# *"MY VOICE RISES ON THE MIC"*


# AN ARTOGRAPHIC NEW SPOKEN WORD POETRY PROGRAMME PORTRAYING TWO YOUNG OFFENDERS' ARTISTIC WAYS OF BEING IN A MACEDONIAN PRISON



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This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.


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**DEDICATION**

For the power of poetry to open up my life & for the humanity, resilience, creativity of Luani and Jess & all children & artists who survive against all odds living artistically; because, as my creative writing teacher, poet Sean Thomas Dougherty wrote:

> *"a poem is not a university, but a universe. As soon as one writes it down, a poem changes. It is a spiral shifting slow above us, a cosmos inside us, like the constellations, like the staircase of our bodies. You can never kill the poem. [You can never] erase the poem"*

> The Second O of Sorrow, (Dougherty, page 27, 2018).

**DECLARATION**

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except where specifically indicated in the text.

It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

STATEMENT OF LENGTH

This dissertation does not exceed 80,000 words, excluding the title page, content pages, captions, footnotes, boxes, references, bibliography, appendices, and acknowledgements.

**ABSTRACT**

**"My Voice Rises on the Mic": an Artographic New Spoken Word Poetry Programme Portraying Two Young Offenders' Artistic Ways of Being in a Macedonian Prison**

A vibrant live performance, spoken word poetry has enhanced people's lives worldwide. Yet, it continues to be underrepresented among arts programmes in prison. Research interest in the arts resurfaced with the narrative and desistance criminological turn to study how the stories offenders tell about their lives can support a crime-free life, through subjective, social and judicial rehabilitation. In this context, I enquired into the potential contributions of a new spoken word poetry programme in offenders' lives in a Macedonian prison. Particularly, I investigated the programme development and its perceived impact. The former focused on the artistic responses and life experiences elicited for the duration of the programme, while the latter examined the meanings they held in two young offenders' lives.

The artographic design of the three-month programme, which was developed and implemented together with artists, young offenders and prison staff, enabled me to conduct arts-based multi-method data collection throughout three stages. The data included 18 life story interviews with six young offenders with a visual elicitation tool; 23 participant observations of workshops and rehearsals including arts-based evaluative tools; and, participants' 32 self-authored poems. The programme's final performance event in the prison, with an audience of over 40 people, connected prison residents, artists, criminal justice and local NGO representatives. The study reports findings from the programme's contributions in two Albanian young offenders' lives based on 8 individual life story interviews with 2 visual river journeys and 1 painting, 23 participant observations, and 7 participant poems. The analysis with artographic portraiture integrated poetic and visual inquiry with the five key tenets of the method of portraiture: voice, relationship, themes, place, and aesthetic whole of narrative. Artographic collaboration with a child psychotherapeutic counsellor enabled to me to cultivate embodied reflexive empathy in the analysis of sensitive data.

The study found the programme has the potential to support young offenders' artistic ways of being. Specifically, the programme's sites of artistic practice, emergent pedagogy, and the performance community made possible for young offenders to 1) empower themselves through poetic voice as creative agency in resistance to social exclusion 2) develop ways of being alternative to their history of trauma and perceived criminal immutability 3) have their artistic way of being validated by artists, educators, the prison staff.

I concluded that young offenders' artistic way of being through the artographic programme could potentially inform their rehabilitation within the interdependent subjective and social dimensions, relevant to Macedonian national resocialisation policy. This means that arts researchers, arts and prison practitioners should centre arts in prison work on the creative practices. To do so, there is a need to: 1) develop an evidence-base and theorisation of the nature of artists' creative practices, which would account for the legitimacy of arts-based methodologies in prison; and, 2) to frame contributions of the arts to the criminal justice system in a language meaningful to all stakeholders.

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# PART ONE: THE SEEING SENSE OF POETRY

*"It is the strangest yellow, that wall-paper! [...] There are things in that paper that nobody knows but me, or ever will [...] but I must say what I feel and think in some way – it is such a relief!*

*Through watching so much at night, when it [the wallpaper] changes so, I have finally found out. The front pattern DOES move—and no wonder! The woman behind shakes it! Sometimes I think there are a great many women behind, and sometimes only one, and she crawls around fast, and her crawling shakes it all over. [...] I think that woman gets out in the daytime! And I'll tell you why –privately – I've seen her! I can see her out of every one of my windows!*

*As soon as it was moonlight and that poor thing began to crawl and shake the pattern, I got up and ran to help her. I pulled and she shook, I shook and she pulled, and before morning we had peeled off yards of that paper. [...] I really have discovered something at last [...] I am here, and no person touches this paper but me--not ALIVE!*

**(Perkins Gillman, pp. 13-16, 1892)**
**From the short story "The Yellow Wallpaper"**

## ME-SEARCHING/WE-SEARCHING/RE-SEARCHING THE PERSONAL, "THE STRANGEST YELLOW"— CHASING AFTER THE PRE-PERSONAL

For as long as I can remember the phrase "an only child" used to define me in school, together with the ethnic identification "Aromanian". In the Macedonian classrooms, every year a person used to interrupt the class and briefly collect information about each of the students. We all responded at once by a show of hands, and this is how the labels of "only child", and "Aromanian" stuck with me like a cloud of emptiness and shame around me. It was only later that I understood what a census was, but the drill of it felt more like a censorship. Me-searching the personal has meant removing layers and layers of such erasures. It would be more empowering to begin with a background story of strengths, and, the me-searching/we-searching/re-searching of the present PhD journey has meant encountering struggles rooted in intergenerational trauma, so that I can begin to re-write the ramifications of violence. Perhaps, the best evidence of my existence, for as long as I could remember was poetry. The first poem I wrote was in fourth grade to express my disappointment at a teacher who yelled at the whole class for buying him an

"inexpensive" fishing rod as an end-of-the-school-year gift. I recall my mother's disbelief at reading my verses, which I later grew to understand were emulating Shakespeare's monologues I had happened to read in Macedonian translation by sheer luck. 'Bookish' is not how my family describes itself, nor how others would ever describe us. My mother was born third in a family of five siblings. The first one, a stillborn. The third one, my mother. The loss, a silent memory like so many others. One of them unfolded during a casual conversation over the dinner table. She was sitting next to me at the dining room with a plate of fried leek and pork meatballs – I refuse to eat meat; she struggles to understand this. Our eyes would meet but our minds rarely, or so I used to think. She told me about a day in her adolescence when she'd feared for her life –

Sensitive data removed for confidentiality reasons. The passage contained third party identifying information removed for privacy reasons.

It was one of those moments I understood silently how trauma works blindly with eyes wide open – it's how I discovered poetry, not knowing, and yet, knowing more than ever before. Ocean Vuong reminds me that:

> I didn't know the cost
> of entering a song—was to lose
>              your way back.
> So I entered. So I lost.
>                   I lost it all with my eyes
> wide open (Vuong, p. 6, 2016).

Stories of violence woven into the fabric of everyday – it never crossed my mind to question it only it all poured through the cracks of poetry – if you say it in poetry the price paid for standing up is to live another day to rise to the occasion – but to rise meant to keep running, more often than not it meant running away from a "legacy" of trauma. Thankfully, I discovered I could run as fast as I can through living poetically, through the rhythms and rhymes of other poets, I run as fast as I could towards getting educated– yes, Ocean "I run until the heartbeat was all I could remember of my name" (Vuong, p. 18, 2016). Kierkegaard says, "What is education? I should suppose that education was the curriculum one had to run through in order to catch up with oneself (in Ruefle, 2012). A PhD is an education, I should suppose the present PhD was a programme of poetry and narratives I had to run through not alone, but together with Jess and Luani, with my supervisor professor Pam Burnard, with friends that are family, and a community of artographers in order to catch up with the possibilities of poetry to open up not one, but many lives, our lives.

I remember once in university my creative writing teacher Sean Thomas Dougherty wearing a T-shirt that said "poetry saves lives" – I had felt it, but I didn't believe it. Poetry as a lifeline, a parachute, that thing used to slow the motion of another thing through an atmosphere by creating aerodynamic lift – poetry affecting the motion of another through a climate of violence – poetry of witness like a space from which one can at the very least hope to rise – rise where? It was never about the parachute but what it can do, what it does – into the limitless possibilities of a cosmic ever-expanding imaginative identity. I don't think a poem is a parachute but my writing seems to disagree – and my life story brought me here at the place where violence and trauma meet to heal as if fear and terror weren't the prerequisite to discover poetry to begin with – all forms of fear, dread or panic – fear is, as Mary Ruefle says, the job of poets – so no wonder those who need courage the most turn to poetry (Ruefle, 2012).

I think that's why I learnt how to tell the difference between silences, to read the stories between the lines. That's why I've felt like I have to know all the faces of poetry – or at least begin – and one day, I began to wonder more and more about monstrosities – Rimbaud says a poet's soul needs to be rendered monstrous in order to understand (Rimbaud, 1966)! When I started my PhD in October, 2014, I knew "poetry slam was a

beast that means many different things to different people" (Gregory, p. 3, 2008), so fear and courage combined, prisons emerged as those unexplored spaces of trauma and pain; of the legacy of humanity's capability of unspeakable horror, as well as the prospect of healing and transformation. A question spiralled to spike an interest, there was something to understand, a conundrum – what is the face of poetry slams, of spoken word poetry in the lives of prison residents? Perhaps I just wanted to find out whose turn it was to sing through the places in the body where it hurts, those wounded places that we think won't heal without the touch of some kind of life force, an energy moved by the sounds of our own making, our, your, my story, your own poetry, the voices that be– *poem as trace, poem as evidence* – that carries the actuality of you—I can only hope the thesis ahead can hold the life actualities of the people who enabled it by agreeing to be a part of and shape together the new spoken word poetry programme for which I am eternally grateful.

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The course of my educational research as well as creative practices, are inevitably intertwined with my personal narrative. McAdams' (1988) theory that we live by the stories we tell enables me to reflect on how I position my life story in the proposed study, the inquiry into young offenders' own life stories. In this poetic/narrative/performative inquiry, I live and perform the professional, artistic, and human goal to connect to other people empathetically. I do not assume I can put myself in the shoes of young men in prison, each story is unique. Yet, I cannot escape the hope for vicarious understanding. I wish to connect, and extend my emotional capacity. I commit to explore the empathetic process of both embracing and suspending my subjective, cultural and intellectual perspectives (Keen, 2013) in order to make space for and to make sense of the unknown (Griffiths, 1998).

The present study seeks to contribute to social justice by enabling access to arts education in the prison context. The imbalanced redistribution of resources and social inequity reproduces stereotypical representation of young people who commit crime. Young people who spend time in the criminal justice system[1] erroneously forge the fixed identity of "the incorrigible offender" both in their own eyes and in the eye of the public. I want to understand the subjective stories of young people in the context of the creative participation in the proposed spoken word poetry programme[2] because I have personally experienced and witnessed the transformative power of the poetry slam and performing communities. In summary, I believe that participatory poetry slam communities of artists, researchers, educators, creative practitioners, are tracing the pathways for spoken word poetry education as a culturally relevant and transformative arts education for social justice (Hanley, 2013).

Paradoxically perhaps, I was sceptical of poetry slam's aesthetics and its role in self-development before I gradually become part of the slam community. Participating in poetry slams since 2010 up to date, has made me reflect that my reluctance arose from a

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[1] 'The criminal justice system' and "arts in the criminal justice system' has been referred to simply as arts in prison throughout the thesis.
[2] The spoken word poetry programme is referred to throughout the thesis as 'programme'.

place of unquestioned privilege. I was clinging to the academic poetry world dominated by the canon and its aesthetics, taking sides in the debates between "page" (written poetry) and the "stage" poetry (popular poetry written primarily for performance) (Gregory, 2008; Pathmantahan, 2014).[3] I hadn't yet opened my eyes to the complexity of the poetry continuum encompassing oral poetry traditions, diverse spoken arts movements of resistance as well as the polyphony of voices on the page. Celebrating this diversity, the present study attempts to illuminate the contribution of spoken word poetry as a creative process in prisons.

That said, personality traits as well socio-cultural background shapes the type of SWP experience a person may have. For example, looking at the role of performing in poetry slams for internal conflict resolution, Maddalena's study (2009) offers a number of successful example cases. However, the study also emphasizes that people heal in different ways; some do so through sharing and disclosure, while others through avoiding the same. Whether poetry slams provide a platform for people who are inclined towards sharing, or serves as a positive trigger for people low on disclosure remains to be established.

Following this, the present study relies on the knowledge and intersecting contributions of a number of fields discussed below, which inform the design of an inclusive and relevant new programme. The section that follows also provides an overview of the structure and rationale for the present study.

## 1.1 The Story Behind the Study

Doing prison research involves navigating the politics surrounding prison institutions as well as the national political climate. Understanding the power dynamics in the novel and uncertain fieldwork context of the prison, is key for establishing creative partnership with the prison staff as well as the participants. The programme design departs from facilitation principles ingrained in creative practitioner pedagogies, as well as from the refined conception of critical pedagogy within the field of performance ethnography and

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[3] See 2.2.6

arts-based research[4]. Performance ethnography, drawing from diverse fields, like performance studies, reframes and questions critical pedagogy's desire to help the oppressed. It does so by politically examining the challenges of this leftist ideal adopted in the arts-based research (Garoian, 1999; jagodzinski & Wallin, 2013). Consequently, the present study cannot escape the assumptions associated with a leftist, neo-Marxist ideology that comes with critical pedagogy. Bergman and Hawish admit to this type of challenge in their work on addressing violent behaviour with men in prison saying:

> We made the classical mistake of seeing this special audience through our political 'leftness' rather than through their specialness. We were the ones who needed help. [...] The workshops became our major way of trying to figure out what was different about these men besides being behind bars. It was our laboratory search for theatrical relevance (Bergman & Hewish, 1996, p. 94).

Similarly, Bergman and Hewish's reflexivity makes me question my negative conception of the work ethic in the correctional institution. It makes me reconsider that irrespective of the plethora of negative national and international reports, I should approach the young people and staff in the institution with respect and belief in their creative practice and development. Thus, one the one hand, I am aware of the past reports concerning staff negligence of relevant duties, the lack of resources as well as the sporadic nature of correctional education. On the other hand, I also feel that young people have the creative capacity that can thrive through the engagement in the arts, whereby the pains of imprisonment can be alleviated forming grounds for self-development.

In addition, my experience of working both in the private and public educational sector encompassing higher education, creative writing and the project-based creative workshop practices, has made me aware of the disparity in the official education policy recommendations and the underperforming practice. However, working in a private university in Macedonia has helped me debunk some of the myths concerning the underachieving students that populate private higher education institutions.

In summary, reflecting on the existing national and international prison literatures as well as my experience of working in institutions with low academic performance, has made me challenge my prejudiced expectations of the unique and diverse capabilities of

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[4] See Chapter 4

young people. Hence, I now consciously seek to embrace an open and non-judgemental approach in my creative and research practices. I strive to maintain this reflexive attitude through the methodological lens of artography, which I discuss below through a novel coinage that aims to capture the specifics of spoken word practices and research in the prison context.

*1.1.2 Reflecting on Performing as Poet/Educator/Re-searcher*

Reflecting on my practice as a lecturer in a private university in Macedonia, challenged my assumptions that private universities harbour "underachieving students". I taught a course on Legal English for law students and started a course called Creative English which was designed to practice English as an additional language by participating in eight arts-based workshops. The students' input and output on the course surpassed my expectations. I had the opportunity to carry out a small-scale research on how they responded to the arts environment the course provided. The study showed that the arts space encouraged students who were less confident in their spoken and written English skills to discuss and write poetry in English. Also, these students' creative expression through arts-based methods, like visual methods, was more valued in the course than in formal classes, which produced an inclusive environment conducive to creativity (Nikolova, 2014).

**Box 1.1 Action Research in Macedonian Higher Education: Eran's Poetry Excerpt**

*I am from dark blood walls*
*and the sound of tea kettles.*
*I am from a chilly moist place, crazy driving*
*and the bad smell of the canal above the bluezed blue sea.*
*I am from the happiness of seeing a cherry tree*
*in white silk on a Sunday evening.*
*I am from respecting elders and thinking you're better.*
*From an awful brother and a big family.*
*I am from 'there really should be a black tea on the table'.*
*I am from looking after each other and caring.*

*February, 2014*

Reflecting on the above mentioned study, I realised that my practice was limited by my assumptions of what poetry is and should be through the lens of a poet, not an educator or pedagogue. This teaching/research experience, the increased participation in poetry slams made me question my rigid and rigorous views of poetry in general, and in the classroom. For example, when students wrote a poem based on the "I am from" creative writing exercise I didn't allow enough space to listen to what they have to say and appreciate their developing aesthetics and cultural complexity as shown in this excerpt written by one of the student participants:

This was the first draft the student wrote which already displays a sense for descriptive imagery, and the lines engage the all the senses like the touch "silk" or hearing "bluezed". Moreover, this excerpt shows a critical cultural awareness "thinking you're better" and communion "caring". Reflecting on my practice, I feel compelled to change my feedback approach, the lack of praise and appreciation for students' poems. I now realise "that the social pedagogue who wants to reinforce positive behaviour [...] needs to be able to spot the nearly invisible glimmer of a good performance in the child or young person" (Storø, 2013, p. 134).

To sum, reflecting on my professional teaching experience, I am prompted to re-form my teaching and facilitating practices by consciously engaging in possibility thinking (Burnard et al., 2006a). In order to take on and nurture the roles of performer poet/educator/researcher (P/E/Re-forming see 4.1) in the prison context for the present study, the pilot study provided an opportunity to hone my facilitating skills as well as to learn the specifics of using drama-based approaches with offenders (see 5.1).

*1.1.3 Grounding the Study: Configuring the Thesis*

The programme as a part of the wider field of arts education, is located in the present study in the dimension of arts-based research in education which has been evolving as its own research paradigm in the past twenty years (Leavy, 2008; Rolling, 2010; Springgay, Irwin, & Leggo, 2007). Figure 1 below selectively shows the related fields of arts education and arts practices, together with the relevant intersecting field of criminology,

in relation to and as part of the arts-based research paradigm, the literatures reviewed in chapter 2.

As shown in Figure 1.1, Chapter 2 draws the literatures from the field of arts practices in prison settings to trace and synthesise the role of the arts in offenders' lives. In so doing, it covers the ground of arts in prison lessons from practice, research and policy. Reviewing the arts practices in prisons the second chapter locates the field commonly discussed in the literature as arts interventions in the criminal justice system, I refer to all formats of the arts in prison shortly as 'arts in prison' throughout. The review of the arts in prison (Cheliotis, 2014; Hughes, 2005; Miles, 2004; Miles & Clarke, 2006a) reveals a gap, a lack of representation of poetry slam and programmes practices in prisons. It shows how the arts research practices' focus on outcomes requires individualised research approach to see the values of arts, particularly a new practice in prisons, spoken word poetry. It thus overviews the practices of cultural phenomenon of poetry slam, focusing the youth programmes that harness spoken word poetry. It traces how these creative arts practices emerged in the context of schools and communities, forging informal and formal learning. Thereby it argues that programme enriches arts education through the practice of spoken word poetry programming for youth (Weinstein, 2010).

Chapter 3 introduces the context of the present study research site overviewing the literatures on prisons, with a focus on the young offender treatment and policies. It argues that artistic experience and responses to spoken word has yet to be studied in-depth with young offender population. Following the desistance and narrative move in criminological research, the second chapter makes the key argument that the role programmes merits substantial research in the prison. The rationale for this lies in the conception of poetry as a way of creative empowerment and move toward a literate identity. This strongly resonates with narrative criminology's stress on how the stories people tell reveal aspects of their identity and criminal behaviour (Presser & Sandberg, 2015).

