shakespeare-specific practices, a history of prison Shakespeare and variations between programme claims. Both texts write within this field but are complimentary, not duplicating or contradicting this research project. Niels Herold's *Prison Shakespeare and the Purpose of Performance* connects the practice of performing Shakespeare in prisons with the performance rituals of the early modern period. It has a very specific focus on performance and how performance in particular is impactful in offender repentance.

Robert Pensalfini's (2017) *Prison Shakespeare: For those deep shames and great indignities* explores more broadly exemplar Shakespeare programmes offering a history of prison Shakespeare, detailing a comprehensive file of historical examples of prison Shakespeare largely from the past 20 years, followed by the case study of the Australian Shakespeare company's, "Queensland Shakespeare Ensemble's" usage of Shakespeare in prisons examining the impact of such a programme. Pensalfini's text is very much about the programmes themselves, highlighting their existence and the claims of prison Shakespeare as a field of practice. Pensalfini's text offers insights into the practice of prison Shakespeare as a broad phenomenon. Herold's text draws close connections to the specifically Shakespearean content, and the style and purpose of performance. My

research compliments these texts, digging into a specific, prominent, multi-sited case example and drawing my findings from the participant perspectives and contributions. Whilst Pensalfini's text offers significant insight into the history and claims of the practice, with some insight into participant feedback or claims, this research interrogates the perceived outcomes of a long serving multi-state project considering both the professed value of Shakespeare and also the broader activities of the group.

I have focussed on the perceived outcomes of direct participants producing a range of varied outputs relevant to the programme practices, engagement with Shakespeare and what individuals have drawn from these experiences. Taking this focus highlights a need for a shift in both the attitudes of criminal justice systems and society at large, in this case in the US contexts with relevant lessons to be learned applicable to the UK context also. Emphasis in considering challenging criminal behaviour must have this individualised approach. In terms of applied theatre and drama therapeutic principles, though these may not have been forced or implemented by practitioners, participants describe learning from engagement with language relative to identified core principles in these practices (see 3.2). A particularly noteworthy example was the therapeutic performance process (see 3.2.1). This process of performing and learning through engaging and interacting with a performance was prioritised by the programme, rather than the quality of any end product. These programme groups do not identify as therapy programmes, however, practitioners and participants alike acknowledged and described personal therapeutic and developmental change from engagement. The programme allows participants to embody a whole range of Shakespeare's characters, present, create and perform their own work and project their own life situations onto the group activity, all of which relate to key principles of dramatherapy and applied theatre as broad initiatives (see 3.2) and, indeed, connect to perceptions in Shakespeare scholarship such as, "Shakespeare reveals a different face to different cultures and different people at different times" (Boston, 2016).

It is programme participants who were able to articulate these changes and developments, even without the official terminology to do so. Practitioners have had an input into this research and are quoted where relevant, but the strongest report of outcomes is drawn from those who have experienced them. Again, I am not claiming that the criminal justice system should be determined by criminals, but I am arguing that the criminal justice system stands to benefit from reconsidering its perception of the prisoner population. This shifts the way the problem of offending is recognised. At present incarceration is a blanket treatment for all incarcerated persons. There is

potential that within prison bars different crimes carry different rules or restrictions, but as a whole, participants are merely people housed within a shared community of the prison. The structural injustices of society have rejected them, and they have come together. The structure of the Shakespeare programme is constructed and formulated, both through its physical set up, expectations and ethos, to include, integrate and enable participants to feel valued bonding over a shared positive activity.

This research has demonstrated how participants are enabled and equipped with the tools for self-exploration and self-expression, without detracting from the punishment they are administered. Significant previous research has demonstrated that prison alone is unsuccessful in reducing and challenging criminality, with minimal impact, based on the way it has been normalised as an institution to house prisoners out of society's sight and mind. These projects demonstrate an approach through which institutions can still serve as a punishment, whilst further actively tackling behaviours and permitting individuals autonomy; I have not argued for prison abolition. Foucault's (1977) conception that prisons are to coerce behavioural change is subverted by these programme groups. They do not coerce or incentivise participants to fit a selected behavioural pattern or way of thinking. These programme groups equip participants with the skills they need and give them the opportunities to help themselves.