In part 2, chapter 4 explores poetic inquiry as the ontological ground for artographic drive research in the present study. Through self-inquiry it argues for an adaptation of portraiture method as an artographic approach to study narrative identity. Chapter 5

expounds, the research design, and data collection methods performed as the new programme. The chapter elaborates the overlap of the programme with the research process as rooted in the emergence of arts practice as research, arguing that spoken word poetry practices as well as spoken word poetry education can be conceived as a form of arts-based, practice-led research, ingrained in the amalgam of poetics/narrative/performance inquiry. It supports this claim by drawing on the expansion of academic and research communities, poetry slam and spoken word (education) practices. It provides examples of how spoken poetry is represented in the body of empirical studies in the fields of the arts and humanities (Frost, 2010), sociology (Freitas, 2012), education (Gregory, 2014; Michalko, 2012), communication, psychology (Maddalena, 2009) and anthropology.
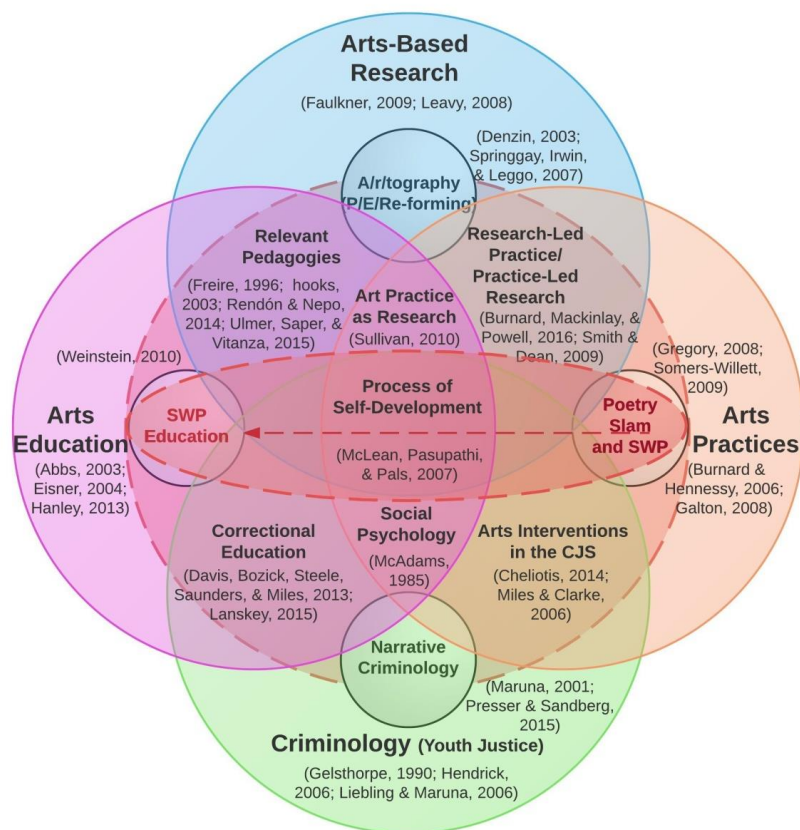


**Figure 1.1 Locating Spoken Word Poetry as a Potentially Powerful Arts Practice in Prison**

In part 3, the present study offers artographic portraits of two young offenders as poets which presents the finding for the programme's artistic contributions in these two young

people's lives. Chapter 6 traces the path of Luani as a poet rising through lyrical music affinity and a profoundly challenging life circumstances. It shows how a violent past moves into wrongdoing in adolescence, and seeks to irrupt the strengths of Luani's sense of self. Similarly, chapter 7 renders the life of Jess as inner-city young men involved in the drug-dealing community that ultimately proves to him devastating as it leads to his first time imprisonment. Jess' poetic creativity arose through desire to speak parts of denied traumas and saw him weave a narrative poetic voice to recast his own reality. The artographic portrait of Jess seeks to connect beyond the layers of unprocessed trauma and offender stigma.

In part 4, the present study situates chapter 8, the discussion that bolsters the programme's creative contribution as artistic way being that unfolds alongside criminal immutability. It offers an artographic frame as way of capturing the multiple contributions the programme's sites have in making possible young offenders' possible ways of being. Chapter 9 then revisits the research problem of the present study offering pathways for arts in prison to cultivate poetic creativities with research imperatives for practitioners, and artographers concerned with young people's wellbeing and rehabilitation.

# CHAPTER 2: TRACING ARTS PRACTICES IN PRISON: THE POTENTIAL OF EMERGENT SPOKEN WORD POETRIES

The literature review is was guided by three main criteria for sourcing historically relevant and diverse types of up-to date literatures about any aspect that covered the 1) arts in prison 3) the versatility of poetry slam and spoken word across contexts 3) the arts for artistic experience, rehabilitation and wellbeing across community, care and education contexts. It thus overviews the theoretical approaches, key terminology and research evidence concerning the impact of the arts in prison from an outcome-oriented culture to the role of contextually and culturally informed understanding of the of the arts in prisons (McNeill et al., 2011; Miles, 2004). I identify the emergent practice of spoken word poetry workshops and projects in prison, as a gap that merits empirical research to understand their potential contribution in young offender's lives, based on poetry slams' evidenced power in authenticating young people's voices identity (Somers-Willett, 2005). I emphasize the need for further research unpack how the personal and social benefits credited to programmes with youth in schools, communities and urban settings (Gregory, 2014; Taylor, 2015; Weinstein, 2010) around the globe can translate in prisons.

## 2.1 A Revitalised Movement: The Arts in the Criminal Justice System

In the past decade, the practice of arts in prisons in a range of countries, like the US, UK, Canada, Australia, Brazil, New Zealand, Scandinavia and South Africa, has been gaining an increased research interest outlining the emergent field of arts in prison (Miles & Clarke, 2006a). The literature predominantly uses the term interventions as opposed to programmes, where the former encompasses the practice of more short-term projects in prison as opposed to the latter (Towl, 2012). Towl explains the terminology of interventions is a newer trend in prison and probation than the use of the term programmes. The distinction he finds between the two is that programmes historically in the past fifteen years or so, has been used more broadly than interventions, specifically to capture a set of integrated interventions.

The term 'arts interventions' is increasingly being used as an umbrella term for a number of arts activities in prisons which can be based on a particular art form depending on the arts practice. The types of interventions in prisons include specialised arts therapies, or they can be art-form based projects guided by the commonly employed theories in offender treatment, such as cognitive behavioural theory, resiliency theory, social capital theory, intelligence theories (Hughes, 2005; Miles & Clarke, 2006).

Miles and Clark concluded that the resiliency and performance theory displayed a large scope for developing arts interventions practice, because "on the one hand, [...] arts interventions might help develop a range of protective competences, such as abstract and flexible thinking, independence, perspective-taking, empathy and goal setting. On the other, [...] arts projects with a performance element might facilitate changes in perception by creating liminal or transitional spaces (2006a, p. 35).

Arts interventions based on a specific art form, in the order of most to less common, include: theatre and drama, mixed-arts, visual arts, creative writing, music, dance, and crafts projects. Overall, the art form-based interventions depart from the belief that participation in the arts as well as the creative process is inherently rewarding for offenders. Thus, most arts organisations in prisons do not voice a specific theoretical lens (Hughes, 2005).

A seminal feasibility study encompassing five arts projects in UK prisons by leading organisations, groups the common intervention objectives under the following thematic strands:

- arts for enriching the prison curriculum
- arts education
- arts as therapeutic interventions
- arts as adjunctive therapy
- arts for participation and citizenship
- arts as a cultural right (Miles, 2004; Miles & Clarke, 2006a, p. 53)

Education is the standard minimum requirement in the treatment of prisoners as a human right (United Nations, 1955). As part of the resocialisation process of offenders, most prisons run counselling and art therapies by certified art therapists. With art form-

based interventions, the emphasis is on the practice of arts as a cultural right; as well as an extended form of participation in the wider community, enabling the voices of people in prison to enter the civic conversation. Perhaps, the central argument of arts intervention is the capacity of the creative process to support the rehabilitation of offenders by instilling "soft skills", crucial for within prison as well as after release re-integration (Hughes, 2005; Miles, 2004). The latest direction of arts intervention practice and research has taken a narrative turn in criminology, describing desistance from crime through the concept of narrative identity (Colvin, 2015; Maruna, 2001). The empirical evidence of the impact and multiple outcomes of arts interventions are discussed below.

This section is relevant for locating the present study within and in relation to the arts interventions in prison. Particularly, in contrast to the traditional offender treatment programmes driven by theories, I situate the programme within the arts practices domain in the prison in the tradition prison spoken word programmes for empowering youth and channelling youth voice (Gregory, 2014; Weinstein, 2010). In this, I am driven by the "inherent" benefits of the cultural and arts movement of poetry slam and the existing practice of programmes with young people.

*2.1.1 A Tapestry of Art Forms: Collating and Discussing the Research Evidence*

The following section provides a summary of the empirical evidence concerning the impact of arts interventions in prison drawing on an increasing body of research literature in the past decade. Figure 1 below represents the summary of the research impact, which Miles and Clarke drew based on a seminal feasibility study encompassing five arts interventions in different prisons in the UK (2006, p. 35); a study which strongly builds on a major publication on arts interventions in prison by Hughes, which offers "a strategic literature review of relevant worldwide practice from 1997 through to 2003 (2005)".

As shown in the Appendix 1, the arts interventions support the existing correctional education, the learning process from basic to higher education, as well as the work of offender treatment programmes. In addition, while nurturing individual development,

indirectly, the arts produce a societal impact, supporting the desistance from crime process (Cheliotis, 2014; Davey, Day, & Balfour, 2014; Hughes, 2005). The indirect impact on desistance from crime comes from the arts' role in offenders' self-development and identity change though increased self-confidence; creating positive expectations for the future; helping the change in attitudes towards offending and, therapeutic effects (Digard & Liebling, 2012). Another example is addressing violent behaviour through drama therapy developed by Geese Theatre Company (Bergman & Hawish, 1996a). Hence, the main area in which this study seeks to locate the programmes' artistic contributions is primarily the personal and social level, which may have implications for other known areas of impact.[5]

Concerning the individual impact, studies have shown a positive change in terms of increased attitude, motivation and social skills (Cheliotis, 2014; Hurry, Lawrence, Wilson, & Plant, 2014a; Lösel, 1995). These type of "soft skills" contribute to the self-change, referred to as "secondary" desistance from crime. This concept can also refer to "changes in self-perception that function to challenge and disrupt prior offending behaviour" or "motivating participants to take up basic literacy education, vocational skills, social skills, and family and community relationship improvement" (Cheliotis, 2014, p. 12; McNeill et al., 2011).

The growing empirical body of evidence about the arts impact in prison not only does it portray the role of the arts as key in resocialisation, but also it provides a resourceful pool of potentially feasible methods, widely applicable theories like performance theory which informs the present study. Perhaps the biggest reassurance for taking a narrative research approach in the present study, is the favouring of "secondary" desistance from crime, the core identity change, to explain the desistance process which resonates with the argument of poetry slam as performing identity which makes identity development possible.

The diverse tapestry of arts interventions in prison sees prevalence of certain art forms over others. The following section offers a discussion of example studies, mapping out

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[5] See Appendix A

the outcomes from art-form specific interventions in the field in order to introduce the place of programme in prison. The overview is structured in three parts, with a special focus on the creative writing interventions (CWI) using storytelling or poetry, followed by an overview of other art forms, such as theatre, music, dance, crafts and mixed arts. In this context, I also discuss the role of arts programmes based in schools or communities which add to the bigger picture of participation and programming in the arts for personal and social grow

*2.1.2 A Landscape of Different Arts Practices in Prison*

The boundaries among art forms in arts interventions are commonly blurred in practice. Thus, many interventions use multimodal and diverse arts-based approaches engaging participants in the creative process of a specific art form. Hence, although CWI rely primarily on creative writing they also use non-verbal techniques and other art forms. For example, in the CWP "Write to be Heard" (Hurry et al., 2014a) writers collaborated with artists from the Geese Theatre Company who carried out ice-breaking exercises and the use of mask for facilitating discussions on a sensitive topic (see 3.4.2) (Harkins, Pritchard, Haskayne, Watson, & Beech, 2011). The project consisted of creative writing workshops, master-classes, and a competition in a variety of genres of which the most popular was the entry in "writing with rhythm and rhyme" (Hurry et al., 2014a).

The drama approaches like the use of mask, are one example where the non-verbal expression is conducive for resolving internal conflict and building trust (Cheliotis, 2014; Gussak, 2009). In addition, creative writing provides thinking through metaphors, honing expressiveness and the use of associative language to communicate and challenge stereotypical thinking. The intervention promoted literacy, 'employability' skills and desistance from crime (Hurry et al., 2014a; Tett, Anderson, McNeill, Overy, & Sparks, 2012). They found the following 'intermediate' outcomes from the workshops associated with desistance: "team work and self-reflection positive attitude about a non-criminal future improved family relationships increased confidence, writing skills and motivation for learning" (Hurry et al., 2014a, p. 47).

The above project included one young offender institution, engaging youth that had already expressed interest for rap or poetry. After a four week follow up, the participants reported high rates of self-confidence in writing and adoption of new writing skills; showed increased reflectivity and expectation to stay out of trouble (Hurry et al., 2014a). The outcomes of this type of interventions are called "soft skills", and sometimes "intermediate outcomes" or "short-term outcomes". These are more readily attributed to the arts and fall under the individual and institutional impact; the "longer-term outcomes" fall under the societal and institutional impact.[6]

Another example is a three-year CWP in Texas, which showed decrease in incident rate during participation (Cheliotis, 2014; Miles & Clarke, 2006a). This three-year long project was commissioned by the Oklahoma Department of Corrections and tracked conflicts in prisons six months before the implementation and during the duration of the project. It noted an improvement in the relationships and communication within the prison setting. Two similar longitudinal studies, the University of Victoria's (Canada) liberal arts degree programme and a California department of corrections study, tried to track sustainability of the arts outcomes over time. Cheliotis as well as Cursley and Maruna have pointed out the issue of tracking abstinence from crime through official records of reconviction, recommending tracing evidence of "secondary desistance" (2014; 2015).

Concerning other arts interventions based on the creative writing model, a number of small scale studies support the claims that arts contribute towards "secondary desistance" from crime. For example, the CWP Changing lives through literature, led by the University of Massachusetts found that only 18.75% of participants in the programme, compared to 45% of non-participants, were reconvicted (Hughes, 2005). However, establishing a causal link between the intervention and lower reconviction rates proved challenging. A similar programme was established in the UK, Connections, which found that the collaboration and participation of prison staff along with offenders enhanced the overall positive effects. (Cheliotis, 2014; Hughes, 2005, p. 36; Miles & Clarke, 2006a).

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[6] See Apendix A

Given that the focus of these programmes was primarily on reading literary texts followed by discussions with the purpose to trigger identification with a character, they are not the typical CWI. Reading can be transformative (Sikora, Kuiken, & Miall, 2011), but arts interventions usually involve artistic doing, not only soaking in the arts, but also experiencing and embodying that takes place in the creative process.

Other literature reviews, have also put forward these developments as conducive to primary desistance: "engagement, confidence, self-control, co-operation and empathy – were identified as pertinent from the various arts and criminal justice literatures." (Miles & Clarke, 2006a, p. 41). Also, Hughes located the following impact factors:

> improved attitudes to learning, increased readiness to participate in learning and other opportunities, self-awareness, awareness of others, improved artistic skills and abilities; a range of personal skills and capacities: confidence, positive self-image, imaginative ability, self-control, discipline; a     range of social skills and competencies: cooperation, communication skills, and the ability to see perspective from another point of view." (2005, p. 32).

Other studies have stressed that expressive arts can help youth understand and transform past trauma and develop identities outside the socially allocated criminal one (Jacobi, 2008; McMackin, Leisen, Sattler, Krinsley, & Riggs, 2002). Moreover, the opportunity to perform, be it within the prison or in public, could contribute to desistance (Cheliotis, 2014; Moller, 2004; Tett et al., 2012). The value of arts programmes can be understood more readily within the new currents of desistance, than in the primary desistance's focus on measuring rates of reoffending as indicator of change. Tertiary desistance particularly resonates with the arts' communal aspect:

> Over the last 20 years our approaches to rehabilitation have become too narrowly focused on supporting personal change, neglecting three other forms of rehabilitation – moral, social and judicial. The central argument here is that no amount of personal change can secure desistance if change is not recognized by the community ('social rehabilitation'), by the law and by the state ('judicial rehabilitation'). Restorative justice may have something to offer here. More generally, my argument is that these four forms of rehabilitation are often interdependent, and that failing to attend to all four reduces the likelihood of successful desistance (McNeill, 2014).

A feminist-driven CWI, using narrative profiling, reports boost in women's self-confidence through reading and practising creative writing (Rowe, 2004). A similar feminist study using poetry, values poetry writing as therapeutic and as nurturing self-

confidence; it acknowledges the difference between writing as therapy and language art by viewing them as an amalgam rather than poetry as a therapy technique (Bolton, 1999). The International federation for biblio/poetry therapy is the only organisation that can certify individuals as poetry therapists and the field provides useful resources for arts intervention practices (Bolton, 2010; Morrison, Field, & Thompson, 2006).

Arts interventions based on theatre or multiple art forms are most widely spread in the UK. A study using music, narrative art, collages and journals with incarcerated abused women has noted increase in their self-confidence and building a positive self-image (Williams, 2004). Additionally, a US study of young offenders' engagement quite early tried to measure the impact of the arts interventions in crime desistance (Chandler, 1973), as did the YouthART development project in the 1995 inconclusively stating their positive effects (Coolbaugh & Clawson, 2001). While there are many indicators for "secondary desistance", an arts intervention, depending on the study's focus the researcher can choose which desistance indicators to study. For example, Dance united had narrowed down their choice to look at three: engagement, confidence, and creativity (Hughes, 2005; Miles & Clarke, 2006a).

**Table 2.1 Arts in Prison Outcomes Relevant for Secondary Desistance from Crime**

| Psychological and attitudinal changes | Increased learning capacity and motivation | Building social skills |
|---|---|---|
| -self-esteem<br>-self-expression (D. E. Gussak & Ploumis-Devick, 2004)<br>-sense of achievement<br>-self-efficacy (Lazzari, Amundson, & Jackson, 2005)<br>-internal locus of control (D. Gussak, 2009)<br>- levels of depression (reduces)<br>-levels of anger (reduces)<br>-risk of self-harm (lowers) (Digard & Liebling, 2012) | -experiential learning<br>-listening skills and a desire for other educational engagement (Gelsthorpe & Cox, 2012; Hughes, 2005; Hurry, Lawrence, Wilson, & Plant, 2014; McNeill et al., 2011; Miles & Clarke, 2006; Tett, Anderson, McNeill, Overy, & Sparks, 2012) | -effective communication and showing empathy (Chandler, 1973; Miles & Clarke, 2006)<br>-collaborate in a group[7] (Digard & Liebling, 2012) |

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[7] Stressed in the new offender learning strategy "Making Prisons Work: Skills for Rehabilitation", published jointly by NOMS and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), 2011.

The present study's focus on the artistic responses to the programme, is open-ended, but its interest in the subjective, may be associated to "secondary desistance", the personal as driver for rehabilitation. Desistance has been linked to arts outcomes in summarised in Table 2.1.