This attitude shift in the behaviours of the prisons is also needed across society as a whole, which presents a larger problem, unlikely to be overcome by one lone initiative. The media hold more power than prisoners; different privilege is attributed based on class, race and socio-economic status to certain societal demographics and there is a significant and ingrained stigma attached to offenders which further embeds these societal divisions (see 2.1). These statistics demonstrate a demographical flaw in the system which also has an impact on these populations and their views of themselves, true to this structural injustice. Participants of colour in this research shared some of their experiences of this, leading to their incarceration. Though their race absolutely did not determine that they committed a crime, the way they are handled and dealt with in the criminal justice system often seemed to be based on their race. Some perceived themselves as othered from society by the very structures that are relied upon to keep it together. They saw racism, experienced police assumptions and social assumptions about them simply based on their race. There is a social and educational responsibility here for criminal justice policy makers, but also for broader institutions including governments, schools and media across society, to challenge and advocate for change. Though particularly true in the US context, in much the same way UK offender

demographics are not dissimilar, with similar attitudes and perceptions of prisoners, or people assumed to be more likely criminals, due to structural inequalities present and in need of being challenged (see 2.1).

The media could be a critical tool in this also and further research into media influences is needed. There is a significant discord between the success and impact that educational interventions can have within the prison system, and the way they are perceived by society at large (see 1.2). Media discourses are empowered in society (Foucault, 1977). Modern media frequently argue that interventions grounded in the arts, such as music or theatre, are treats or undeserved rewards for participants. However, as this research has demonstrated, as enjoyable as many participants may find the course, enjoyment is a minimal outcome by comparison to the positive developments, changes and influences engaging in this programme has been reported to have. There is a suggestion that prisoners are unintelligent, incapable or unworthy. Though it is true that existing research demonstrates largely low educational standards and attainment levels for prisoners on entry into the prison system (see 2.2), this cannot be conflated with prisoner capability and, as many participants have discussed in this research, just because they perhaps did not read or write, did not engage in formal schooling or did not hold qualifications prior to prison entry, does not mean that they were incapable of doing so.

In relation to Shakespeare, there is a canon of literature highlighting the complexity of character, situation and content written into Shakespeare's plays as reflective of real-world issues and timelessly applicable to real life. The capital Shakespeare carries holds an undeniable value in enabling prisoners to identify themselves as capable but also demonstrate to society that they are also capable of more than their criminal offences. I have not concluded from this research study that Shakespeare is a one size fits all model, nor would I espouse his works to be literary canon that cures criminality. However, as a mechanism for demonstrating capability Shakespeare is demonstrated here as a useful steppingstone for many participants. For participants who reported Shakespeare-specific programme outcomes as their strongest influence, Shakespeare undertakes a number of roles from teacher to counsellor to interpreter or voice-giver, who provided texts through which they have been enabled to learn lessons relating to their own lives. Shakespeare is claimed to teach through the examples he demonstrates lessons about "morality," "family," "relationships," "emotions," and "impact," to list some of the strongest reported learning themes. Throughout this thesis (see 6.0; 5.3), the impact of specifically Shakespeare has been

explored, contributing further and modern interpretations of the value of Shakespeare to a field that has continued to explore and attribute value to his works for centuries. The voices here also add to existing scholarship as most voices that withstand time and can be heard surrounding Shakespeare's prestige are not, to use the words of my participants, from the "bottom of society." Rather they are from academic, theatrical and historical voices. In this research the opinion of a non-academic, usually working class, not formally qualified human being has taken precedent over the supposed authority of the most prestigious academics, in taking ownership of the Shakespeare experiences and demonstrating the impact it has had on them.

Overall, this research has contributed to an expanding and relatively new niche area in the much larger field of prison theatre, considering the educative potential of one Shakespeare project that is impacting a whole range of individuals of different backgrounds, levels, locations and criminal classifications. This research crucially gives a platform to experienced voices from inside the prison environment who had committed different crimes, had come from different backgrounds and shared different stories, needs and preconceptions. I have triangulated these voices to compile a set of reported potential outcomes and impactors administered via this programme that could make a significant impact on the prison community, and in turn society at large. I have contributed fresh research to the field of criminal justice and have connected the outcomes of this programme with the potential needs for prison reform.

9.3.2 Implications for education, policy and society

Though this research was conducted in the US context, due to the similarity in issues the UK face, the findings hold considerable potential for application not only in the USA but also globally for example in the UK context.

It is recurrently clear from the findings that many participants that are propagating this programme as a successful approach to criminal rehabilitation, value education at the present time but have not always done so. In line with this, it is also clear from participant testimony that this style of educational intervention has enabled or facilitated opportunities for reported change and new perspectives across the groups. Individuals have reported identifying new perspectives on their past behaviours and the ability to express deeper emotional and personal issues and experiences that pre-empted their eventual activity placing them in a prison. Education does not provide them with excuses for their actions, but rather in the case of this programme, encourages them to explore and understand it beyond a single-sighted perspective.

By encouraging participant-led educational engagement and connecting this with Shakespeare's characters and texts, significant food for thought was brought to an otherwise turbulent, dangerous and unsupportive environment found, reported and exposed to be in US prisons. I experienced first-hand the tension within the prison environment, the fragility of inmate-guard interactions and I listened daily to reports of fears, conflicts, and ex-members of the group "locking up" (meaning placing themselves into protective custody) or seeking a transfer for their own safety. Prisons are not safe environments and, as cited throughout, there are tensions which control emotion, require a mask or false persona and make the participants feel at risk.

Learning and education was prioritised by many of the participants but holding and controlling appear to be the priorities of prison environments. Yet where education demonstrates significant potential in criminal rehabilitation settings (see 2.2), there is an implication for policy makers to not only recognise this, but mandate and ensure the encouragement of personal development and learning on a much larger scale. Formal education rarely allows for this, even beyond bars, with assessment grounded in regurgitation and examination; however, school curricula are designed so that young people throughout the system do have opportunities to see perspectives and learn crucial lessons, outside of the confines of their home environments or a limited set of attitudes or ideals. This kind of approach to prisoners is so frequently dismissed; however, the findings of this research suggest that broadening perspectives and offering educational development opportunities, demonstrating life lessons, could be a core situation changer for many offenders.

Prison education was prioritised by the UK Conservative Government as recently as 2016, however, plans have recently been shelved due an ongoing preoccupation with negotiations to leave the EU, and it is therefore unknown how UK education policy will progress in relation to prisoners at this time. However, when it was a hot topic only in 2016, there was a review of prison education, commissioned by the Conservative Government and former Education and Justice Secretary, Michael Gove, and carried out by Dame Sally Coates (2016). In line with key recommendations surrounding prisoner assessment, prisoners need rigorous baseline skills, needs and ability determination, their crime must not be all that defines the way they are treated and the activity they are encouraged to engage in. If their issues lie within functional skills, testing provision and support can be put in place to enhance that formally. However, due to prisoner attitudes and experiences of education being predominately negative across research, the approach used by the Shakespeare programme considered here may offer a more

accessible route to enhance these skills. The Shakespeare programme enhances prisoner literacy in relation to not only reading and writing, but also emotional literacy and critical functional skills, especially in relation to communication and interpersonal relationships. Coates recommended that educational performance should be a formal measure, relating to all prisons enhancing the significance placed on education. It is in some part fundamental to the success of the Shakespeare programme groups that they are housed in institutions with wardens and stakeholders who place value on educational intervention. If this became a mandatory feature of prisons in the UK there would need to be a mass attitude shift; however, by placing a formal measure on this and therefore a target to reach, there would at least be an arbitrary level of compliance that prisons would be required to reach for. Although the Coates Review recommendations are not yet embedded into current practices, the Shakespeare programme would fit well with this as a cross curricular, multi-functional approach to educational criminal rehabilitation.

One way my research findings differ from existing thinking around prisoner qualification, is the notion of examinations as measures and in particular the earned release scheme, proposed as an incentive by governments for prisoners to seek education (Travis, 2015). Rejecting examination-style assessment, a core success of the Shakespeare programme is connected by participants and practitioners to the fact that though there are milestones, there are no incentives to encourage falsifying completion; if participants just pay lip service they are not truly rehabilitated, but they also gain no reward from doing so. Coates wants to see core educational performance measures, which are most often grades or qualifications. I argue that these do not have to be typical examination results alone, allowing scope for value to be placed on initiatives that are not solely grade-focussed and ensuring the participant yields no benefit from false engagement.

Educational interventions in prisons do need to prepare prisoners for life beyond bars, and therefore qualifications in line with society at large are important, particularly where criminal histories impact life chances upon release (Batiuk, 1997; Harlow, 2003; Vacca, 2004). However, there is a broader purpose and scope for educational prison policy to cover, as demonstrated throughout the findings here. Personal change has emerged from the research as critical in challenging recidivism, focussing on the offenders as complex individuals in need of targeted support (Thompson, 1999).