The overview of the empirical evidence of arts in prison particularly creative writing, puts forward the workshop as a staple format of delivery and participation in the arts. Mindful of the low literacy levels of the potential participants in the present study, from this overview I take away the stress on the performance element as potential indicator of "secondary desistance". I will also revisit the successful collaboration with drama facilitators, particularly the use of mask and ice-breaker exercises; the use of mixed-arts approaches, like rap songs, which is one of the most commonly used form in programmes as rap's aesthetic anticipates poetry slam's. Moreover, the overview makes me reflect on the place of a follow-up phase in the research design of the present study; the need to incorporate a sustainability element in the programmes; and factor in the collaboration with the prison staff as conducive to positive workshop implementation and outcomes.

Finally, having located the study under the field of arts practices in prison, the distinction between arts/poet practitioner on the one hand, and arts/poet therapist on the other should be mad clear; the former being an artist who engages participants in the arts process, while the latter a certified therapist utilising arts tools and techniques. In the next section I cover the lessons from policy and practice of arts in prison.

### 2.1.3 What Matters Behinds the Scenes of Arts Practices

The practice and policy regarding arts in prison, it has seen a shift from a positivistic towards a more realist and socio-cultural approach favouring an understanding of the arts as a process in addition to locating evidence-based outcomes. The focus gradually shifted from measuring the impact of the arts impact and posing the question of "what works" in prisons, towards looking at the type of relationships between artist practitioners, participants and staff establish within pockets of diverse cultural contexts.

The following paragraphs explain these shifts offering examples and key lessons for the present study.

Practice literature theorizes that early evaluation of the specific needs and potential risks with young offenders is a precondition for a successful implementation of an arts intervention (Ward & Maruna, 2007). The research methodology should allow for a "dynamic element in assessing what is effective" (Prior & Mason, 2010). This means, that research should take into account that the modes of workshop delivery or of implementing a certain technique influence its effectiveness (Smith, 2006). Thus, the implementation of arts interventions should involve establishing a positive rapport, empathy, clear instructions and openness, among arts practitioners, prison staff and participants, whereby a proper balance between friendly behaviour and the notion of "control" and boundaries should be established (Burnett & McNeill, 2005; F. McNeill et al., 2011; Fergus McNeill, 2006; Trevithick, 2005).

As mentioned earlier, the role of artists in arts in prison is distinct from corrections education teachers and resocialisation staff, and arts therapists. To reiterate the distinction among the terms, the first refers to someone who is primarily an artist and happens to be involved in an arts intervention; the second is someone trained for using arts in intervention programmes as part of the institution; while the third is a qualified therapist (Miles & Clarke, 2006a).

The lessons from practice inform the programme planning in terms of the choice of a facilitator for the workshop delivery, seeking someone who has a good track record of facilitation with young people; is a person of trust and a good collaborator. The programme will focus on developing the relationship among practitioners, offenders and prison staff for effective implementation, by establishing a non-judgmental and collaborative environment and relying on inclusive approaches. The conversations with spoken word poets and arts practitioners working in prison during the pilot stages have enhanced the decisions for the type of relationships, communicating strategies and challenges in establishing and maintaining a good relationship with prison staff and participants.

*2.1.4 Policy Currents for Arts Practices*

The policy for the arts in prison started with a focus on securing research-based evidence about the impact and the outcomes of the arts (Hughes, 2005; Prior & Mason, 2010). UK government's positivistic policy, also referred to as the "what works" agenda, has gradually started to acknowledge the research relevance of context and time. In line with the shift, Hughes points out, that "absence of evidence does not mean there is an absence of effect" (2005, p. 25) and there should be more research concentrating on the question: "in what circumstances do interventions work best - for whom, when and in what contexts?" (2005, p. 71).

The "what works" policy has disregarded lessons from practice-based evidence, the importance of relationship for example, under the excuse of not being robust enough (Eadie & Canton, 2002; Hollin, 2008; Prior & Mason, 2010; Smith, 2006). The shift from positivist methodology was followed by a critical realist approach which acknowledging the role of socio-cultural context and time (Hughes, 2005, 2005; Pawson & Tilley, 1997). Studies urge policy to consider the realities as well as the personal experiences of young offenders through the intersections of their multiple identities such as ethnicity, gender and class during participation in the arts (Dowden & Andrews, 2004a; Lipsey, 1995; Lipsey & Wilson, 1998; Lösel, 1995; McGuire & Priestly, 1995).

In conclusion, the policy focus is gradually shifting towards exploring the effective relationships among social workers, arts practitioners, artists, therapists, prison staff and offenders, as opposed to the effectiveness of techniques used in interventions. This shows a shift from positivist to a more critical realist methodology. The present study not only does it distance itself from the positivist methodology and the "what works" agenda, but it positions itself in the arts-based research paradigm which embraces the subjectivity of the researcher as part of reflexive self-development; it also seeks subjective meanings participants create in their poems as well as their own perceptions in participating in the programmes, firmly rooted in narrative inquiry informed by the poetic and performance traditions.

## 2.2 The Spoken Arts: Slamming and Performing Poetries

This section covers the development of the cultural phenomenon of poetry slam and the emergent practices it gave rise to, poetry slam youth movement, poetry slam for transformative education and spoken word performance as a popular performance art form. When talking about poetry slam, a number of poetry and arts movements enter the conversation both as its predecessors and as its counterparts, highlighting the divergence of practices emerging from slam.

I also engage with the contested terminology surrounding the practice as well as the shift in meaning which threatens to undermine the identities of marginalised social groups. In so doing, I propose to harness the lessons from poetry slam and spoken word performance with a reflexivity that may give rise to more ethical conversations surrounding slam and spoken word poetry practices. Tracing the key characteristics of poetry slam as well as its impact for youth empowerment, voice and self-development I locate the emergent practice of spoken word poetry workshops in prisons the potential contribution of which has yet to be researched. Hence, this necessity of the present study, especially in the Macedonian context which has been cherishing poetry slams, but has not seen a big rise in youth movements with spoken word or harnessed the potentials of slam to develop correctional arts education programmes.

### 2.2.1 From Poetry Slam to Spoken Word Poetry

Poetry slam was conceived as a competitive art form of performing poetry in the US. While I engage the variability of poetry slam across geographical contexts for the programme design later in the thesis, I focus here primarily on the US model because of its central place in the Macedonian poetry slam.[8] Gregory, who has been a significant voice in addressing the issue of a US-oriented portrayal of slam in research and scholarship, has offered a simple definition of slam, informed by the practice of slam across countries as well as her comparative study of US and UK scenes (Gregory, 2008;

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[8] See Chapter 5, 5.1 and 5.1.1

Gregory, 2009).[9] Particularly, she defined slam as "an oral poetry competition in which poets are expected to perform their own work in front of an audience. They are then scored on the quality of their writing and performance by judges who are typically randomly selected members of the audience (Gregory, p. 201, 2008).

In the US model specifically, participants have three minutes to deliver their own spoken word piece, whether a poem or a narrative, without the use of props. Each participant is given a score from 1 to 10 by five judges randomly selected from the audience at the time of the competition. Anyone from the audience can volunteer to be a judge and there's no selection criteria or a requirement that judges are poetry 'experts'. Judges allocate points to poets on a scale from 1 to 10 using up to one decimal. The highest and the lowest score is removed and the sum of the remaining points makes up the final score of the competing poet. The poet with the highest score wins the poetry slam securing a place as a 'sacrificial' poet or as a supporting act at the next slam.

Poetry slam is considered to have officially started in Chicago Green Mill Tavern in 1986 (Blitefield, 2004; Somers-Willett, 2005). The poet Marc Smith conceptualized poetry slam as an accessible space for creative expression of voices that were excluded from the existing poetry circles and poetry confined to academia. Hence, poetry slam is usually referred to as the poetry of the working class, poetry of the street or the voices on the social margins. The poetry slam soon moved to New York at the Nuyorican poets' café which became popular for its centrality in the movement. Nuyorican itself is a coinage of New York and Puerto Rican, exemplifying the inclusive intentions of the poetry slam and is related to the Nuyorican movement.

The developing of a spoken word performance intervention in prisons departs from poetry slam, its positive features and praise for inclusivity. For this purpose, it is important to understand the key features of poetry slam as well as the role of the audience and the atmosphere at poetry slam events. The next section explains the latter

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[9] Specifically, Gregory argued that the introduction of slam into the U.K. prompts participants in the performance poetry scene to reassess definitions of performance poetry, slam, and their own identities as artists. In doing so, U.K.-based slam participants strive to define a uniquely British form of slam that enables them to preserve their identities as authentic British artists, while capitalizing on the benefits that this emerging art world may bring them (Gregory, p. 203, 2008).

as part of the discussion surrounding the contested terminology such as poetry slam, slam poetry, performance poetry/performance poet, performing poet/performed poetry spoken word poetry. This discussion, not only does it clarify the use of the terminology in this study, but explains the ethical implications of the terminology choice as well as the literary, artistic and cultural traditions that inform the assumptions for developing a programmes.

*2.2.2 Poetry Slam: A Transnational Movement Travelling to Macedonia*

In the past two decades of its existence, poetry slam expanded all around the globe, and countries in Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Europe, and Australia have organised national competitions and seen winning poets compete at the World Poetry Slam Cup in Paris since 2001. Also, there is an emerging European Network that envisions an increased mobility of spoken word artists though residencies and exchanges around Europe.

Poetry slam was also introduced in Macedonia in 2010, but it was not until a group of young Macedonian poets established a national poetry slam in 2012, that slam became more active and sustainable. In 2010, a German poet Michael Abdulla visited Macedonian city of Tetovo, running slam workshops and organising the first slam in the country. The same year, the first poetry slam was also organized in the capital, the first time I also participated in a slam. Since then, poetry slams started running in the capital occasionally and mostly under the organisation of the Macedonian poet Elena Prendzova. Even though the initial introduction of slam in Macedonian was through the German poetry practice in 2010, the flight of poetry slam in Macedonia was under the lead of poet Prendzova together with poet and actor Igor Trpcheski, who infused it with the influence and structure of the US poetry model.[10]

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[10] Perhaps this is not surprising, given the pervasive influence of US slam transnationally. For instance, comparing UK slam to US, Gregory observed "The U.S. undoubtedly has a higher status, than the U.K., on the transnational slam scene, and this power differential is focal to the ways in which many U.K. based slam participants define the for(u)m and their own positions in relation to it. The need to be seen as authentic British artists is prominent here (Gregory, p. 241, 2009).

Following the example of poetry slams, the project called "Poem-sing" ("Pesnilo") brought poetry performances on stage. As Macedonian poet, Goko Zdraveski explained, this project diverged from the idea of poetry slam, excluding the competitive element as well as taking on a more performative and dramatic aspect with poets using props and performing on stage. However, in practice the performances featured a dramatic take on what was already known as 'page poetry' and did not contribute to a more inclusive and relaxed poetry environment well known to the spoken word performance circles abroad.

In 2012, the first national poetry slam was established in the city of Prilep with the support of the Macedonian Ministry of culture. It was sustained the following three years, with 2015 introducing regular series of local poetry slams every month, starting in the city of Tetovo, February, 2015. With the rise of slam practices in Macedonia, as editor of the literary magazine "Sh" (NGO, "Way Out"), I started an online platform featuring international spoken word artists as well as interviews with Macedonian poets and rappers about the meanings and possibilities of slam in the Macedonian context in 2014.

There is a tendency of organizing events which are officially presented as 'poetry slams', although they do not follow one of the essential prerequisite of poetry slams, its competitive component. These events strive to promote performed poetry in the spirit of poetry slams as perceived by Macedonian organisers and participating poets. For example, the Macedonian Writers' Association welcomed slam participants and poets to perform in a non-competitive manner. Additionally, the national newspaper Macedonian Telegraf, also saw the youngest generation of Macedonian poets perform poetry non-competitively.

Even if this may be perceived as departure from the US competitive slam model, it is one of the many possible ways of engaging slam. For instance, in her study of slam, Gregory traced the multiple ways in which slam has developed across geographical contexts, including its role not only as a competitive art form, but also as giving rise to a particular style of poetry in performance, including its spread outside the completion format. As a result, Gregory referred to poetry slam with the term 'for (u) m' to capture 'slam's dual (and contested) nature as both art form and forum' (Gregory, p. 44, 2009). Particularly, in her analysis of slam, Gregory concluded that:

> Poetry slam is more than simply a competition. Rather, it is a community, a movement, a philosophy, a forum, a form, a genre, an educational device, and a career path. Slam and its participants do not acquire their identity in isolation, but in interaction with a host of different groups and art worlds. These interactions may be harmonious or conflicting, but their impact on one another cannot be overlooked. They help to explain the evolution of art worlds, as well as the different ways in which individuals within a given world construct the for (u) m and their relationship to it (Gregory, p.77, 2009).

In this sense, the full scope of the function of poetry slam in Macedonia should be understood, in addition to the annual national competition, by also encompassing its reach across pockets of poetry worlds and cultural practices which are non-competitive. This indicated that Macedonian slam has a potential to act as a powerful forum for comradery, and collaboration across poetry generations as well as extending the idea of poet beyond the world of page poetry and poetry publishing.

The style of poetry, both at these events and the national slam, is quite diverse, with examples characteristic of Macedonian page poetry, funny poems, poems that critique a social issue, or poems with a confessional tone. Some of these are often criticized by organisers and the audience for not being 'true' slam poems. The reason for this perhaps is the rigid interpretation of what poetry slams should look like and the expectations created by poetry slams internationally. However, it is certain that these events have opened up and created a space for new people to enter the poetry scene who might have otherwise been excluded from the more academically dominated poetry circles. In addition, the poems selected in the three winning categories at the national poetry slam in 2014 offered a stylistic range from comical satire, to poetic and dramatic social critique of culturally specific accounts of both female disempowerment and the Macedonian-Albanian ethnic tensions.[11]

The rise of poetry slams in Macedonia made the poetry scene more inclusive, but the practice of spoken word poetry and performance remains underdeveloped. Moreover, it has not yet entered the educational sphere or youth culture as in other countries around the globe. While the existing slams are promising and encouraging young voices to enter

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[11] Having won the national slam in 2014, my comments are based on my observations of the event both as participating poet as well as audience member.

the social conversations, the lack of culturally relevant spoken word practices may prove a challenge in my plan to develop a spoken word performance intervention to engage young people in a correctional institution. Acknowledging this as well as the association of spoken word with popular culture, rap and hip hop, using the rap practices in Macedonia as a way of introducing youth to the possibilities of spoken word can prove an accessible route. The next section elaborates the research evidence on the positive impact of poetry slam and spoken word as an educational tool. I will then proceed to unpack spoken word poetry as part of a creative industry which threatens to undermine its inclusive and creative spaces.

*2.2.3 Key Terminology in Poetry Slam*

Poetry slam has been conceived of as a cultural phenomenon, a political resistance, a literary movement, a type of competitive performed poetry/spoken word or entertainment (Gregory, 2008, 2014; Noel, 2014; Somers-Willett, 2009). It emerged from the working classes in opposition to the exclusive canon and academic literary circles. In this sense, it is its own type of counterculture a term which stands for opposing the dominant culture while embracing an inclusive practice where people from a variety of backgrounds, especially minorities, can cherish their identities and express their feelings in an accepting environment (Aptowicz, 2007; Noel, 2014; Somers-Willett, 2009). For example, the most praised and audience favoured slam performances are a powerful personal expression of emotions, a critique of a pressing political issue, or a support for the rights of groups experiencing discrimination like LGBTQ community, African-Americans and women (Gregory, 2008; O'Reilley, 1984; Somers-Willett, 2009).

Developing as its own counterculture, the audience acquired a distinct taste in slams which guided the judging process. Hence, the audience started enacting these internalised values as unwritten criteria for judging. For example, perhaps the most dominant criterion is how well participants perform and embody their identities (Blitefield, 2004; Somers-Willett, 2009).

Performing identities can also be linked to performance theory that distinguishes between 'doing' or the more performative, 'showing doing' (Graebner, 2007). According to Graebner, performance poetry of the 60s and 70s is an example of 'doing', while contemporary performed poetry and spoken word is increasingly 'showing doing'. Although both are valid approaches to performance, with this distinction she's making a case for contemporary performed poetry as non-performative rather than an immediate political resistance like earlier performance poetry (Graebner, 2007; Schechner, 2006).

Poetry slams usually take place in an intimate and relaxed environment like bars or cafés and the host of the slam introduces the slam format to the audience. The audience in poetry slams has a very special place not only because they are involved in the judging process but also because it creates the unique supportive and lively atmosphere of poetry slams. For example, the members of the audience show their appreciation of particular lines by finger snapping during the performance; also by clapping and whooping in an attempt to persuade or dissuade judges' scoring decisions.

As slam practice continued to grow, it gave rise to other practices which diverged from the competition format and slam as counterculture. These practices include the rise of spoken word poetry and the use of slam as an educational tool in schools, communities and other contexts. The divergent practices emerging from poetry slam complicated how poets, audiences and academics use the slam related terminology. Specifically, the uses of the terms such as 'slam poetry', 'spoken word poetry', 'performance poetry', 'performed poetry', 'performance poet', 'performing poet'.

In this study slam poetry stands for the competitive form of performed poetry or a special genre which is in the spirit of the type of poetry usually performed during poetry slams. Spoken word poetry, as Somers states, is the popular art form of performed poetry which developed outside the competition (2009). Performance poetry is commonly used interchangeably with performed poetry by and for contemporary poets. However, as Graebner has argued that the persistence to use the term 'performance poetry' for today's contemporary performed poetry is a misnomer. The term should be reserved for the performance poetry movement of the 60s, 70s and 80s across the globe (Gräbner, 2011). Hence, the term performance poet should be reserved for poets partaking in that

movement depending also on poets' personal identification. Similarly, Gregory's analysis of the terminology in the field, found that slam participants in the UK mostly saw the term 'slam' as applicable to poetry that wins a slam competitions, which in their view was considered an obstacle to cultivating performance poetry (Gregory, 2008). Similarly, for the interchangeable use of performance poetry with slam, Gregory concluded that:

> It would be erroneous, however, to imply that performance poetry and slam are interchangeable. Indeed, many performance poets are highly critical of slam, refusing to participate within the confines of the slam format. Slam poets, in contrast, rarely limit their performances to the slam stage, and "performance poet" is a term that many would prefer to that of "slam poet." In the U.K. especially, where slams are less frequent and lower in profile than they are in the U.S., it is rare for poets to adopt the slam poet label, yet many would happily call themselves performance poets (Gregory, p. 203, 2008).

It is however problematic to impose a terminology to poetry practices when the term 'performance poet' is increasingly being used to refer to performing poets in slams and ones that pursue spoken word poetry careers today. Perhaps a sounder argument for not using the term 'performance poet' unless poets themselves identify as such, is the negative connotation the term has acquired. Specifically, poets shy away from the designation because it has been racialized and exploited by politicised 'multicultural' agendas in the media.

In addition, poets also recoil from the term because of its association with the negative perception and criticism of poetry slam and spoken word aesthetics. For example, in the Cambridge Union talk, John Cooper Clarke said he would rather be called a punk poet than a performance poet because these were "just 'bad' poets who can't write but learn words by heart" (2014). Similarly, the scarce but yet present use of the term 'slam poet' also carries negative connotation. For example, when I interviewed the poet Hollie McNish she discarded it explaining that not only she doesn't identify as such, but the term poet is sufficient enough to capture her practices (Nikolova, 2014). In another interview she explains the insecurity with using the term poet about her practice, which may be due to the spoken word aesthetics criticism:

> I'm going to call myself a poet, because I didn't do that. I just mean like; I never would ever say that I was a poet or I did poetry because I was embarrassed. Because it's not as good, it's not like full of imagery, full of I don't know what I thought poetry should be sort of I would always say oh I'm a spoken word artist, person, and I think it was Ray who said

'Hollie, just call it poetry because that's what it is (Hollie McNish, Pete the Temp interview, 2013).