Prison education needs more than basic qualifications particularly surrounding re-entry, reintegration and life beyond bars. The findings of this research suggest that

non-traditional methods may enhance the education, knowledge and skills of offenders on a holistic scale, incorporating elements of functional academic skills, whilst also working towards a rehabilitative process, which is supposedly the overall intention of the prison service; to punish but also to rehabilitate and facilitate genuine change. As considered in chapter two, a literature review, the current criminal justice practices successful in reducing rates of recidivism are grounded in community, educational and practical sentencing, as a supplement or alternative to incarceration. However, prison and incarceration-style sentencing remain the norm for criminal justice policy across the UK and USA. For advancement to occur, greater emphasis must be placed on rehabilitative practice with higher investment in rehabilitative courses, however, this is a broad statement that could apply to any educational initiative. What the Shakespeare programme offers specifically is a model for the treatment and engagement with the prison population. The way prisons currently operate, and prisoner interactions are undertaken largely contravene my research findings here. Hierarchy brings about deeper division and may, in fact, exacerbate issues more than it alleviates them. Prisoners can still be controlled without being dehumanised, and they may be more likely to engage in rehabilitative and eventually positive activity if they feel part of the society they are within. Tabloid media and leaked footage from prison riots, exposé documentaries and prisoner testimonies consistently report a darker and deeply dehumanising aspect to prisoner interactions, whereas the Shakespeare programme appears to demonstrate that a more communicative dialogue and supportive style may encourage greater engagement from participants.

Issue-based teaching is often grounded in Shakespeare in a presentist context, bringing Shakespeare's texts and applying their content to modern day (Bronfman-Collovati, 2016) and the use of Shakespeare to share a political or social commentary on society is undeniably present in modern theatre and adaptation (see 3.2.3). With this in mind, the parallels between Shakespeare and the direct experience of prisoners may not need to be made any more explicit than the text dictates, and the inclusion of these Shakespeare-based approaches coupled with the style of teaching and practice, offers a significant springboard for wider educational lessons, skills development and rehabilitative education.

As represented from my pilot work through to this point, there is a clear segregation in society at large in the way prisoners are perceived and the way they perceive the outside world beyond bars. What the programme considered in this research study reportedly achieved was a redefinition of the prisoner as a capable

human being in the eyes of both people connected to them, people impacted by them and themselves. Participants demonstrated to society that they are capable human beings, but society also needs to shift in attitudes and processes, enabling them to have a future. Any previous conviction has grave impact on life trajectories in terms of employability, financial stability and life chances. Society needs to introduce mechanisms for prisoners post release, once their sentences have been served. I realise this sounds advocatory, however, grounded in the findings of this research, what makes these programme groups successful for many are the skills it equips participants with, coupled with the opportunities to demonstrate them to society beyond the prison. Where local communities understand and support the positive work occurring and have opportunities to engage with it and see it for themselves, transitions from prison into society at large are reported to be stronger and longer lasting.

With this in mind, society, including policy makers and media outlets, need access to resources, evidence and, in turn, policy that demonstrates that such educative programmes are a potentially life-changing treatment that can bring about genuine social change, rather than the treats or rewards that they are so frequently dismissed as. Reporting and publicising positive interventions for prisoners needs to be informed by an attitude shift. Punitive punishments and the aftereffects of such punishments, long after sentencing within society do nothing to curb recidivism, whereas programmes such as the one considered in this study have the potential to make genuine and impactful change.

9.4 Limitations and recommendations for future study

This research is just one study of one multi-sited long-serving programme; however, these findings suggest that there is positive potential for rehabilitation emerging from this approach. To fully explore and capture this model for increased usage, longitudinal work needs to be completed. What is provided here is an initial insight into the programme, drawing largely on shared long-term experiences from participants and practitioners collected over the short-term experience of myself as a researcher. This thesis provides a useful and unique window of triangulated participant reported outcomes, drawn from several separate institutions and groups engaging in the same programme. It is a useful window into the programme groups at the point of collection and from the perspective of participants successfully participating in it at the time. However, it is one window that has significant limitation and, in turn, leaves significant scope for further research.

I recommend longitudinal research to be conducted with programme graduates from the point of release. Though not all of the outcomes reported are only relevant outside of the prison location, the purpose of rehabilitative programming is to change behaviours for the benefit for society at large. Though there are a small number of graduate voices present in this research study, they were fairly recent programme graduates and more work to this effect over a longer period of time would enable a greater measure of "success" as an impact factor. Further research questions could longitudinally measure rates of recidivism, destination post release and life changes, again from the perspectives of participants post-incarceration.

A longitudinal study of programme graduates, tracking existing participants progress beyond release at yearly intervals, could crucially include factors surrounding reoffending rates, but also community engagement, employment and reintegration factors post release. A limitation of this research was that I was only able to engage with three programme graduates and although they shared rich data, this was a limited sample upon which to base future success. There are also only a limited number of programme graduates at present in that participants may still be serving long sentences, even having participated for the full length of the programme duration from its conception. With this in mind, significant work needs to be conducted surrounding the long-term impact of these programme groups on programme graduates. It is also difficult to empirically identify genuine progress without pre-and post-data measures.