In conclusion, I think the word poet can be used to refer to people involved in any type of poetry practices. For the sake of emphasis or distinction, I will resort to the term 'performing poet'. In relation to the terms discussed above, it is useful to summarize the arts movements such that preceded poetry slam. Some of these are the performance poetry movement, anticipated by black arts movement, the Beat generation, Nuyorican movement, as well as the hip hop culture in the US, all of which informed slams and spoken word. These movements and cultures will play a crucial part in harnessing suitable approaches for the spoken word intervention in Macedonia. This is so because poetry slams in Macedonia are as yet not a massive part of youth culture. The male dominated rap scene may be an exemplary creative practice to appeal to youth as a form of popular culture associated with masculinity. It is also a resource for workshop stimuli that can introduce youth with the art of spoken word performance which is almost non-existent beyond slams in Macedonia.

### 2.2.4 Slam and Spoken Word Poetry: The Academy and Creative Industry

Poetry slam's turn to audience members as experts of poetic quality was a radical shift from the academy's dominion over literary value. When it comes to the state of slam in the academy, Gregory traced an increasing collaboration between the two with an underlying ongoing tension however, which was notable in defining seemingly exchanged conventions within the traditions of either page or stage poetry (Gregory, 2009). The exchange of conventions across the two worlds, like slam poets' book publications, and academy's adoption of the versatile and interactive poetry workshop, is well observed in practice and documented is some of the literature (Pathmanathan, 2014). One example of the differences in shared conventions is that slam poets' publications take on a different form, from self-published, to the rise of poetry publishers like the UK's Burning Eye Books that defined their work exclusively as spoken word publishing.

The benefits of mutual collaboration, specifically, for slam poets, included resources and recognition that comes with being a part of the dominant literary world; for the academy,

expanding the reach of audiences as well as influencing the direction of slam. Similarly, Pathmanathan observed that:

> The success of slam has led to diverse audiences for academic readings and to a large number of poetry publications. Furthermore, the number of poetry workshops, writing programs and literary magazines featuring partnerships involving slam and academics lend insight into these increased interactions. These shifts can be construed as support of the increased popularity that slam has brought to the institution. On the contrary, slam has gradually accepted academic conventions with many slam poets publishing books of their work, performing in traditional academic settings or running formal courses to educate others on how to write and perform slam. These particular developments hint at an emerging approval of slam performers in the dominant literary world (Pathmanathan, p. 57, 2014).

While this is partly reflected in the development of more fluid boundaries across the two worlds, Gregory found a tendency among some slam poets to look to the academy as a point of reference for their poetic practices even as poetry slam developed in opposition to it (Gregory, 2009). Specifically, slam emerged in opposition to elitist poetry circles, and became a home for the artistry and voices of people who are often marginalised on the basis of their race, gender, sexual orientation. Pathmanthan argued that while slam has enjoyed an increasing acceptance into the academy, in order for slam to be truly a part of the academy, it should be respected fully as an art form in its own right as opposed to moulded into Western ideas of art (Pathmanathan, 2014). This is necessary because in her view comparing poetry slam to the canon and the place of the arts in academy would inevitably diminish the radical artistry that poetry slam and spoken word poetry embody (Pathmanathan, 2014).

Gregory's study found a more hopeful outlook to the divisions across slam and the academy, which is particularly accentuated in continued collaborations amongst individual poets, and poets who navigate the two worlds.[12] I have taken a similar stance, in a conference presentation I gave in London on the state of spoken word poetry in the UK in light of the inclusion of spoken word poets and poets navigating the two worlds

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[12] That said, like Gregory's findings of both UK and US slam participants experience of marginalisation in the dominant literary worlds, I too have personally witnessed derisive comments towards slam and spoken word. For example, at the Cambridge Union Talk, one of the most prominent of poets within the UK performance poetry stream, John Cooper Clarke, refused to be associated with the term 'performance' poet, because of its adoption within the spoken word poetry circles, who he said were 'not really poets, just people who learn stuff by heart and say it out loud" (Clarke, 2015)

within the well-reputed literary phenomenon called Next Generation Poets (Nikolova, 2015). Specifically, for the Next Generation Poets a renowned literary panel selected twenty poets from the UK every ten years who are expected to dominate the poetry scene in the coming decade, which has included poets like Patience Agbabi as well as Kate Tempest. I focused my critique of the possibilities of poetry in performance, by exploring Patience Agbabi's[13] work because of her proven track record as a poet whose creativity has spanned the performance stage as well as masterful take on traditional poetic forms with, for instance, a grime and post-dub aesthetic.

Crucially, Agbabi's work in its distinctiveness critiques the canon while legitimating a poetic creativity that is at once 'artful' in both page and stage worlds.[14] An acclaimed poet within the dominant literary world, Agbabi has chosen to promote her award-wining poetry through the format of poetry slam. In so doing, Agbabi's poetic practice defies being compartmentalised through the simplistic rendition of poetry in performance as 'artless' and page poetry as 'lifeless'. Most importantly, her work is a testimony that contemporary poets have been engaged in devising complex poetry aesthetic in spite of a poetic culture that is rooted in racist profiling of black poets, particularly, in poetry slam (Miller, 2009). Somers-Willett traced the possibilities and limitations of the 'performance of identity across race and class' for slam poets. The present study's proposal to position poetry slam and spoken word poetry in the creativities and arts-based research framework may offer ways to go beyond the limits of identity oriented theorisation of poetry.

In addition to this stance, the programme of the present study is nevertheless at the core of the research project of my PhD, hence the academy. In this regard, it is encouraging that Gregory found 'youth slam [to be] a site within which members of these worlds are able to interact to mutual benefit, without either group appearing to have lost ground or

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[13] Agbabi's "usage of the post-dub poetic rubrics is her printed performance: scribal endeavours to stage orature, to put the oral/theatrical in writing" (Wojcik, p. 85, 2009)

[14] Agbabi "asserts her poetic right not to be inhibited by a choice of single lexemes, not to mention occasional topics or worthy causes. [...] Immersed in literary/writerly tradition, Agbabi takes the printed to another level; as she did in R.A.W [her poetry book], she promises in the preamble to Transformatrix, which serves both as an act of conception of the whole book and an account of the creative process and its (open)end(ed) product, to 'take you reader/listener higher' (Agbabi, p.9, 2000) beyond the obvious implications of the very term of performance poetry that dub poetry became synonymous with" (Wojcik, p. 86, 2009)

compromised their distinct beliefs and values (Gregory, p. 272, 2009). The possibility of approaching poetic practices through a lens of creativity, like the theory of multiple creativities (Sawyer, 1999) as well as its application to typify musical creativities in practice as plural and unconstrained by the Western or European criteria of 'artistry' (Burnard, 2012) may respond to the task. The model of musical creativities will also enrich the proposed continuum of poetry practices from oral tradition through to page and stage poetry (Pfeiler, 2003), by way of offering multi-dimensionally – a tapestry of poetries. Possibly, a practice-driven approach to theorising poetic creativities can be a way forward in fully capturing the artistic value of a plurality of spoken word practices as poetries in their own right.

The question of slam in the academy remains a focal future point – what the just role of research can be in rendering visible these poetic practices and staying with the injuries of the page-stage debates. Perhaps examining the internal contentions within poetry worlds unified under the same umbrella can be a starting point. Platforms like the rising arts-based research practice of collaborative poetics (Johnson, 2018)[15], can be a ripe ground to examine some of these questions, given that it has created an additional bridge not only across the two worlds, but communities and the public at large.

When it comes to slam in the creative industry, the US is a prime example of how poetry slam, initially poetry of the masses, became commercialized with HBO airing the Def Poetry Jam on Broadway (Somers-Willett, 2005). Poets gaining prominence with the Nuyorican movement have made a successful artistic career beyond it. A great example is Ntozake Shange whose play *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/when the Rainbow is Enuf* was staged on Broadway. Another example is Saul Williams, who after winning the national poetry slam in the US went on to build a poetry and music career with MTV.

Soon there emerged a poetry canon from the slam practices which originally appeared in opposition to the academia and its established canons. In this sense, poetry slam's extension of performed poetry, better known as spoken word poetry or performance,

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[15] Née Gregory

became commercialised. Specifically, the performing communities were exploited by the media for 'multicultural' marketing agendas. This compromised the perception of poetry slams and the intercultural and safe spaces they were nurturing enabling personal and creative expression of diverse marginalised social groups (Bauridl, 2010; Somers-Willett, 2009).

The commercialisation of slams as well as spoken word poetry perpetuated racial stereotypes in the way that poets felt the term 'performance poet' became a limited term that cannot reflect the creative expressions and achievements of poets beyond their racial identity. Poets themselves vehemently criticized the industry and politics of spoken word, like Willie Perdomo who "nuances and repudiates the pious, marketable multiculturalism of the slam poetry he has helped shape" in Smoking Lovely (Noel, 2014, p. 13).

Despite the exploitation of poetry slam and spoken word by the media, poets in the field have pushed beyond the limiting and racialised terminology as well as the criticism of poor poetry slams and spoken word's aesthetics. Poets like Patience Agbabi, Hollie McNish, Ntozake Shange, Saul Williams, Kate Tempest and many others, show the variety and the complexity of performed poetry today. These voices navigate through the challenges of poetry slam and performed poetry changing not only the face of poetry performance, but poetry in general. This is instructive as to how future spoken word practices or interventions, may preserve and cherish the inclusive and creative spaces slam created as it started out a decade ago. The next section explores these possibilities by concentrating on the migration of spoken word practices in prison as the core concern of this study.

*2.2.5 From Youth Slams to Spoken Word Poetry Programmes*

While research about poetry slam is scarce, some of the influential names in the UK include Gregory, Dymoke, Parton, Taylor, who are making a case for it as a pedagogical and transformative tool (Dymoke, 2015; Gregory, 2008, 2014; Parton, 2015; Taylor, 2015). For example, Gregory researched the outcomes of the UK's national poetry slam WordCup. Positioning herself both as a poet and researcher she relies on a constructivist

epistemology. She uses an opportunity or convenience sample and qualitative methods, and observes that the impact of the arts is difficult to quantify. Impact studies could benefit from the use of mixed methods and a follow-up. The follow-up, however, can be understandably impractical (Cheliotis, 2014; Hughes, 2005; Miles & Clarke, 2006). This might be better tackled with studies that have the capacity to develop a longitudinal design and therefore use impact tools or change indicators (O'Keeffe, 2013).

Applying a phenomenological analysis of the data Gregory reports the following outcomes:

- student-centred learning
- supportive community
- learning about poetry
- empowerment and self-development
- continuity (Gregory, 2014).

The last aspect of continuity is particularly important because it proved problematic. The programme was short and there was no guarantee for sustainability. In this regard, my study will aim to include a sensitive conclusion of the programme, considering avenues for sustainability if feasible within the prison context. The study had positive implications for vulnerable youth, but Gregory warns about the need of researching challenges. In this regard, other studies remind me of the responsibility of ensuring aesthetic quality that might be neglected in arts programmes used as a pedagogical tool (Cheliotis, 2012; Davey et al., 2014).

Regarding the use of performance poetry with vulnerable youth, one example is the research study concerning the 'Seen but Seldom Heard' project (Hodges, Fenge, & Cutts, 2014). Specifically, this study employs performance poetry as an arts-based research method for dispelling the stereotypes surrounding youth with disabilities, in the school context. It's a case study drawing on the participatory methodology developed in Boal's "Theatre of the Oppressed". This approach, "a critical and participatory, praxiological art-based research, is common in arts in social justice. For example, I was first inspired by Freire's contributions to social justice which link to performance ethnography.

The study uses the workshop format and a collaboration among "professional performance poets, two academic researchers, the school's drama teacher and a group of support staff like students" (Hodges et al., 2014, p. 1095). It disseminates outcomes through a documentary and a publication of a poetry anthology. While this is very promising, the study relies on the assumption that disseminating or performing poetry can dispel stereotypical perception, a contested area in itself (Sikora et al., 2011). It does not offer a further empirical support on how audiences' viewpoints might have changed after they'd seen or read the participants' poems. Admittedly, the study argues convincingly in favour of using performance poetry for exploring youth experience. One aspect of poetry as a research method that seems unclear here, is the ways in which Faulkner's aesthetic criteria for assessment of the poems had been applied (Faulkner, 2009).

Research on the impact of slam raises the question about spoken arts pedagogies which empower marginalised youth and increases their access to education (Gregory, 2014; Kim, 2013). This will be further explored in relation and contrast to existing theoretical lenses and models of pedagogies, and artists and youth relationships with a focus on participatory approaches and pedagogies of listening as well as 'possibility thinking' (Burnard et al., 2006; Burnard et al., 2008).

*2.2.6 Staying with the Injuries of Poetry Slam and Spoken Word*

Developing as from the working class to empower the marginalised social groups, poetry slam encountered challenges with commercialisation and in the areas of gender, race and aesthetics. During the Nuyroican movement the awareness about the gendered nature of spoken word became prominent. This refers to the male dominated spoken word scene, but also to the masculine ideal developed around it. Specifically, the street aesthetics, as in the work of Brandon, had given a gendered and masculine tone to slam, which was later questioned in the work of female performers like Lorraine Sutton (Noel, 2014). The racialisation of poetry slam rooted in marketing agendas and terminology abuse should be approached through the poet's perspective, their attitudes and personal identification with a certain term or practice. Hence, having a reflexive approach constantly challenging preconceptions and assumptions about people's identities and performing styles.

When speaking about aesthetics of slam and spoken word one should be weary of the danger of discarding the value of young people's poems, which is a general challenge for the use of arts in social justice or as an empowering process (Cheliotis, 2012). Here a reminder is in order of the interventions' objective to rely on spoken word performance as a process and approach for self-development which sets different criteria for assessing the value of young people's engagement. Moreover, beyond the argument of participating in the creative process, when assessing the spoken word poem one should consider it a special genre. This necessitates different aesthetic criteria like its contributions to identity construction through performance, community belonging and social empowerment, which arise from slam as cultural practice involving audience response and immediate evaluation.

To tackle challenges in spoken word performance practices, both in creative industry as well as in educational and socially transformative contexts, it is imperative to adopt reflexivity towards the understanding of race, gender and aesthetics. This should provide a more ethical and sensitive pathway for developing a spoken word intervention that addresses the plights caused by the misuse of slam terminology and performative social agendas. In using poetry performance for educational and self-development endeavours, the practice should shy away from the homogenising tendency in the spoken word scenes in order to enable the development of young people's unique voice and in turn nurture the subjective ways in which they narrate their life stories.

*2.2.7 Spoken Word Poetry Programmes in Prison: A New Practice?*

Poetry slam and spoken word workshops led by performing poets or organisations is an emergent practice in prison. This practice has yet to be mapped out and researched to broaden the picture regarding arts interventions and programmes in prison. Like other arts interventions, spoken word objectives range from providing alternative or transformative education to supporting offenders' personal development. Major meta-reviews of the empirical research on arts interventions and practices in prison do not cover spoken word as a special art form distinct from creative writing (Hughes, 2005; Miles, 2004; Miles & Clarke, 2006a). Hence, the poetry slam and spoken word practices

are an uncharted territory in the official discussions and evidence about the value of arts in prison. Yet, there is a growing number of performing poets and arts organisations implementing these activities in prison.

For example, Apples and Snakes, UK's biggest literary agency for performance poetry partnered with the Manchester police to reduce youth crime. The initiative, part of the *Inside Out Project*, commissioned five poets to enable young people to create and showcase their own work. Apples and Snakes have also run an intensive two-week residency in Wandsworth Prison where "over 400 inmates participated in a series of empowering". Also, Apple and Snakes poets have been involved in spoken word practice in prisons. Prominent examples are the poet Joelle Taylor who has run spoken word courses and a slam in Holloway Prison; and the poet Lemn Sissay who has worked with young people at risk in HMP Wandsworth, and poet Phil Kaye poetry work in US prisons.

In addition to individual practitioners there are also organisations that dedicate part of their mission to enact a change through spoken word workshops in prisons. For example, the poet Chanje Kunda founded Afrique Performs in the UK, a social enterprise working in the arts and music industries also running spoken word workshops in correctional facilities. Similarly, a community organisation in Melbourne, The Centre for Poetics and Justice, runs spoken word poetry workshops for social transformation with youth and in correctional facilities.

The literature review locates and maps out the emergent and yet under-researcher practice of spoken word workshops in the prison within the field of the arts education in prisons. Following the empirical evidence of the positive impact of slams and programmes for self-development of youth in schools and communities, the present study proposes to design, implement and facilitate a programme in a Macedonian young correctional institution. It seeks to understand how young people and prison staff perceive the potential role and contribution of the programme in youth's lives. The ethical responsibility in the research process requires engagement with the challenges of using spoken word and slam as transformative tool discussed below.

# CHAPTER 3: YOUNG OFFENDERS' LIVES – THE POSSIBILITIES OF SPOKEN WORD POETRY'S CREATIVITY IN PRISON

The present chapter offers a brief overview of the place of young offenders within the judicial, social, and cultural discourse internationally, with a focus on the Macedonian research context. In terms of the research site of a Macedonian prison, national policy as well as practice currents are discussed in relation to the potential of the new programme supporting young offenders' resocialisation process. It concludes with a brief consideration of the study in the context of the lessons from desistance, restorative and narrative criminological approaches to rehabilitation.

## 3.1 Prison Systems: Approaches to Justice and Crime

This section provides a general overview of the prison context internationally locating the prison system in the Republic of Macedonia within it.  It focuses on the young correctional institution which is the research context of the present study. It covers the role and duties of the institution; it offers a brief description of the physical conditions; the state of the resocialisation process with a focus on education and treatment as well as the official prison policy.

### 3.1.1 Framing Macedonian Prisons and Young Offenders

Republic of Macedonia gained its independence in 1991 and has been a candidate for accession to the EU since 2005. The country's Directorate for execution of sanctions at the Ministry of Justice is responsible for the work of thirteen prisons, two of which are a young offenders' institution and a young correctional institution. The population in the country is 2.076 million and on average there are around 2500 prisoners at a time ('FYR of Macedonia Home', 2014).  Regarding national and ethnic background of prisoners in Macedonia, 43 % are Macedonian, 32 % Albanian, 16 % Romani, 4 % Turkish and 2 % are Serbian and the other 3 % are from another background. The educational background of prisoners is predominantly that of elementary school, followed by high school and then

by the number of prisoners with low literacy levels, with the highest number of offences committed against property (Министерство за правда, 2014).

The young correctional institution is referred to with a variety of names in international reports, for example, "Juvenile Correctional and Rehabilitation Institute" or "Education correctional institution" (O'Donnell, 2010). In my view the term young correctional institution is an appropriate equivalent in English because it reflects best the work and the legal duties of the institution. According to the "Law for juvenile justice", the young correctional institution is a secure setting for young offenders between 14 and 18 years of age, where the person can stay until turning 23 ('Закон за малолетничка правда', 2010). For example, in 2012, there were four young people between the age of 14 to 16; there were 15 between the age of 16 to 18; and 17 of the young people were between the age of 18 to 23 (Министерство за правда, 2014).

Specifically, the "Law for administering sanctions" states that the young correctional institution is for "young males who have been legally sentenced to a training order and detention in the correctional facility for the territory of Republic of Macedonia" ('Закон за извршување на санкциите', 2015). Young people should stay confined in the young correctional institution for a minimum of one year and no longer than five years. Depending on the gravity of the crime, young people and adolescents can be sentenced to prison of five years and over. In this case, the young person is sentenced to imprisonment in the young offenders' institution, where they should stay no longer than 10 years.