Unfortunately, there was no baseline measure available for this research, beyond the knowledge that the participants were incarcerated, and anecdotal discussion about their lives prior to incarceration, with the corroboration of other group members surrounding their behaviours post participation. Longitudinal evaluation of new participants from programme entry to gauge personal development, impact and advancement using empirical measures would enhance this, rather than relying on shared stories and told experience. Though my ethnographic experience helped supplement the told experiences as data, this was limited to a relatively short period of time with each group and although this yielded a volume of data, the first-hand experience on my part was only partial. By placing an ethnographic researcher into the field for an extended period of time, they would be able to engage on a far deeper level and construct meaning based on formally gathered first-hand evidence.

The research was also conducted in the US context and policy borrowing between countries throughout time has demonstrated that systems that work in foreign climates are not automatically adaptable to other cultures, institutions and countries.

Based on the findings, there is a vast array of programme outcomes that are powerful in the prison context. With this in mind, I also recommend that programme practices should be considered for piloting in the UK context to tackle many of the identified issues here, including prisoner mental health and isolation issues, educational and functional skills discrepancies and recidivism rates. To do this, a series of research-informed pilot interventions within the UK context and undertaken with research documentation throughout would be my initial step in implementing what seems to work in the US prison context.

In disseminating this research, one key criticism I have faced is that I chose to take the word of the prisoners as authority, with the claim that prisoners by definition are not trustworthy. This is yet again reflective of the stereotypical and socially constructed perception of prisoners as automatically untrustworthy. Though I am not claiming that all prisoners are trustworthy, as this is not a blanket phrase that can be applied more broadly to humanity, I am not willing to discount these voices due to the single shared characteristic of "prisoner". What I am attributing authority to, however, is an individual's ability to be best placed to testify to their own perceptions. As a researcher, I do not position my stance to take authority over my participants, rather as a guest in their communities to co-construct the research findings. I also however acknowledge that longer participant-researcher engagement would strengthen the validity of these voices.

9.5 In Conclusion

My argument throughout this thesis has been to highlight the potential for rehumanisation this Shakespeare-based prison programme holds; establish what the function of a specifically Shakespeare-based approach is and understand how these programme groups may improve the existing flawed approaches more widely used for criminal rehabilitation. This study has established meaning from the voices of those impacted by these programme groups, exploring the potential these programme groups hold, particularly encouraging social interaction and developing key social, educational and emotional skills to prevent recidivism and crucially reintegrate ex-prisoners into society.

My conclusion to this research project surrounding Shakespeare is not that Shakespeare is a universal key to criminal rehabilitation. I am not arguing that a canon of texts that is over 400 years old has been a miracle solution to criminality that has been overlooked thus far. Shakespeare is not a miracle cure and his texts are not simply

worthwhile just because they have the reputation as being good for you or the right kind of knowledge (see 2.3.2). However, Shakespeare's works provide a fantastically rich source material that, demonstrably for many participants, provides a method to access rehabilitative learning that other approaches have not, giving them a voice, developing their literacy and encouraging their self-reflection. In line with my approach to prisoners, it is understandable that not every person will be impacted in the same way; however, where a minority of offending behaviour is currently impacted by prisons, this research has demonstrated that the use of Shakespeare could be a powerful tool for some in changing behaviours.

The findings to be taken from these initiatives hold impact and implications for the criminal justice system that could be addressed through simple changes. The treatment of individuals within the prison system is unlikely to be pleasant, after all, prison is a place of consequence. However, prisoners in my research study demonstrated how dehumanising the US prison system is, attributing numbers, removing identities and collectively defining participants as "inmate." The treatment of offenders in this way disregards their humanity entirely and further distances them from the society from which they are already physically isolated. Policy makers, justice workers and society at large have a responsibility to challenge this dehumanisation of offenders and the prison demographic (see 8.0;2.2), not only upon conviction but to an extent prior to reaching that point. The structural injustices within society are not an easy challenge to overcome and the programme considered here is not necessarily the answer to a macro-cultural change; such a shift would require a societal attitude shift supported by institutions of power, from authorities to the media. However, this research has offered an insight into the potential available for changing attitudes on a micro-scale amongst people most isolated and othered. If such an effect can be truly achieved within these small circles, and genuine change can be elicited via this approach, then there are lessons to be transferred to a macro-scale shift in the way criminality is addressed and communities are treated.