The correctional institution is divided into a reception sector; two correctional groups and a correctional ward. In 2013, 36 of the employees were Macedonian, four Albanian and one Serbian. The correctional institution is governed by a governor, a governor deputy, head of the resocialisation sector, head of the instructional sector, a commander, and a head of a team of experts which includes a psychologist, a sociologist, a pedagogue and, a doctor if and when required (Ombudsman Republic of Macedonia, 2014). The main sectors in the institution are as follows: resocialisation, security, sector for trade and instruction, health sector, administrative and legal sector, and a financial one, all of which can be organised as such or according to the need of the institution.

This brief overview of the correctional institution is instructional for my study in several major aspects summarised in the following paragraphs. First, the age group of the participants I will target for the present study will be predominantly in the category of young adults or young people, because this age group is the most common in the correctional institution. Moreover, the personal and social outcomes of spoken word programmes and practice with youth, has been documented, researched and proven beneficial on personal and social level.[16] The age ranges I'm referring to is between 16-21, defined in the Macedonian Law for Juvenile Justice as an older young person, someone who has turned 16 and hasn't turned 18; and as a young mature person, someone who is 18 or over 18 and still hasn't turned 21 ('Закон за малолетничка правда', 2010). Moreover, while the institution has juveniles younger than 16, the choice of older and a more homogenous age group of participants is based on ethical pragmatism regarding consent; and also on the legal recommendations to cluster youth at risk within a similar age range in order to protect the younger from age-driven power dynamics imbalance ('Закон за извршување на санкциите', 2015).

Awareness about the trend of low literacy and education levels of potential participants informs the planning of the fieldwork in the direction of selecting visual data collection methods and inclusive arts-based activities. Moreover, the objectives as well as the content of the workshops will be designed to be both accessible and stimulating. The style of facilitation will be adapted to fit participants' needs as they arise in the workshops and technical terminology will be kept at a minimum in the beginning. A report on young people on training orders states they're not very familiar with the concept of "arts", although this depends on previous exposure and does not affect engagement with the arts (Sapsed & Springall, 2005). In the present thesis methodological section, I critique this with the lessons from piloting in the Macedonian prison to strengthen and enrich these decisions[17]. One argument for the present study lies in the basic right of young people to education, the participation in the arts as well as arts education, which is scarce in Macedonia. The next section reviews the state of resocialisation programmes and education in prisons.

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[16] See 2.2.2
[17] See 5.1 and 5.2.3

*3.1.1.2 Resocialisation Directives: Treatment and Education*

The correctional measures in a young correctional institution involve prevention, help, surveillance and education. The process of resocialisation, "the purpose of implementing and coordinating aspects of the training process, education and empowerment of the convicted and young people" ('Закон за извршување на санкциите', 2015, p. 9) is the main goal of every prison. The term rehabilitation is sometimes used interchangeably with resocialisation, although it's smaller in scope and "in the prison context it means readying prisoners to re-join society, as useful and law-abiding members of the wider community" (House of Commons, The Home Affairs Committee, 2005, p. 10). Ward and Maruna explain that the newer term referring to the same, re-entry, was short-lived, while the term rehabilitation carries a negative historical backdrop like the formality of administering rehabilitation activities or the assumption that a person or institution knows what other people require (2007). However, they argue that while the term is laden with meaning, it captures the essence of their mission "to return to basics in some ways, recasting rehabilitation as a way of helping people who want to go straight" (2007, p. 7).

In this regard, the research approach as well as the potential contribution of the present study align with the notion of enabling participants' enact a self-change. The new term and turn in criminology is "desistance from crime" which concentrates on the strengths of prisoners to develop a more positive identity; from prisoners' perspective there's a suspicion towards managerial offender treatment programmes perceived with the negative connotation of the term rehabilitation. Hence, prisoners would rather "embrace the self-change, empowerment, and desistance perspective" (Ward & Maruna, 2007, p. 16).

Macedonian prisons are facing great challenges safeguarding prisoners' human rights due to lack of facilities, a consistent education process and treatment programmes (O'Donnell, 2010; Ombudsman Republic of Macedonia, 2014, US Department of State, 2011). For example, the instructors in the young correctional institution teach informally, but there is no official elementary and high school education. Education is a legal

requirement by national and international regulations, and the lack of it deeply undermines the resocialisation process of young offenders as research shows:

> Where the pains of imprisonment are keenly felt, the capacity for young people to engage with learning and focus on their education is likely to be compromised. Where the benefits or prospects of education are felt strongly, the negative experiences of imprisonment may be mitigated (Lanskey, 2011, pp. 57–58).

Not only is education subdued, but also the discomforts of imprisonment are increased by the lack of facilities for young people, as the National Preventative Mechanism reported after a visit in 2014:

> There's a lack of workshops in the institution. The children are registered in a work group for economy and paintwork, but at the day of the visit we found that there was no economy and the children spend their time sitting in the yard [...] there are no cupboards to store personal items [...] the temperature is below desired standards [...] there is no sickbay to accommodate children who are ill (Ombudsman, National Preventative Mechanism, 2015, p. 69).

The actual nature of some of the officially reported resocialisation activities is unclear given this discrepancy between policy and practice. Rehabilitation programmes are administered by the staff, usually two teachers and a psychologist, but in practice correctional work engagement is very low, with some instances of kitchen work; this reflects the high rates of unemployment in the country overall which together with the poor communication between prisons and social services only makes the re-entry process harder (Avramovska & Schweighöfer, 2011). The Directorate for Sanctions reports on the execution of the following projects in the young correctional institution, without further direction regarding the projects' evaluation or outcomes:

- A pilot programme for enhancing the education and improving the basic skills of young people in 2012-2013 which consisted of 16 hours teaching per week for six months. A resocialisation project for doing hand-made crafts for sale, which consisted of 8 workshops.
- A three yearlong project "Improving the prison conditions for reintegration of young offenders" was introduced at the end of 2013 by the Holland Helsinki Committee (Министерство за правда, 2014).

Regarding the Helsinki Committee project, during the process of applying for access, I talked to a number of criminologists in Macedonia, among whom was a criminologist involved in this project. From our conversation I learned that the project is a professional

development for the prison staff to enable them to deliver education in the core subjects like mathematics and languages; also the young people welcomed the instructors with a self-devised role-play. This is notable because it is a rare report of engaging with the arts, as reviewing the projects in the prisons active in the past decade did not include any arts education, with one example of the crafts project

In summary, the process of resocialisation in Macedonian prisons is deeply undermined due to lack of facility, staff, resources, poor communication with the social services and the unpredictable nature of the education process left to one-off projects. Moreover, the nature of the reported existing projects and programmes is unclear, because not only is there no research evidence of their outcomes, but also the Ombudsman has repeatedly ascertained the absence of these activities upon actual visits in the institutions (Ombudsman Macedonia, 2013). Because of this, there is an urgent need to address the resocialisation process and education. Following the desistance perspective to resocialisation, the participation in the arts for identity change as well as narrative approaches to criminology can add an increased interest in prisoners in addition to programmes that target their behavioural change.

The lessons from the desistance perspective and the fragile state of education in the correctional facility, inform my decision frame the programme to the institution and the participants under the umbrella of arts education. The programme will be presented as an opportunity to participate in the creative process which in turn can divulge potential contribution to the resocialisation and rehabilitation of participants.

In addition, the discrepancy between policy and practice, partly a result of the country's poor economy, alerts me to be highly sensitive in the negotiating and communicating with the prison staff, since the institution has already been targeted in the public discourse. I would have to ensure that my role and intention is conveyed clearly in a way that will enable a collaborative environment and attempt to bridge the above mentioned gap.

*3.1.1.3 Macedonian Policy and National Strategy*

International and national prison reports urge safeguarding of the basic human rights of prisoners in Macedonia; these include education, improving living conditions, health care as well as increasing inter-sector communication and encouraging collaboration with external bodies (European Commission, 2014, Macedonian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights (MHC), 2012, Ombudsman, National Preventative Mechanism, 2015, Ombudsman Republic of Macedonia, 2014, US Department of State, 2011, U.S. Department of State, 2013; O'Donnell, 2010). For example, last year, the institution was given a special attention because of a report of sexual harassment among the young people who expressed complaints about the care of the staff which was brought to the attention of the prosecution (Ombudsman, National Preventative Mechanism, 2015). The Committee Against Torture responded to this case reporting that:

> An investigation into allegations of the ill treatment of a juvenile [...] Educational Correctional Institution led to a member of staff being found guilty, given a disciplinary warning and a fine of three months' pay ('Committee against Torture', 2015).

The government's response to some of the challenges in the prison system have been directed towards reducing overcrowding in prisons by starting a reconstruction and building of new facilities for the prisons in accordance with European standards in 2013. The construction is in progress and it is expected that the young correctional institution gets a new building with a higher capacity for accommodating 110 young people.

In addition, the Macedonian government also adopted a strategy for developing a probation service in 2013 after a collaboration with the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) supported by the British Embassy in the Macedonian capital (Министерство за правда, 2014). The national strategy for the development of the prison system in Macedonia for 2015-2019 continues to stress the focus on improving the treatment of offenders as well as the re-socialization activities.

The current political situation in Macedonia is in the aftermath of a huge political scandal of wiretapping officials' conversations after which two ministers allegedly implicated in illegal activities resigned from their positions. The ruling party and the opposition signed

a treaty overseen by the EU community, called the Przino Treaty which outlined the establishment of a technical government with elections being scheduled for April, 24th, after which the prime minister also resigned. The treaty stipulates fair and democratic conditions for the implementation of the elections as well as safeguarding media freedom.

At the face of uncertain political future and outcomes for Macedonia, as well as the negative reputation surrounding the correctional institution in the media and national reports due to staff misconduct, the planning of the implementation of the programme in the correctional institution should be approached with caution. On the one hand, the programme aligns with the national policy planning and proposes to address the key component of resocialisation through participation in the arts; on the other, at this unstable political climate the institution and staff will be highly suspicious of outside parties which would necessitate strong strategies of trust building and collaboration. Moreover, as a researcher I feel the imperative to safeguard the programme from political agendas in choosing reliable and trustworthy collaborator for the workshop facilitation; as well as the choice of person of contact in the Macedonian context during the fieldwork process.

## 3.2 Youth Justice System: Young Offenders

This section provides a brief overview about the ethical responsibility that goes with the understanding and researching young people's developing identity. The discussion about young people should start from youth cultures, both nationally and internationally, with a link to how youth are being portrayed in the public eye. The portrayal of young offenders is also reflected in youth justice policies as well as practices. While these are orientated towards rehabilitation like the justice systems in Scandinavian countries, New Zealand, and perhaps UK and US more so than China, Russia, Eastern-European countries and African countries the prison system remains managerial in nature. Approaches differ not only in facilities, living conditions and ensuring human rights, but also in the presence or absence of specialized courts and judges and youth justice legal frameworks and conventions the countries abide to. In such institutionalized places, education has been

envisioned as transformative and supporting rehabilitation. This section lists some of the key areas that should be addressed to improve the self-development of youth in prison.

*3.2.1 Portrayal of Young Offenders*

Adolescence is the journey from childhood into adulthood (Baxter, 2008; Hall, 1904; Nikolajeva & Hilton, 2012).  In the process of maturation young people's identities may be suppressed by social expectations and stereotypical portrayal of youth in the public discourse. For example, youth are often talked about as "lost" or "rebels without a cause". Such myths should be deconstructed by engaging with the specifics of a given social contexts, their cultural dynamics in a classed or globalised society (Dillabough & Kennelly, 2010; Ricoeur, 1981). The narrative approach to understanding young people's identity and self-development, pioneered by Maruna (2000) in criminology, resonates with Ricoeur's urge to:

> look beyond representation of economically disadvantaged young people as ever  being in need of rescue from the clutches of vice and criminality, towards a temporal and spatial narrative of youth experience which does not leave these young people frozen in the text or in 'historical time' (1981, p. 3).

Developing an 'anti-social' or aggressive behaviour can escalate in adolescence as an individual response or a response to surrounding factors like family and conflicting social situations (Cummings, Goeke-Morey, & Papp, 2004; Patterson, Dishion, & Bank, 1984). Research also shows that usually male adolescents are more prone to responding in a delinquent behaviour than females (Sadeh, Javdani, Finy, & Verona, 2011).

In conclusion to this, it is not unexpected that that the two of the Macedonian young offenders' institutions have only male prison population (O'Donnell, 2010). Hence, the present study will be working with young men in a Macedonian prison. The role of family and friends in the lives of the young people will be considered in the introductory sessions and collaboration with the staff in order to ensure to maintain existing good relationships which can support the performance process of the programme and enhance its contribution.

*3.2.2 Approaches in Youth Justice*

Approaches for tackling youth crime and young offenders' behaviour range from more punitive, punishment-orientated, to a more welfares attempt for building emotional wellbeing and strength (Newburn & Hagell, 1994). Responses to addressing criminal behaviour in youth strongly rely on a resiliency and risk assessment frames which attempt to transform individual attitudes and identities that strongly underpin action and improving the living environment (Castells, 2009; Fionda, 2005; D. E. Gussak & Ploumis-Devick, 2004; Merrilees et al., 2013; Newburn & Hagell, 1994; Young, 1999). Hence, support from family, school, the community, extra-curricular engagements and interventions like the arts are conducive to building 'secondary desistance' (Fionda, 2005; Gornik, 2001; Hughes, 2005; Wacquant, 2009; Young, 1999).

Young offenders' patterns of behaviour point towards a need to address a set of difficulties in order to hone self-development. For example, working with young offenders':

> Resistance to trying 'new' activities; impulsive behaviour and strong, 'anti-authority' sentiments; poor concentration and changes in mood; limited articulacy; the maintenance of 'criminal code' at all costs and/ or aggressive behaviour; low self-confidence (Johnston & Hewish, 2013, p. 8).

In this respect education and interventions provide a transformation of young people's reasoning and attitudes which affect how they construe and shape their own identities, indicative of criminal behaviour or desistance Gergen, 1982; Merrilees et al., 2013; Sen, 2007). A transformation is:

> the notion, that students, particularly those less privileged, be encouraged towards expansive affective and cognitive growth, and the notion that schools can act as vehicles for change within society and redefine and deepen democracy and equality (Clemons & Clemons, 2013, p. 61).

Such transformative experiences take place in informal learning environments, in conflict resolution and community work (Hunt, 2013; Illeris, 2013). Similarly, engagement with the arts and participation in the creative process can lead to a transformative aesthetic experience and a modification of one's emotions (Dewey, 2009; Sikora et al., 2011;

Weddington, 2004). In this sense, the participatory element and dialogic nature of interventions enables young people to explore their own identities and undergo a process of conscientization, the process of acquiring political consciousness (Freire, 1996; Giroux & McLaren, 1989).

Given that "identities are sources of meaning for the actors themselves, and by themselves, constructed through a process of individuation." (Castells, 2009, p. 7), the present study would be interested in how youth make sense of their lives, but through the arts. In encouraging young people to explore their past experiences and autobiographical memories through spoken word as well as in the analysis of their life stories, the researcher should be weary of the polarised portrayal of young offenders in public discourse and juvenile justice practices (Fionda, 2005). This means that the programme design should enable youth to explore and express their experiences in the realm of the fictional with the necessary nuance necessary to transcend simplistic and stereotypical narratives.

### 3.2.3 Creative Lens: Narrative Criminology, Desistances, Restorative Approaches

Approaches to rehabilitation of offenders that have held a central research interest, in addition to the traditional risk responsivity and therapeutic treatment models, in the past three decades are desistance theory and practice as well as restorative justice approaches in the justice system (McNeil, 2006, Maruna, 2016). The desistance theories apply to the question of how offenders stop with criminal behaviour, whereas restorative approaches are interested in how collaborative efforts to restore relations between victim and perpetrators can inform social justice and criminal justice's response to crime. While the former is focused on offender behaviour, and the latter primarily on supporting people harmed by crime, there is a surge of credible re-evaluation of the links between desistance and restorative approaches in the criminal justice.

Desistance theories, as outlined in chapter 2, in addition to retaining the traditional criminological interest in reducing offender recidivism (primary desistance), encompass personal sense of change (secondary desistance), and the central role of social dimension

in supporting that change (tertiary desistance). Maruna has identified five key areas of overlaps between desistance and restorative approaches to crime based on his critique of a special issue dedicated to re-evaluating the two criminological streams. He argues that both streams:

1) challenge the traditional individualistic 'lens' of criminal justice
2) challenge the 'top down' approach of traditional offender rehabilitation and instead locate the agency behind change in communities, social networks and within the individual him or herself rather than in the work of professional 'treatment'.
3) assign a central role to the power of narrative and self-identity
4) share an interest in the benefits that come from helping others (as opposed to receiving help passively)
5) are premised on a belief in redeemability or the idea that human beings are not of fixed moral character and the worst behaved among us have something positive to offer society (Maruna, page 290, 2016).

Relevant to these overlaps, and core goal of agency of community and relationships to support offender rehabilitation is the concept of restorative encounter focused on victim-offender mediation. Based on Cremin's critical review of similarities and difference in restorative justice and restorative approaches across the criminal justice sector and schools (Cremin, 2013), analogies can be drawn of the relevance of arts as pedagogic practices in prison. Specifically, artists' creative encounters with offenders have been found to increase offender confidence and wellbeing (Cox and Gelsthorpe, 2008). Restorative encounter conference "enables those involved to increase awareness of self and others, forging an integration of the public and the private, self and other, thought and emotion" (Cremin, p. 111, 2013). Similarly, arts in prison that feature the prison community as well as the general public as audience and active participants in the arts programmes can act towards this restorative goal. That said, challenges faced by restorative approaches may well apply to the attempt of offender inclusion through the arts, which can leave social systems of exclusion undeterred.

Furthermore, Maruna goes on to explain the crux of these overlaps in the words of one of the earlier proponents of the interdependence of desistance processes, stressing the need for desistances to integrate tertiary desistance, McNeil:

> Put simply, the implication is that offender management services need to think of themselves less as providers of correctional treatment (that belongs to the expert) and

more as supporters of desistance processes (that belong to the desister) (McNeil, page 46, 2006, in Maruna, page 293, 2016).

This is relevant to the present study's focus on the artists as supporters of young offenders' creative process. Maruna points out the fifth overlap between desistance and restorative approaches as most influential, the notion of 'redeemability' of serious offenders. However, he also found the concept of redemption to be problematically reductive in explaining desistance from crime in his seminal study in Liverpool prisons (Maruna, 2001). The link between the reductive redemptive narrative of ex-offenders and literary fiction is evident in Maruna's work and it has been explicitly explored by Colvin (Colvin, 2015). This raises key questions regarding the relationship of narrative identity approach to crime and the use of literary texts with offenders (Colvin, 2015; Miall, 1994; Sikora et al., 2011). Given the attempt to bridge the redemption gap in prison from the field of literary studies, the present study may inform ways of expanding the literariness perspective.

The narrative identity was adopted in criminology following Maruna's that ex-offenders maintain crimeless lives by telling redemptive stories about themselves (Maruna, 2000). His analysis mainly draws on the findings from The Liverpool desistance study (LDS) encompassing longitudinal observations and hundreds of in-depth interviews. A personal story unfolds a person's conceptions about themselves impacting their thought processes and by extent, behaviour (Cursley & Maruna, 2015; Maruna, 2000; McLean et al., 2007. Particularly, in the process of identity development, people attempt to make sense of their past, present and future expectations in the form of a life story. This life story is also known as narrative identity, extensively theorised by McAdams (McAdams, 1988).