In conclusion, there is powerful potential demonstrated by the Shakespeare programme that can be applied to make significant contributions to successful criminal rehabilitation. These are useful conclusions and ideas and I hope that my thesis may encourage fresh discussion and debate. The practitioners and participants in the Shakespeare programme recurrently report being active agents for change in the way society perceives initiatives to help offenders change, often currently rejecting them as unworthy of such support. Where society maintains a system of structural injustice,

segregation and socio-economic hierarchy, this is just one small step in a wealth of work that needs to be done to shift attitudes that continually reject offenders and much of the demographic that makes up the prison environment. It is often overlooked, however, that almost all prisoners will be released from prison eventually (Travis, 2005), both in the USA, with only 49000 out of 2,193,798 incarcerated persons marked never to be released (Hughes et al, 2003; International Centre for Prison Studies, 2017; Project Censored, 2017), and the UK with only 70 people out of 88,249 incarcerated persons marked never to be released (Evans, 2016; International Centre for Prison Studies, 2017).

My closing line to this thesis reflects the necessity for an approach grounded in humanity to achieve successful criminal rehabilitation, acknowledging that the programme that uses Shakespeare here appears to make significant contributions, using a combination of Shakespeare and humanity to achieve this. It is natural to fear those so heavily demonised within a culture, especially where one is not given anything other than an individual's criminal history upon which to make a judgment. The question I put to society is twofold based on my findings: The first is a question of whom they want to be within their communities. Their options based on current release rates are either somebody who entered prison with their existing thoughts and perceptions and has spent years caged, with only these limited thoughts for company, or somebody who is known to have had the opportunity to receive the education, support and scaffolding to consider the true consequences of their actions, who has stepped back to consider their impact, and in turn who may just think twice before offending again. Beyond this I would ask how people wish others to be treated within their communities, drawing back to some of the many social justice issues throughout this thesis: Class segregation, racial injustice and poverty are just three examples of how the prison population is largely demographically limited through broader structural injustices and societal issues. Society and existing criminal justice structures in the USA and UK alike condemn the actor, or perpetrator, without condemning or challenging the fault itself. The approaches undertaken by the programme enable communities to integrate, not segregate; to value all voices and allow them input and involvement in their community, regardless of their personal circumstances and, crucially, a re-education of society as a whole to work collaboratively, creatively and without judgment. If the methods adopted by the programme were successfully integrated into prison-based criminal rehabilitation as a whole, I argue that it is possible to condemn the fault, not merely to punish the actor of it, and work towards a fully integrated society before, behind and beyond bars.

10.0 Appendices

All difficulties are easy when they are known

(Measure for Measure, IV, ii.)

There are three appendices to this thesis.

10.1: Appendix A

This Appendix details criminal levels and classification for England, Wales, Scotland and the USA as throughout, I refer to different levels and categories of prisoner and these differ in title and severity. This also adds scope to how significant mixed groups are permitted to work together, for example level 2 and level 4.

10.2 Appendix B

This Appendix contains a copy of each of my four consent forms. This project had many thorny ethical issues and took multiple attempts and revisions to ensure it was wholly, ethically sound. A key feature of that was having a set of consent forms designed to ensure the intended recipient fully understood what they were consenting to.

10.3 Appendix C

This is my statement confirming my ethical approval and was an official confirmation based on a detailed and rigorous process seeking ethical approval. At times throughout the research project, I have had to err on the side of being overcautious to truly protect my participants who are vulnerable for a variety of reasons. This appendix confirms that I considered all aspects of this and successfully secured ethical approval for this research study.

10.1 Appendix A: Prison Security Categories

10.1.1 England and wales (Offenders' Families Helpline, 2015):

There are four different security categories:

Category A – Category A prisoners are those that would pose the most threat to the public, the police or national security should they escape.

Category B – Category B prisoners do not need to be held in the highest security conditions but, for category B prisoners, the potential for escape should be made very difficult.

Category C – Category C prisoners cannot be trusted in open conditions but are considered to be prisoners who are unlikely to make a determined escape attempt.

Category D – Category D prisoners can be trusted in open conditions.

10.1.2 Scotland (Offenders' Families Helpline, 2015)

High Supervision: A prisoner for whom all activities and movements should be authorised, supervised and monitored by an officer.

Medium Supervision: A prisoner whom activities and movements are subject to limited supervision and restrictions.

Low Supervision: A prisoner for whom activities and movements are subject to minimum supervision and restrictions. Prisoners in this category may be allowed to participate in activities in the community, which may be supervised or unsupervised.

10.1.3 United States of America (Federal Bureau of Prisons, 2017)

I Minimum: Minimum security institutions, also known as Federal Prison Camps (FPCs), have dormitory housing, a relatively low staff-to-inmate ratio, and limited or no perimeter fencing. These institutions are work- and program-oriented.