McAdams and McLean state that "narrative identity is a person's internalized and evolving life story, integrating the reconstructed past and imagined future to provide life with some degree of unity and purpose" (McAdams & McLean, 2013, p. 233). This notion has been present both in the humanities and social sciences for the past two decades (McAdams, 2001). Research has shown that developing a more directed and unified personal life story has been associated with the person's "psychological well-being, generativity, and other indices of successful adaptation to life" (McAdams, 2001b, p. 237).

One crucial area in the narrative context is the interest in the stories offenders tell to make sense of their crimes as well as to orient themselves towards a crime-free life. Storytelling in the context of crime has spurred a stream often referred to as narrative criminology, which was largely inspired by the application of narrative identity theory to explain desistance from crime, among other narrative approaches (Presser & Sandberg, 2015).

Relevant lessons for the present study with regards to the application of narrative criminology are the links across narrative identity and literary studies. Particularly, within the narrative approaches to narrative identity in the field of social psychology, I have identified the narrative process model for self-development as open-ended and socio-culturally situated close to the present study's interest in the creative process of the artistic practice. Because of this, I overview here the narrative process model in relation to Colvin's literary take on Maruna's application of narrative identity in criminology. I argue that main lessons from these streams in criminology, are that the narrative process model as well as Colvin proposed move from narrative to a potential literary model, can be informed by creativity of the arts.

Colvin's article proposed a convincing approach to narrative work with offenders directly addressing Maruna's expressed concerns about the limitations of narrative identity. Like Weinstein and Davey, Day and Balfour (see 1.2), Colvin emphasizes the value of the arts over their instrumentalisation by the "what works" agenda. Drawing on narrative criminology, experimental psychology and literary criticism Colvin summarises her crucial proposition:

> In the context of the still influential notion of the 'redemption script' (Maruna, 2001), and of criminology's growing interest in narrative, I suggest that 'literariness' might usefully be understood as a model of narrative practice that responds to potentially serious problems raised by the 'rhetoric of redemption' (Maruna, 2001: 85), and that such an understanding might enhance the practice of narrative work with offenders (2015, p. 212).

Colvin argues the value of literary fiction must be beyond its aesthetics. It is, she adds, its complex narrative structure which offers multiple perspectives, challenges stereotypes and has a complex narrative. Colvin champions the canon of literary fiction over popular fiction following Kid and Castano's experiments which show that reading literary fiction

increases "theory of mind" (TOM). TOM stand for people's ability to empathise and make sense of diverse and disparate, evoked or observed experience vicariously (Kid and Castano, 2013).

Colvin's defence of the canon, traditionally held in high regard for its stylistics, is now based on its power to "liberate" and challenge normative narratives. Yet, Colvin's literariness, precisely its central multifaceted significations and disruptive qualities, is to be found in the long history of spoken word poetry ingrained in black culture through the Black Arts Movement and hip-hop, or performance poetry movements like the Beat poetry (Davidson, 2008).

I believe "literariness" as a conceptual model in the narrative work with offenders may not be confined to the literary canon. Experimental studies do show the value of literary fiction over popular fiction, be it for the sake of their stylistics (David S. Miall, 1994) or for their multi-layered narratives (Colvin, 2015). However, there are studies supporting the power of popular narrative forms like fiction, film or video games too (Mackey; Keen). Keen argues that popular young adult fiction can also provoke narrative empathy (Keen, 2010) and so can life writing (Keen, 2016). Fictional life writing is also a teaching tool in creative writing (Hunt, 2013), and the performance classroom affording a unique insight into both art and self (Bowman & Bowman, 2002). Hence, my reluctance at using "literary" and "literariness" in association with the "canonical", even if paradoxically Colvin acknowledges the reductionism of predictable stories within literary fiction. A more balanced discussion of the meaning of "popular fiction" is in order, since ascribing a democratic definition of "literariness" to the canon, may reproduce the same power imbalances which have long been marginalizing literatures and poetries.

Literary complexity resides in the continuum of poetries which are both complementing and disparate. This continuum would contain reductive poetry due to its commercialisation and exploitation for political agendas, capitalistic driven creative industry (Bauridl, 2010), power dynamics manifested in white supremacist fetishizing of black bodies and experience (Somers-Willett, 2009). Similarly, this is an argument not only relevant to spoken word poetry but to hip-hop culture and rap music (Low, 2011). In the case of the divide between literary and popular poetry (Lansana, 2004), the cultural

appropriation and artistic exploitation which accompanies the popularisation of spoken word and hip-hop has massive implications for spoken word poetry and hip hop education and pedagogies.

Importantly, embracing popular poetry's familiarity and relevance in youth's lives is an entry into reclaiming and paying back respect to the culture and tradition they arose from. This means building educational practices around the possibilities of spoken word and rap in order to interrogate their affordances which may be best discussed and examined through what Kim calls *spoken art pedagogies* (Kim, 2013). Similarly, Bronwen, in making the case for critical spoken word and hip hop pedagogies argues for educational programming which would engage with "a divide between a sanitized hip-hop culture [...] inside schools and the messiness of the culture without" which arises from school's institutional censorship (Low, 2011, p. 148). Hence, my aim for the programme is negotiating the free use of language and expression through a vernacular and cultural idiolect close to the youth, the soul of spoken word and hip-hop.

This section thus brought together lessons from the overlapping points across desistance, restorative and narrative approaches to offender rehabilitation. Based on my review of arts in prison and the wider cross-disciplinary literatures, I argue, it is within these criminological streams that the present study, grounded within arts practice, arts creativities and artists' pedagogies may best inform the implications of the arts for criminology.

## 3.3 Narrative Stop: The Importance of Programmes in Young Offenders' Lives

The understanding of the outcomes of arts interventions is a starting point in tracing the available research evidence in the field in the process of locating the research gaps and the study's focus. This process was facilitated by posing feasibility and culturally relevant questions as well as examining the present study's methodology and location within the broader arts education and creative arts practices frame.

I identified that the existing literature on the arts in prison underrepresent the emerging practice of spoken word poetry practice in prison which is an important omission given a wealth of evidence that spoken word programmes open up young people's lives in the context of schools and communities (Fleetwood, 2005; Low, 2011). Drawing on popular culture, spoken word performance is shown to be an accessible tool for engaging young people and producing a positive change for their self-development. The study locates a need for further research in the areas of:

- under-researched emergent spoken word poetry practice in prisons
- the potential contribution of the programme in the prison context
- the young people and staff's perception of the programme
- spoken word and narrative identity relationship
- the urge to support the resocialisation process of young offenders in Macedonia.

Summary of the emerging research questions is provided in box 3.1.

**Box 3.1 Summary of Research Questions**

*Overarching Research Question:*

What are the contributions of the arts practice of a new spoken word poetry programme in young offenders' lives in a Macedonian prison?

  *Programme development research focus*
A) What are the new spoken word poetry programme's elicited artistic responses and experiences in young offenders' lives in a Macedonian prison?

  *Perceived impact research focus*
B) What meanings arise from young offenders' elicited artistic responses in their lives during the new spoken word poetry programme in a Macedonian prison?

# PART TWO: PERFORMING ARTOGRAPHIC METHODOLOGY, METHODS, DESIGN, PROGRAMME WITH PRISON COMMUNITY

**Poem "Unique Similarities" by Lewey, a poet participant from the Learning Together programme[18]**

> *I thought I knew myself like the back of my hand.*
> *The train lines are fixed*
> *heading to their final destinations.*
> *Each are unique./Some long, some short.*
> *Others hoisted, others straight.*
> *But looking closer under the magnifying glass,*
> *There are shared journeys, experiences, circumstances*
> *Different characters. Same stories.*

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*Poetry of witness presents the reader with an interesting interpretive problem. We are accustomed to rather easy categories: we distinguish between "personal" and "political" poems [...] The distinction between the personal and the political gives the political realm too much and too little scope; at the same time, it renders the personal too important and not important enough. If we give up the dimension of the personal, we risk relinquishing one of the most powerful sites of resistance. The celebration of the personal, however, can indicate a myopia, an inability to see how larger structures of the economy and the state circumscribe, if not determine, the fragile realm of the individual. We need a third term, one that can describe the space between the state and the supposedly safe havens of the personal. Let us call this space "the social." [...] By situating poetry in this social space, we can avoid some of our residual prejudices. A poem that calls us from the other side of a situation of extremity cannot be judged by simplistic notions of "accuracy" or "truth to life." It will have to be judged, as Ludwig Wittgenstein said of confession, by its consequences, not by our ability to verify its truth. In fact, the poem might be our only evidence that an event has occurred: it exists for us as the sole trace of an occurrence. As such, there is nothing for us to base the poem on, no independent account that will tell us whether or not we can see a given text as being "objectively" true. Poem as trace, poem as evidence.*

*Carolyn Forché,*
*"Twentieth Century Poetry of Witness," American Poetry Review, April, p. 17, 1993*

Part two elaborates a practice-driven artographic methodological rationale which informed an artographic research design with ethical multi-method data collection and programme delivery which introduces the prison community and the research site.

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[18] The Learning Together programme was conceived and delivered by the University of Cambridge's Institute of Criminology, led by Dr. Ruth Armstrong and Dr Amy Ludlow. Lewey took part in a spoken word poetry workshop led by poet Joelle Taylor at the HMP Grendon, 2015. With Lewei's permission, the poem is featured here which he wrote response to a photo elicitation activity that I led during the workshop.

# CHAPTER 4:    PERFORMING ARTOGRAPHIC METHODOLOGY

My background, long-standing passion for poetry and lived experience of the arts as life-sustaining, together with being an outsider to prison life, required active examination as to how they were shaping my methodological decisions. To do this I inquired into my poetic and educational practice to develop an artographic methodology which would enable me to question power dynamics in the work with marginalised young men. In my methodological inquiry, I positioned my personal engagement with the arts as a potential source of both insight and limitation to credibly studying imprisoned young men's arts experiences. Hence, this chapter traces the lessons that emerged from artistic and poetic examination of own life story in order to probe into my own gender, ethnicity, social status and cultural baggage, and thus increase my self-awareness in relation to the study.

While I felt that my experience of ethnic discrimination and gender-based injustice, had put me in a position to understand internalised self-rejection, and the struggle to belong in a culture of school bullying, I was mindful of the issue of over-identifying with participants and limiting myself to the opportunity to encounter difference empathetically. To do so, I distinctively used the term PERforming with capitalised PER in order to capture my evolving and yet unclear sense of being a performing Poet, Educator, Researcher, seeking to form and reform my understanding of this PERforming practice. I harnessed my PERforming inquiry as the ontological and epistemological ground for an artographic methodology that is primarily practice-driven. I decided to notate my methodology as 'artography', because this artographic conception of the roles of artist, teacher and researcher as fluidly and equally interconnected is what I aspire to embody in my PERforming practice.[19] With the PERforming practice examined in this chapter I hoped to open a space to be present with participants and learn with and from their experiences (Cain, 1990, Gelsthorpe, 1990, Robert, 1981). At the end of this brief chapter, I propose that emergent artographic prison research, under the wider umbrella of arts-based research practices, is well predisposed to enrich the evidence base of the power of the arts in prison.

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[19] This follows after Heaton's definitions of 'artorgaphy' in contrast to 'A/R/Tography' as focused on the distinct roles of Artist/Teacher/Researcher, as well as, 'a/r/tography' as focused on the in-between spaces across being an artist/teacher/researcher (Heaton, 2018).

**4.1 Inquiring into PERforming: Artographic Ontology and Epistemology**

Firstly, in this methodological exploration I endeavour to forge and crystallise my voice as an artographer. To achieve this, I created a river journey with visual metaphors, also used to foster reflexivity (Kamler & Thomson, 2009). I examined what poetry's pivotal place in my life, from childhood to date, means methodologically both as way of being, a poetic ontology, and a way of knowing, a poetic epistemology. To do so, I first begin with a poetic me-search encompassing my evolving sense of self from childhood to present moment, which yielded three key self-reflective lessons of creating poetry as a way of living, a way of knowing and a way of being with others.[20] Building on the poetic me-search, I take the self-reflective lessons as entry points, a sort of ruptures in order to translate my poetic voice into an evolving artographic voice. Performing the river journey was also aimed at mirroring the same method to study life experience adopted with participants. This afforded avenues for acknowledging my own subjectivity and reflecting on how it may inform as well as stand on the way of data interpretation.

Secondly, as part of the visual river journey, I adapted the poetic tool "Vertical Interrogation of Strangers", created by poet Bhanu Kapil Rider in anthology of the same name. She collects in the book the poetic voices of Indian women who responded to a set of Rider's questions to interrogate their lives (Rider, 2001). I use the set of questions as an ekphrastic poetic tool for self-reflection. Specifically, I created a poem in response to visual metaphor of my sense of self as artographer associated with an illustrated Dixit card. The poetic process of reflexing on my identity as artographer yielded as sense of wholeness across my PERforming practices as influenced by feminist poetry voices, strengthening poetic being as artographic ontology.

Thirdly, I propose PERforming as a form of artography provides a relevant language to voice my emergent epistemology as a poet performer, educator, and researcher performing my truth, my artistry, my inquiry and learning. I argue that this affords ways of forming research tools that can dynamically and specifically respond to the needs of my research questions attuned to both participants' subjectivities as well as my own. In the proposition of PERforming inquiry as forming the artographic methodology of the

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[20] See 4.1.1

present study, I am mindful of the detriments arising from my decision to use 'PERforming' as a new word or as a way of offering methodological solution. On the contrary, I view my PERforming inquiry as a stepping stone to artographic methodology that may enable me to both reflexively disentangle and "entangle [myself] in the layers of voices present [in the present study] and the epistemological assumptions that continue to haunt [my] my methodological practices (Mazzei & Jackson, p. 3, 2009).

*4.1.1 Visual River Journey: Poetic Being as Artographic Self*

The epistemological possibilities of arts education and creativity have been convincingly explored by Wright in the context of her own artistic and research practices situated in her life story (Wright, 2018). Wright also demonstrated the legitimacy of artistic and creative learning as imperative in education and research, but argued that their ontology can be made accessible through practitioner's own commitment to inquire into and render visible how artistic practices come into being and become a mode of progressing knowledge. Similarly, in the present methodological exploration, I too sought to unfold the ontology of my poetic practices. The river journey yielded visual metaphors that layered my evolving relationship to language, literature and poetry at the face of adverse experiences as well as harnessing poetry to develop my own poetic voice and creativity.

The first metaphor, 'pacifying language' stands for oral storytelling and reading as refuge, during adverse experience related to prolonged hospital visits in my childhood. The second metaphor, 'You do not tell the ocean to behave', captures the emotional turmoil during my adolescence.[21] The third, 'taking creative flight', stands for my moving away from a strongly patriarchal town, unstimulating educational system and toxic home environment, into developing an artistic practice and poetic identity throughout my undergraduate studies. The fourth metaphor 'un/knowing artographic self' stands for my turn to research to inquire into the meaning of poetry in my life as well as in the lives of others. The fifth metaphor, 'The I of Me game' was named after a line from Helen Cixous's

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[21] I named the second metaphor after a poetry line from Eve Ensler's poem "I am an Emotional Creature" as it captures the struggle to belong as a girl (Ensler, p. 134, 2013). I harnessed writing poetry and novellas as well as reading literature to navigate school bullying linked to my unconventional gender presentation and being ethnically stereotyped (e.g. as ethnically Aromanian I was seen as 'barbaric', 'mean', and through positive discrimination like being told I was 'exceptionally not ugly', thus 'not truly Aromanian'), and shamed for my working-class background.

intimate address to Derrida (Cixous, 2006), which stands for questioning internalised stereotypes and oppression. The sixth, 'the view from where I stand' indicates a move towards a more conscious feminist positionality arising through my poetic dialogue with feminist poets and scholars evoked throughout this chapter and the thesis.



**Figure 4.1 River Journey with Visual Metaphors: Me-Searching my Artographic Self**

I synthesised the 6 visual metaphors into 3 key self-reflective lessons about the meaning of poetry in my life as a seeking 1) poetic being: ontology[22] 2) poetic knowing: epistemology[23] 3) poetic goodness: pedagogy and ethics[24]. While I linked the potential significance of my 3 key self-reflective lessons to the arts-based research, I would like to emphasise that I see my poetic practice as still forming, re-forming, questioning and seeking to know how to be artographically, rather than fully embodying artographic ways of being. As such PERforming yielded a potential for my artographic development, unfolding the ontological and epistemological grounds for the present study:

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[22] See visual metaphors 1 and 3
[23] See visual metaphors 2 and 4
[24] See visual metaphors 5 and 6

1) Creating poetry as sustaining life, particularly as a safe space at the face of adversity which links to artography as a way of being in the world (Spinggay, Irwin, Leggo, Gouzouasis, 2007).
2) Creating poetry as learning to discriminate and see beyond the obvious, learning to trust my gut feeling which resonates with Lorde's conception of poetry as indispensable in shaping our realities, the what-it-feels-true-to-me, particularly when women' lived experiences have been historically denied as illegitimate (Audre Lorde, 2007). This links to Faulkner's demonstration of poetic inquiry as a feminist methodology (Faulkner, 2018)
3) Creating poetry as a way of relating to others, and recognising how my self-growth is entangled with others' self-growth which can be a way of tapping into my artographic voice for inner poetic pedagogy and seeking to discover ethical living. This links to the capacity of arts-based pedagogies to enable an interplay of unconscious and conscious knowing towards conscious self-knowledge (Bresler, 2017).

The self-inquiry showed me that translating poetic practice into life and self-development is an arduous and not a self-explanatory task. It is a know-how cultivated over time in relation to the communities of research practice which informed my current artographic commitment and openness to the artographic principle of cross-disciplinary collaboration (Spinggay, Irwin, Leggo, Gouzouasis, 2007). Poetry fosters emotional courage to work with fear of the other which "is the primary force upholding structures of domination. It promotes desire for separation, the desire not to be known (hooks, 93, 2016). I see the know-how of self-development through poetic practice as informing my pedagogic practice as poet educator, the drive to share poetry relationally with other human beings and embrace difference.

In addition, the ekphrastic poetic inquiry into my artographic self, further affirmed poetry as vehicle for the following values 1) the legitimacy of knowledge both by marginalised people and rooted in adverse lived experience 2) critical thinking and voice in resistance to social oppression, and 3) living creatively as an active search to develop ways for leading a life full of goodness, in the sense of avoiding harm to self and others. I have been weaving, cultivating and nurturing these three core values through my poetic practices which require cultivating self-trust. Thus, poetry arises as the mediating epicentre of my innermost self, my radical subjectivity (Delay, 2014), affording pathways to expressing what-it-feels-true-to-me. Poetic practice as a way of seeing and knowing in this sense is for me a kind of epistemology in its own right. My poetic practice has served as a guidepost toward taking responsibility over life decisions interacting with other from a place of genuine 'authenticity'. Thus, I see poetry as springboard for cultivating a love ethic, striving to harness "care, commitment, trust, respect, responsibility, and knowledge" (hooks, p. 6, 2016) not only in life but in artographic research.

**Box 4.1 Ekphrastic Poetic Inquiry of Artographic Self – adapted from (Rider, 2001)**

*I am me, my radical ontological subjectivity*
*sitting on the bench bending gender norms*
*I am me, reading the star lettered sky, my poetic inquiry*
*reading from an invisible script of emotional impulses*
*It's not 'whom' but how you love who you love,*
*after bell hooks I love as a verb*
*within and beyond conjugated*
*in all its un/grammatical forms*
*I come from the child in me*
*I begin anywhere and everywhere*
*a curious little human growing*
*stronger by the minute complicated*
*perfectly layered and bold*
*is how I will live – I will live*
*'the-what-it feels-true-to-me'*
*validated by Audre Lorde's*
*affirmation that poetry is not a luxury*
*a survival/an inquiry/ a know-how/ a knowledge*
*it is in and through the body I see too*
*the body, a natural readymade chance*
*for your suffering, blame patriarchy mother*
*it IS a real thing [see feminism: 'I feel therefore I am':*
*seek radical freedom] & about the earth*
*I remember the dear departed*
*whose faces I never met but carried as trauma –*
*one of the consequences of silence –*
*the other, an endangered language,*
*a no woman's language, my Aromanian heritage,*
*as artographic healing as PERforming*
*a voice of my own & of dismemberment I know:*
*16 young boys killed by Jeffrey Dahmer*
*murder falsely named love: the misuse of language*
*miles and miles away from responsibility*
*from genuinely loving as leading the good life*
*if you remember this, then you'd know*
*that every morning is an occasion to wake up with fear*
*every morning is an occasion to acknowledge fear*
*intent over getting out of my way to get up & go*
*about living with sobering truth, every morning*
*is a limit-situation: 'the method of occasion'*
*to realise one must 'live life seriously like a squirrel',*
*[fight for myself] conscientious, conscious, critical & fully present,*
*I will live creatively, come hell or high water.*

Having explored my poetic practice as the grounds for my ontology and epistemology, I explore further how my methodology was a driver for ethics in artographic practice.

**4.2 PERforming Ethical Artographic Practice**

Having explored the emergence of my artographic self, I proceed with a critical self-reflection on the role of my background in the study, as a white minority woman from Macedonia studying at an elite university. I do this in order to understand and trouble my perception of imprisoned young men in Macedonia. In addition, my self-reflection is guided by an acknowledgment of working with spoken word poetry practices and Macedonian hip hop, largely influenced by the US aesthetic. I reflect how this as well as actively following and participating in UK spoken word practices, has shifted my approach to race, not only in the US and the UK, but also in the context of widespread racism against the Roma in Macedonia (Janevic, Sripad, Bradley, Dimitrievska, 2011). This helped me to begin to acknowledge my white privilege as well as question my complicity in a white supremacist culture within the Macedonian national context.

In order to be able to cultivate a symmetry of power with participants, I explore how my artographic voice is entangled with the authority of oppressive discourse. Particularly, as artographer, in have struggled to develop a voice in real life which would feel as equally empowering as my poetic voice. Reflecting on my own upbringing, throughout my PhD I have continued to grapple with my inability to embrace my ethnic minority background implicated in nationalistic and patriarchal silencing. I began to consider the traumas these forms of oppressions imprint. For example, I was able to shed the guilt of feeling complicit in the marginalisation of my ethnic language, Aromanian, given it is as an endangered language spoken by 300 000 people in the world. I recognised how ethnic oppression had alienated me from my heritage and as a result chose to consciously move towards reconnecting to my language.

Promoting poetry in Aromanian, and obtaining a Macedonian-Aromanian dictionary made me feel a little bit more at peace with abandoning my troubled ethnic sense of self, feeling proud that orality was my ancestors' literacy. For the study I was mindful of the socially-driven unconscious biases towards minority languages in Macedonia, particularly Albanian language, because the Albanian ethnic minority is commonly perceived as a threat to Macedonian national integrity unlike the Roma. In this context, I completed a beginner's course in Albanian language before the programme as I wanted

to connect to the sounds of Albanian and develop a closer appreciation of it outside of social stigma. But the perception of Romani people as 'peacefully coexisting' with ethnic Macedonians, particularly when compared to Romanies across the European region (Barany, 2010), is not unproblematic as it can arguably be seen as indicator of the deep marginalisation of Roma.

Thinking of the disproportionate incarceration of ethnic minorities in Macedonia, particularly Romani young men, I was faced by the fact that in my experience there was no discussion of racism and race in Macedonian public spaces and day to day life. In this context, I was confronted with the seeming default of whiteness I had internalised as a neutral perspective growing up in a predominately white country. Not surprisingly the racism towards Romani people spans personal, internalised and institutional levels (Janevic, Sripad, Bradely, Dimitrievska, 2011). Reports on the experience of Romani children in the Macedonian school system have historically shown that they endure various forms of racism and bullying both by teachers as well as peers from other ethnic groups (Cahn, et al., 1999). This is something I have witnessed first-hand as a pupil in Macedonia. My active examination of race and racism only began in the context of reading African American literature in university, as well as studying American history. My immersion within the US and UK spoken word scene helped me see the responsibility I had, especially working under the influence of the US poetry slam model, to introduce spoken word poetry and particularly hip-hop culture within the wider context of black culture (Rose, 2016) as well as the oral poetry traditions of African griots (Akala, 2016).

I began to notice a disjuncture in race discourses across cultures, and while being in England had made me confront my minority background and sense of national inferiority, it also made me realise my unquestioned white privilege. However, this was hardly relatable to the question of race in the Macedonian context. This made me reflect on regional difference in the experiences of Roma across Europe. Analysis of the Eastern European has revealed that race and racism are particularly neglected in real-life in spite of governmental anti-discriminatory policy (Imre 2005). Miskovic confirms the omission of racial discourse in her analysis of Roma in Eastern Europe that "the Roma have suffered racial discrimination and exclusion ever since they migrated to Europe. And yet, with a few notable exceptions, their plight is carefully expressed through the language of

'culture', 'nationality', and 'ethnicity' (Miskovic, p. 201, 2009). She identified similarities between racial violence against African American children in the US and Roma in Eastern Europe, like the educational inequalities associated with stereotypical criminal profiling of young people. That said, applying the academic US discourse on race in the case of Eastern Europe poses the threat of homogenising the voices of and experiences of Romani children.

In Macedonia, the social workers I had collaborated with in the past, who work with the highest populating of Romani children in the country, had stressed that the children may feel that their heritage is not represented in the school curriculum. Also, parents do not feel equipped to support their children's learning processes given the cross-generational social exclusion. This prompted me to explore ways of embedding culturally distinctive Macedonian hip hop artists who also have a sound artistic dialogue with African American hip hop culture. For example, I wanted to learn about Macedonian hip hop artists' view of race and racism as part of my artographic practice which led me to consider a rap song "Freedom", a collaborative effort by two rap bands (Kup de Gras & Divizija, 2016). The song opens with the lines "we are not African Americans, we are Balkaners, our people were not forced to pick cotton on plantation fields we threaded tobacco leaves". I found this kind of identification of the history of enslavement of African Americans in the US offering the song a ground to delineate Macedonian cultural identity, without seeking to compare or relativize the disparate socio-cultural realities.

The reference to Macedonian struggle in the rap song to the devastating health effect of tobacco work to Macedonian workers, echoed poems of similar content represented in Macedonian school curricula. I was surprised by this, especially as months before my fieldwork at home I had witnessed an argument in my family over 'who threaded tobacco more, whose hands bled more, and who was poorer'. Witnessing this argument, as a second generation Aromanian not affected by abject poverty and only having threaded tobacco as a past time when growing up, made me consider different generational truths and realities. It made me recognise the survivor's guilt that I had felt growing up in a home where I was repeatedly silenced with the reminder to be grateful I had 'food on the table'. I grew to see how narratives of victimhood within the family were not empowering me to accept my background, or form insightful cross-cultural connections.

Through my wide poetic reading, and international poetry festivals, I began to appreciate the cultural distinctiveness of poet's practices. In the piloting stages at the World poetry slam in France, I had the opportunity to deepen the conversations about cultural heritage, race, adverse experiences and mental health in interviews with poets from 10 different countries across five continents.[25] This made me consider the geographic variability of poetry slam (Johnson, 2014), and relate this to the artographic endeavour to trouble stereotypes. I was guided by the conviction that it is an artographic responsibility to model poetry as a practice that questions social prejudice. This made me question how artographic practice can go beyond social stigma both with the artistic and educational practice of the programme as well as in research. How can artographic methodology truly be in dialogue with and guided by the voices of young men in prison? Certainly, empowering myself as PERformer would be key given that:

> Teachers are unlikely to empower and consult with students if they feel that their own perspectives are marginalised, and students are unlikely to take consultation seriously if they see that teachers have little power to implement change (Cremin, p. 5, 2007).

To move forward with these question, I reflected on the power of poetry in my life, and turned to the creativities of spoken word poetry across geographical contexts, cultural heritage, race, and gender which had impacted me as a person. For example, Alok Vaid-Menon's performative spoken word show "Watching you/ watch me", enabled me to acknowledge my cis-gendered lens on spoken word poetry, and how this, in relation to being a white audience member, was shaping my view of a spoken show by a brown trans-gender artist (Vaid-Menon, 2017). It confronted me with feelings of white guilt, and raised my awareness about the need to reposition my view of marginalised artists' work outside of the white gaze (Somers-Willett, 2009). Furthermore, spoken word poetry show "Sexy", by a UK contemporary poet Vanessa Kisuule, was a window into a complex view of sexual identity and how this interacts with the specific experience of a woman of colour in Britain (Kisuule, 2018). I was prompted to explore how my inability to engage in sustained conversations about racism was in effect racist and implicated in white supremacy[26]. This made me expand my understanding of the domination of white

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[25] See 5.1
[26] Diangelo uses the term white fragility to defines the defensiveness of white people when it comes to talking about our racism and deepening our understanding of the effects of whiteness which inevitably collude with racist behaviour and are conditioned by white supremacy (Diangelo, 2018)

aesthetic in portrayal of femininity in popular culture.[27] These are but a few examples of how artists' backgrounds can be a driver for a distinct artistic creativity which cannot be boiled down to artists' gender, class or race.

I was emboldened to embrace my lived experience in my poetic practice to shape a culturally relevant artography. Hence, I invited conversations with the participants to learn about their cultural and artistic preferences, and shape a programme of artistic voices beyond a tokenistic cultural and ethnic references in art.[28] Crucially, I also adopted strategies to cultivate reflexive embodied empathy, which I discus in the next section.

### 4.2.1 PERforming Relationally: Cultivating Reflexive Embodied Empathy

Being with the data in artographic research can mean working with layered personal narratives and practice which can also be messy and overwhelming. It involves trial and error, the courage to embrace and traverse the uncertainties of artographic fieldwork, and possibilities of narrative threads that provide emergent themes as key insights in into young people's lives. In this context, I wanted to develop robust strategies for being able to reposition myself in the field as well as 'recontextualise the data', to have the means for seeing young people's responses and have the ability to relate to their experience from multiple perspectives. For this I harnessed, I the self-reflective practices outlined thus far, weaving poetic inquiry as a versatile tool of knowing throughout (Vincent, 2018). To enhance my empathetic relating I reflected on my artographic practice and methodology with therapeutic approaches.

This meant, seeking modes for stepping back from the limitation of a stereotypical and vilifying discourse arising from the field of the prison. Stepping back afforded data re-

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[27] Especially when contextualised with davenport's observation concerning the division between black and white feminist camps. She detected that "the cause of racism in white feminists is their bizarre oppression (and suppression). […] This pathological condition is what they [white women] have to admit and deal with […] part of the reason is fear, as a result of centuries of living with dogs and having no identities" (davenport, p. 85, 2015). I too think some defensiveness comes from the unquestioned 'need' for a patriarchal femininity and the fear of difference which I discussed in the context of cultivating a love ethic.
[28] See the piloting stages elaborated in Chapter 5. For geographical variability of slam see 5.1.1; for Macedonian relevance of the practice see 5.1.2; for piloting with participants see 5.2.3, particularly, 5.2.3.3.

contextualisation embodying reflexivity.[29] This is an act of reflexive practice which in turn enabled me to reclaim participants' humanity and personhood from social stigma discourse as the essential departure in understanding criminality. This led me to recognize the difficulties of shaping and maintaining a relationship that can afford and nurture a safe zone where a love ethic can be the driving force for mutual self-growth.

The relational approach relevant across the stages of the research process and derived from the use of therapeutic techniques afforded reflexive embodied empathy. Relational dwelling 'between' thus means finding avenues for being in the points where the researcher and participants' worlds, epistemologies, values, worldviews collide, intersect and meet. Informing my artographic methodology with therapeutic approaches for relational research cultivated embodied ways of seeing which can be described as a 'felt sense' and 'tuning into the wisdom of the body' (Finley, 2009). Cultivating these processes of embodied relating and inquiry into data via therapeutic artistic tools enhances reflexivity in researcher-participant and research-data relationship.
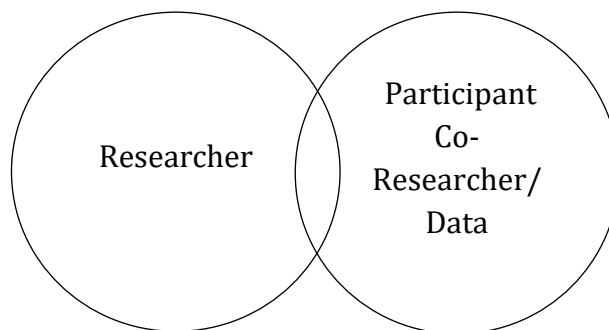


**Figure 4.2 PERforming Dialogue: Relational "Dwelling Between"**

Through this I wanted to meet the participant in a respectful manner that would enable our intersubjective relationship to shape the portrayal of arts experience in the programme, evading pathologising – rather, the participant is a co-researcher. This portrayal is possible because in the researcher-participant relational dwelling, in the "opening '*between*' lurks ambiguity and unpredictability, together with the possibility of true meeting. Anything can –and does –appear" (Finlay, 2011).

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[29] See 6.2

Specifically, in being entangled already with the participants' personhood by way of an 'interhuman' relating, I strived to embody "the essence of work with another person [which] is to be present as a living being" (Gendlin, 1996, p.297). Thus, in cultivating relational artographic practice I invited responsibility to be present with and responsive to the participants through I-Thou relating. I envision PERforming thus as an empathetic artographic inquiry imperative in the work with vulnerable people.

## 4.3 PERforming through the Arts-Based Research Paradigm

The perspectives proposed in this section draw mainly on the emergent practice and theory of arts-based research. It is also informed by the rise of a performative social science, like performance ethnography, encompassing literatures and knowledges from the fields of literary theories, performance studies and arts-based pedagogy (Denzin, 1996; Norman K. Denzin, 2003; Norman K. Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Keen, 2013).

Arts-based practice or arts-based research is the use of different art forms mainly in social science research. Researchers have used narratives and storytelling, poetry, music, dance, performance and visual art as well as a mixture of these to enrich their research (Faulkner, 2009; Leavy, 2008; Prendergast, Leggo, & Sameshima, 2009). Specifically, these methods enable subjectivity to be a part of the research process, pose different research questions, capture complex experiences, distil the important elements of research outcomes and provoke an enhanced emotional response (Faulkner, 2014; Leavy, 2008).

Situating the artographic methodology under the umbrella of arts-based research raises questions about the present study's view of the state of the field of arts-based research practices. While arts-based research was initially positioned within qualitative research paradigm, its distinctiveness as a separate research paradigm was influentially directed by jagodzinski and Wallin's critique of arts-based research (Jagodzinski and Wallin, 2013). Their call for arts-based researchers to be more radical in resisting academic objectification of arts practices offered a powerful lesson for the ethical responsibilities

of arts-based research in academic spaces. This refers to both the domination of positivist paradigm and the marginalisation of the arts within the qualitative paradigm (Leavy, 2018).

I arrived at performance ethnography (Norman K. Denzin, 2003) through my original departure and engagement with literatures in literary theories (Eagleton, 1996; Keen, 2013); critical pedagogy (Freire, 1996) as well as performance studies (Schechner, 2006) and critical performance pedagogy (Pineau, 2002). The turn to performance ethnography was initially driven by its move to grapple with the challenges of representation in research by encouraging a different and embodied insight in the life stories:

> When we screen our dreams and our crises through the canvases and lenses that the cinematic and electronic society makes available to us, we rode becoming storied versions of somebody else's version of who we should be (Denzin, 2003, p. 76).

Arts-based researchers have the task to stay true to artistic inquiry, even if perceived as 'betraying' academic research agendas, in order to separate arts-based research from academic research that marginalises marginalised participants.[30]

I saw PERforming the programme and collected data as a way of knowing and gaining empathetic understanding, by stressing the attitude of doing research 'with' rather than 'on' young offenders (Conrad, 2008). Thus, artographic methodology guides the fieldwork "as a collaborative process, a performance; and knowledge as performative and not informative" (Denzin, 2003, p. 28). Specific to my poetically informed artographic methodology, is the stream of A/R/Tography which illuminated the navigation of distinct identities of artists/researcher/teacher in overcoming the tensions between theory and practice:

> […] radically transforms the idea of theory as an abstract system distinct and separate from practice. In its place, theory is understood as a critical exchange that is reflective, responsive and relational, which is continuously in a state of reconstruction and becoming something else altogether. As such, theory as practice becomes an embodied, living space of inquiry (Springgay, Irwin, & Leggo, 2007, p. 20).

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[30] For a poetic critique of the positivist domination in academic and ethical portrayal of participants, see Cremin's poem "The Bloodless Angel" (Cremin, 2018).

I explore the possibilities of artographic methodology as PERforming considering Rolling's paradigm critique of arts-based research which spans the initial qualitative and constructivist influences towards the performative and post-modernist turn (Rolling, 2010). For my version of the artographic methodology, his extrapolation of the relevance of arts-based research as performative and pluralistic aligns with my poetic focus on the possibilities of creativity to capture the multi-vocality of participants' input in the programme:

> a performative approach might yield projects [...] for a pedagogy of social justice in education creating a haven for dialogic and polyphonic engagements giving voice to the social issues [...]; a pluralistic approach might yield projects across the curriculum based on Wasson, Stuhr, and Petrovich-Mwaniki's (1990) platform recognizing the sociocultural biases involved in art making and arts learning, and their advocacy for multicultural curriculum development [...]; a proliferative pedagogical approach might yield projects across the curriculum based on Olivia Gude's (2007) principles of possibility [...] a postparadigmatic pedagogical approach might yield projects based on Julia Marshall's (2008) understanding of the arts and related study as conceptual collage and the learner as bricoleur creating new ideas from diverse and seemingly incompatible arrays of thing (Rolling, p 111, 2010).

Rolling's pedagogic link of arts-based research as a postparadigmatic endeavour resonates with my notion of PERforming as multi-layered. Particularly, an experimental view of PERforming developed during the analysis, informed by my search to stretch the poetic possibilities in research across textual and visual which led to assembled poetic inquiry.[31]

This follows the conception of artistic practice as research where "the art piece and the academic paper will be ontologically different, but can be as epistemologically and methodologically (even technically) identical as one wishes and chooses" (Andersson, 2009, p. 8). Moreover, to escape the rigid terminology of 'art piece' and 'academic paper' influenced by "logocentric 'reasoned' forms of knowing" the boundaries in practice and in research are more fluid (Barry, 1996, p. 411). For example, Butler-Kisber talks about artful portrayals to make the difference of using arts-based approach to engage in the artistic process of knowing rather than producing art works. These processes enhance

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[31] I departed from cubist, found and collage techniques towards cultivating poetic inquiry that is essentially assembled in the sense of seeking to layer and embody the complexity of experience through the multiplicity of spaces and sense of time. See 5. 4

the research understanding by outgrowing the need to concentrate on a finalised 'art work', which may or may not be part of the research (Butler-Kisber, 2002).

An arts-based inquiry provides different forms of knowing and evaluating the contributions that spoken word poetry programme in offenders' lives (Simons & McCormack, 2007). Before I move to the design, I conclude this chapter with a poetic inquiry into my artographic positionality.