II Low: Low security Federal Correctional Institutions (FCIs) have double-fenced perimeters, mostly dormitory or cubicle housing, and strong work and program components. The staff-to-inmate ratio in these institutions is higher than in minimum security facilities.

II / IV Medium: Medium security FCIs (and USPs designated to house medium security inmates) have strengthened perimeters (often double fences with electronic detection systems), mostly cell-type housing, a wide variety of work and treatment programs, an even higher staff-to-inmate ratio than low security FCIs, and even greater internal controls.

V High: High security institutions, also known as United States Penitentiaries (USPs), have highly secured perimeters (featuring walls or reinforced fences), multiple- and single-occupant cell housing, the highest staff-to-inmate ratio, and close control of inmate movement.

Complex: At Federal Correctional Complexes (FCCs), institutions with different missions and security levels are located in close proximity to one another.

Administrative: Administrative facilities are institutions with special missions, such as the detention of pretrial offenders; the treatment of inmates with serious or chronic medical problems; or the containment of extremely dangerous, violent, or escape-prone inmates.

10.2 Appendix B: Informed Consent Forms

10.2.1: Informed Consent Form: Activity for Participants

In line with the ethical guidelines given to research students by The University of York, UK, please read this form and sign to say that you are willing to be involved in this project. The researcher will be happy to answer any questions.

What is this research for?	Laura Nicklin would like to see theatre programmes offered as support courses. She would like to see what I do, how I do it and what I think about it.
What will happen?	My involvement in this study means that Laura can: - Participate in and watch activities I am involved in or leading -Collect information about things I say or do throughout these sessions -Use anything I say to her towards her research study.
Will my name be used?	Anything I share will not have my name attached to it unless otherwise discussed. I will not be able to be identified by name in the research, but I will be entitled to read the final project if I want to. I can request a copy from Laura at lln500@york.ac.uk.
What will happen to the information I provide?	The information I provide will be stored securely, and only Laura and her supervisor, Dr. Sarah Olive, will be able to see it. This information will be used in Laura's research degree and in further academic publications. My input will be kept forever.
What are my rights?	I understand that if I tell the researcher anything that is of concern or harm to myself or others, she has to report this to a higher body legally, for my own safety and the safety of others. As a participant I may remove information I have provided at any point during each session or ask for what I say to not be recorded but after the session has finished this will not be possible as my information cannot be identified.
What if I have any questions?	If I have any further questions throughout or following the research process I can contact or ask an appropriate adult to contact either Laura directly at lln500@york.ac.uk or Dr Jeremy Airey, member of the Education Ethics Committee at the University of York UK at jeremy.airey@york.ac.uk. You are also welcome to ask questions at any time during the information collection process.

I agree to be involved in this research as described above. I accept the use of information about me as detailed above and understand my rights as a participant. I understand my right to withdraw. I accept that information will not be identifiable. If I want to withdraw I have to do so before or within the session that the information is being collected in, as it will be impossible later unless I have agreed this separately.

10.2.2: Informed Consent Form: Interview (Participant)

In line with the ethical guidelines given to research students by The University of York, UK, please read the following statements and sign to say that you are willing to be involved in this project. The researcher will be happy to answer any questions.

What is this research for?	Laura Nicklin would like to see theatre programmes offered as support courses. She would like to see what I do, how I do it and what I think about it.
What will happen?	My involvement in this study means that Laura can: - Ask me questions about my experience of my arts programme - Record responses given by myself - Use the information I provide in her research and any written record of this.
Will my name be used?	Anything I share will not have my name attached to it unless otherwise discussed. I will not be able to be identified by name in the research, but I will be entitled to read the final project if I want to. I can request a copy from Laura at lln500@york.ac.uk.
What will happen to the information I provide?	The information I provide will be stored securely, and only Laura and her supervisor, Dr. Sarah Olive, will be able to see it. This information will be used in Laura's research degree and in further academic publications. My input will be kept forever.
What are my rights?	I also understand that if I tell the researcher anything that is of concern or harm to myself or others she has to report this to a higher body legally, for my own safety and the safety of others. As a participant I may remove information I have provided at any point during each session or ask for what I say to not be recorded but after the session has finished this will not be possible as my information cannot be identified.
What if I have any questions?	If I have any further questions throughout or following the research process I can contact, or ask an appropriate adult to contact, either Laura directly at lln500@york.ac.uk or Dr Jeremy Airey, member of the Education Ethics Committee at the University of York UK at jeremy.airey@york.ac.uk. You are also welcome to ask questions at any time during the information collection process.

I agree to be involved in this research as described above. I accept the use of information about me as detailed above and understand my rights as a participant. I understand my right to withdraw. I accept that information will not be identifiable. If I want to withdraw I have to do so before or within the session that the information is being collected in, as it will be impossible later unless I have agreed this separately.

10.2.3: Informed Consent Form: Activity (Practitioners)

The purpose of the research project is to gain a first-hand perspective of arts-based courses or support programmes offered to youth. In line with the ethical guidelines given to research students by The University of York, UK, please read the following statements and sign to say that you are willing to be involved in this project. The researcher will be happy to answer any questions.

My involvement in this study means that the researcher, Laura Nicklin, can participate in and watch activities I am involved in or leading. She can collect information about things I say or do throughout these sessions. She can use anything I say to her in an interview towards her research study unless I withdraw this as explained below. The information I provide will be stored securely, only accessible to the researcher and her supervisor, Dr. Sarah Olive, and anything I say will not have my name attached to it unless otherwise discussed and further consent signed. This means that at no point will my name be recorded. This information will be used as part of a wider PhD research project which may lead to further publications of the research findings. As all information will have my name removed at collection I will not be able to be identified, but I will be entitled to read the final project if I want to and can request this from Laura at lln500@york.ac.uk. This information will be kept forever as smaller sections may be used for further research or publishing. "As a participant I may remove information I have provided at any point during each session or ask for what I say to not be recorded but after the session has finished this will not be possible as my information cannot be identified."

I also understand that if I tell the researcher anything that is of concern or harm to myself or others she has to report this to a higher body legally, for my own safety and the safety of others.

I understand that if I have any further questions throughout or following the research process I can contact either the researcher directly at lln500@york.ac.uk or Dr Jeremy Airey, member of the Education Ethics Committee at the University of York UK at jeremy.airey@york.ac.uk.

I agree to be involved in this research as described above. I accept the use of information about me as detailed above and understand my rights as a participant. I understand my right to withdraw. I accept that information will not be identifiable. If I want to withdraw I have to do so before or within the session that the information is being collected in, as it will be impossible later unless I have agreed this separately.

Signed (Participant)………………………….. Date…………………………………………….

Signed (Researcher)…………………………… Date……………………………………………..

10.2.4: Informed Consent Form: Interview

(Parent/Guardian/loco parentis)

The purpose of the research project is to gain a first-hand perspective of arts-based courses or support programmes offered to youth In line with the ethical guidelines given to research students by The University of York, UK, please read the following statements and sign to say that you are willing to be involved in this project. The researcher will be happy to answer any questions.

The involvement of ………………… in this study means that the researcher, Laura Nicklin, can record responses given by the individual and use them in her research study. The information the individual provides will be stored securely, only accessible to the researcher and her supervisor, Dr. Sarah Olive, and anything the above individual says will not have their name attached to it unless otherwise discussed and further consent signed. At no point will their name be recorded. This information will be used as part of a wider PhD research project which may lead to further publications of the research findings. As all information will have my name removed at collection the above individual will not be able to be identified, but the above individual and I will be entitled to read the final project if we want to. This information will be kept forever as smaller sections may be used for further research or publishing. A participant may leave the information set during the information collection session however after any session is complete it will be impossible to identify information for later removal.

I also understand that if they tell the researcher anything that is of concern or harm to themselves or others she has to report this to a higher body legally, for their own safety and the safety of others.

I understand that if the participant or I have any further questions throughout or following the research we can contact either the researcher directly at lln500@york.ac.uk or Dr Jeremy Airey, member of the Education Ethics Committee at the University of York at jeremy.airey@york.ac.uk.

I agree to……………………….. being involved in this research study as described above. I accept the use of information about them as detailed above and understand their rights as a participant. I understand their right to withdraw and I accept that all information will not be identifiable, so I know that if they want to withdraw they have to do so before or during the time that the information is being collected in, as it will be impossible after unless they have agreed this separately.

Signed (Parent/guardian) ………………………….. Date…………………………………………….

Signed (Researcher)…………………………… Date……………………………………………..

10.3 Appendix C: Confirmation of Ethical Approval

Ethical approval granted by The Education Ethics Committee

Main Applicant: Laura Nicklin

Title: Shakespeare-focussed alternatives to criminal rehabilitation and theatre-focused rehabilitation courses.

Date approved: 12 November 2014

Ref: FC14/01

11.0 References

"O, let my books be then the eloquence and

dumb presages of my speaking breast."

(Sonnet 23. 9-10)

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