*4.3.1 PERforming as Poet, Educator, Researcher: Emergent Feminist Positionality*

My self-reflexivity is key to avoid stereotypical and definitive representation of young people and their life stories (Denzin, 1996). Hence, I took a stance which acknowledged my subjectivity as important to how I conduct research in the prison, but at the same time I sought avenues that would enable me to choose to develop ways of shifting my subjective artographic perspective (Harraway, 1991). This is to say:

> Our consciousness is always the medium through which the research occurs; there is no method or technique of doing research other than through the medium of the researcher (Stanley & Wise, 1983, p. 157).

The preparation for and uncertainty of fieldwork was anxiety provoking as I reflected on outsider-insider roles within the prison environment. I inquired poetically into my past experiences of PERforming as a poet, educator and researcher with marginalised children and young people from Romani and Albanian ethnic backgrounds at a Macedonian Centre for Social Initiatives. I particularly focused on a poetry workshop I had delivered in 2012, with a group of around 12 young people from the ages of 8 to 16. I revisited this workshop in order to use my accumulated knowledge since then to tease out and reappraise my perceptions of the ethics of PERforming with marginalised participants.

The poem helped me see I was not sufficiently reflective of my practice and how I was positioning myself in that space. The poem opens from my observation of the architecture of the University of Cambridge from the University Library. It evokes the metaphor of academia as the 'ivory tower', which burdened me with ideas of objective knowledge.

**Box 4.2 Poetic Inquiry – Instructions for Fieldwork**

*Written from the UL, 6th floor*

*When will you ever see branches'*
    *Shadows stripped to foot fall by the college wall?*
    *Birds at your level levitate non-stop:*
    *the muted tick-tock of a man's walk.*
*When will you see gloved hands in March*
    *yellow car tags like wedding bands*
    *circle the parking lot opposite two globe trimmed trees.*
*When will you kiss page after page of centuries*
    *bodies crammed in space. The music of owls*
    *at 4.44 pm. An upright scavenger ignores the college windows –*
    *the breath coming out in every direction: ghost bikes.*
*When will you agree that "beauty" is more value than use*
    *that a spoon can carve a door into a blackboard*
    *chalked leaves knifed the bowl its sickness*
    *before you could measure the temperature,*
*what is your 'truth' blue periodicals or yellow combs?*
    *Whichever you choose, make sure to choose first*
*a standpoint: literacy or tangled hair are not a prerequisite.*
    *If you're still around the corner*
    *sitting on a random chair behind book stalls,*
*you are just too caught up.*
*Clear your tongue with chloroform: the food of the Muses.*
*Forget them when you enter fieldwork.*
*Nothing can help you there: not even a cup of fresh brewed coffee:*
*how will you decide if the roasted taste is an intended thing,*
    *a twitch of a lip, a handicap, a habit, a mother inherited trait,*
    *a what of who that resembles you.*
*Scrub your dust the natural musk*
    *and the minute it will return to you. Wash your*
    *hair AND make-up, and the girls will be suspicious:*
    *one will role-play a human-radio jump onto the chair*
    *lip-sync Maya's poem like something sacred*
*another will play a game mum and dad are arguing*
*again, the floor is a flushed bird's cry*
*but you think silence has its own way of having*
    *and a fruit can be something to hold in a circle perhaps,*
*children take turns to tell a story*
*was this why you passed over the orange?*
*now can't stop thinking of kittens drinking milk from a syringe*
    *but you're concepts of reflexivity can't handle that image:*
*don't you know,*
*this is home*
*if you change your ontology*
    *but everyone tells you're a 'stubborn feminist'.*

*March, 2016*

It bothered me that I was seeing participants primarily through their vulnerability, focusing on oppression, and social harm which I captured the lack of care as in the line of 'kittens drinking milk from a syringe'. Perhaps, also it bothered me that I didn't feel sturdy enough to be exposed to imagine the levels of deprivation lack of formative care and forms of neglect create in in a child's life. Through the poem I was urging myself to recognise participants not only through their vulnerability, but also through their resilience. This meant 'my concepts of reflexivity can't handle' the complexity of lives, because I was myself vulnerable and felt significantly disempowered as a white minority woman in Macedonia.

I was not able to identify PERforming as my ontology because to do so would have meant examining my experiences of gender-based violence and challenge patriarchal oppression. This was further exacerbated by my fear to consciously embrace a feminist way of being artistically because in my experience the term was associated with social derision. My reluctance to assume a feminist artographic positionality is most strongly suggested in the final two lines of the poem I wrote to myself "this is home/If you change your ontology/but everybody tells you/you are a 'stubborn feminist'". I saw these lines as embodying my reluctance to position myself fully as a poet, educator, and researcher. My own inability to fully take a stance was limiting my relationship with the participants. But there was no other way than working through my fear and acknowledging my living inquiry was entangled and informed by the life and vibrant creativity of the participants like the rewarding moment of seeing a young girl initially disengaged by the writing to then role-play a 'human-radio' jumping onto a chair and lip-syncing a poem playing in the background.

Reflectively examining and unfolding the level of disconnect in my PERforming practice as a poet, educator, researcher, I wanted to consciously cultivate artographic methodology to inform my research practice. I observed that my poetic living was entangled with emergent poetic and feminist ways of knowing, and argued for PERforming as the ontological, epistemological and ethical basis of artographic methodology. In this sense, I joined the field of arts-based research practices, proposing that artography can capture the depth of the multiple contributions of the arts not on behalf, but in addition to the outcome-oriented criminological research focus.

# CHAPTER 5: PERFORMING AN ARTOGRAPHIC RESEARCH DESIGN: A NEW SPOKEN WORD POETRY PROGRAMME

The conception of the research design overlapping with the programme development and implementation, followed Kushner's emphasis on the centrality of people's lives as larger than the programmes in which they participate (Kushner, 2000). Figure 5.1 aims to illustrate the programme as situated in people's lives, prison and social context, as opposed to people being situated within the programme.
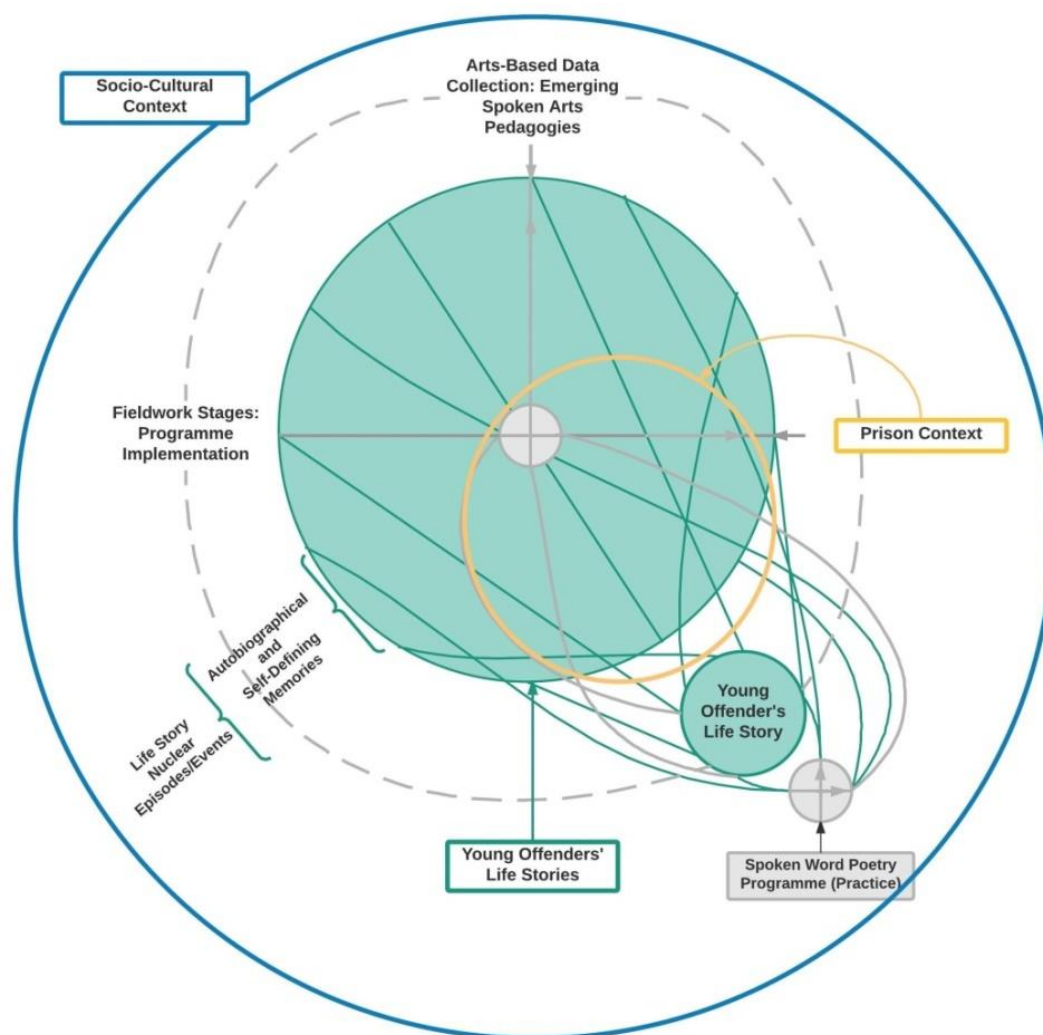


**Figure 5.1 Research Design as Programme: Seeing the Programme within Participants Lives within the Prison and Social Context**

This conceptualisation enabled me to acknowledge the research design and programme's temporal and spatial dimensions within participants' life experiences elicited across their

lifespan. The study is thus capturing the experience of participants for the duration of the programme, but eliciting responses from larger portions of participants' life. Also, the spatial dimension is key for understanding the nature of spaces in the prison and relational aspects that emerge through the creative encounter among artists and participants at the prison site.

The section commences with contextualising the arts and spoken word poetry in prison within the Macedonian poetry slam scene. The programme development as an artographic design for the Macedonian prison is introduced through the presentation of the lessons from the initial piloting stages at the World Poetry Slam Championship in France; as well as within the Macedonian Centre for Social Initiatives "Hope". In addition, the account includes the process of obtaining an official approval from the Macedonian Ministry of Justice with key lessons resulting from informal conversations with Macedonian criminologists.

Then, the artographic design is discussed in its three stages. The first, entering the field, overviews the pilot lessons from the research site of the prison. Here, I introduce the artist collaborators, prison staff and participants. The second stage, being in the field, summarises the programme, while the third stage briefly reflects on the process of leaving the field. Finally, the chapter elaborates the multi-method data collection methods, data corpus, and sampling rationale. To facilitate this conceptualisation of the research design of the programme, in figure 5.2, I represented the temporal dimension on the horizontal axis showing the programme's three fieldwork stages. The arts-based data collection methods, tools and evaluation strategies are spread around both the horizontal as well as the vertical axes to reflect that elicited experiences arose within the prison spaces.

## 5.1 Initial Piloting: Developing the Programme for the Macedonian Context

The programme design follows the lessons from spoken word poetry across settings, particularly in UK prisons, and draws on literature that blends performed poetry with hip hop culture (Hill & Ladson-Billings, 2009; Low, 2011). This follows after the reviewed literatures of the arts in prison as well as spoken word poetry's role in supporting pro-

social and literate identities for young people. In chapter 2, the proportion of the arts in prison literatures reviewed was Anglophone, and I also identified the practice of spoken word in prison largely undocumented in the literatures apart from emergent studies of spoken word in UK prisons. As a result, I had the challenging task of translating the relevance as well as judiciously evaluating the shortcomings of UK-centred spoken word in prison practice, as well as the influence of a US-centred poetry slam in Macedonia.

To address the artistic, aesthetic as well as socio-cultural relevance of the lessons learnt from the UK and US context, for the present programme I made two strategic decisions informed by my extensive practice and experience as a poet and poet educator in Macedonia. First, I harnessed my insider perspective on the poetry slam and poetry scene as a poet, poet critic and promoter as well as early career academic. For example, I started an online magazine platform through which I was able to interview both leading Macedonian poets, hip hop artists, as well as translated interviews with leading UK spoken word educators like Hollie McNish (Nikolova, 2014). The poetry platform enabled me to discuss the direction of the Macedonian poetry slam scene with the two main slam organisers in Macedonia, poets Elena Prendzova, and Igor Trpcheski. As a result, these poets joined the programme delivery as leading Macedonian poetry slam practitioners.[32]

Second, I decided to conduct a pilot study designed to extend understanding of transnational spoken word poets' views of their arts practice in performance and in education at the World Poetry Slam Championship; and further trialled aspects of the programme and research tools directly with Macedonian social workers.[33] Finally, aware of the potential homogenising influence of US poetry slam in Macedonian slam scene, I wanted to observe trends across poet's practices from different countries. This helped me consider how I may have missed features of Macedonian scene being embedded in it.

*5.1.1 Poets' Artistic and Educational Practices: World Poetry Slam Championship in France*

Piloting at the World Poetry Slam Championship was a two-week long visit in Paris, with a range of artistic activities centred on the world slam competition with poets from 24

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[32] See 5.2.3.1
[33] See 5.1

participating countries. To expand my understanding of contemporary poets' practices across geographic region as well as the poetry slam organiser's embodied vision of the slam competition, I immersed myself in the full programme as a participating poet. The account draws from field notes based on informal conversations with poets, interviews[34], as well as participatory observations.

**Table 5.1 World Slam Lessons: Geographic Variability of Slam**

| Participant Observations | Key Lessons for Slam Comunity and Terminology |
|---|---|
| Poetry slam master's approach and organisation of the slam festival | -democratic competition and a collective sport (e.g. judges and poets hug on stage)<br>-audience call and response of "the best poet, never wins"<br>-"the poet is representative of the community" (Slam Master)<br>-"a horizontal relationship between the poet and the audience" (Slam Master) |
| Informal conversations with performing poets regarding:<br>-contested terminology<br>-the "stage" versus "page" poetry debate<br>-the transnational politics and pragmatics of slam | -"slam poet" is not a popular term and is of less value than "spoken word poet" because slam is the competition format<br>-"performance poet" is generally accepted as interchangeable with "spoken word poet" in practice[35]<br>-the medium of performance and the immediate response is central<br>-culture-diverse values in poetry slam (e.g. poets from Western countries like England, Ireland, Germany, appreciate irony, humour, social satire as opposed to poets from Africa (Congo, Gabon, Madagascar) whose poetry is a call to solidarity, equality, democracy in the vein of performance poetry. The conflicting space arises when humour becomes a gimmick for light entertainment in slam as opposed to the authentic social resistance.<br>-culture-diverse values towards performing poetry as a career or social resistance<br>-poet practitioners should nurture their teaching approach<br>-performativity distinguishes slam/spoken word from performance poetry (Graebner, 2007); However, performative poetry slam and spoken word spaces are part of the today's dramaturgical society which blurs the boundaries of performance and performative maintaining a desired authenticity (Denzin, 2001). |

This part of the pilot enabled me consider the geographic variability of poetry slam – how it was implicated in poets' aesthetic, embodied and discussed values. As a result, this part of the pilot enabled me to appreciate the richness of cultural and contextual references in

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[34] While I conducted 10 in-depth interviews with poets from 10 different countries, I directly discuss findings from the analysis of one interview, whereas immersion and familiarity with the rest of interview data supported the synthesis of my field notes.

[35] See 2.2.2 for discussion of terminology in spoken word poetry

slam practices form different regions, in addition to the US poetry slam model, used as the dominant influence in Macedonian and the present study. For the programme development this meant greater consideration of two key aspects. First, I avoided inclusion of what I felt was non-performative poetry in Macedonian context – poetry that felt was oriented towards spectacle or entertainment. Second, I included poetry and rap examples which were culturally rich – ones I felt were respectful of the legacy of poetry slam and hip-hop culture in the US, but achieved a Macedonian culturally sensitive and distinctive aesthetics.

To establish poets' views of their artistic practices I relied on participant observation as a performing poet, as well as individual interviews with selected poets based on my perception poet's having distinctive voice as well as a range of geographical regions[36]. Given that Macedonian slam was largely shaped by US influence, and the US poet Porsha was the only one from educationally engaged poets available to interview, I focused on what her artistic practice; as well as on what she valued in the US slam-coaching workshop. I found Porsha's performance very sustained, dense and distilled. Her poems use incisive poetic imagery and were well delivered. Her performances felt like performed 'truths' – as if she's pouring her emotions and sense of identity on stage. She was the audience's favourite and convincingly qualified in the finals. Porsha's personal poetic stories were to me intriguing to probe in the individual interview with her, and explore how she viewed her artistic and educator roles.

With regards to trialling analysis approaches, the individual interview with Porsha concerning here artistic, education practice and life experience, afforded the trial of interpretative phenomenological analysis. The analysis of Porsha's interview, enabled me to see that phenomenological approach may not be best suited to analyse the narratives of young offenders because I anticipated they would be less dense in detail.

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[36] The pilot themes and lessons based on field notes and interview with Porsha are summarised in Table 5.1

**Table 5.2 World Slam Lessons: Poets' Spoken Word Poetry and Education Practices**

| Piloting: June 1-7th, 2015, Paris, France<br>World Poetry Slam Cup (participating, observing and exploring the poetry festival) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Semi-structured Interviews** | **Key Lessons for Spoken Word Poetry Practice** | |
| Poets' perception of performance in poetry slams/spoken word events | -valuing different cultural understanding and personal stories<br>-the privilege of sharing and identification with people (audiences/poets)<br>-poets are in an empowered agentic position<br>-poetry slam is life changing | -performance as being human<br>-performance is spiritual-like and a subjective truth<br>-slam as ritual, compassion, unity, equality, empathy and sharing experiences |
| Identity development and personal stories in poems | -diverse cross-cultural perception of slam/spoken word as redefining identity through "being real" in the spirit of "performance poetry"(Graebner, 2007) as opposed to "parodic performativity" (Frost, 2010, p. v).<br>-healing narratives and cultural identification | -the collective memory and cultural story as my-story<br>-exploring and expressing the political in the collective and personal<br>-repositioning the personal in relation to the collective<br>-therapeutic-like power of poems |
| Poets' perception of performance | -Performance peaks with the mastery of presence/being in the poem ("the space in which you wrote")<br>-truthful rendition of intense emotions | -forgetting the external distractions |
| Poetry slam (SWP) coaching/workshop facilitation | -modelling poems with specific structures and diverse genres and creating a sense of community<br>-reframing cultural/historical values as "cool" through popular culture<br>-encouraging abstract thinking through symbols (visuals) and indirect elicitation of the personal | -mutual delineating rules and limits of the learning space<br>-facilitator awareness for the need of a third person expertise to address unfamiliar situations<br>-honest and constructive feedback<br>-telling the subjective truth through "poetic lies" |
| Researcher's interviewing skills | -reassurance of honesty/trust-building<br>-unplanned probing where appropriate<br>-emotional readiness to respond to sensitive topics | -establish and maintain a conversational tone/spontaneous reaction without disruption or judgement |
| Applying Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis | Superordinate themes:<br>-Slam as intercultural space<br>-Spoken word poetry performance as "Degree-zero here and nowness" (Collins, 1991, p. 58; Whitley, 2014, p. 71)<br>-Spirituality and narrative of witness<br>Poetry slam-driven facilitation (practice-driven pedagogy) | -IPA would be incompatible with the proposed study which anticipates challenge in obtaining rich and thick data suitable for IPA.<br>-Reserved spontaneity/"my world: forcing participants in it or entering theirs" (Smith and Osborn, 2007, p.62). |

Hence, I trialled thematic and established narrative identity analysis approach on the poem by the US poet.[37] McAdams found that the two superordinate themes marking narrative identity are agency and communion, used for inductive analysis.[38] The thematic analysis of the poem "Father's American Dream" by the American poet Porsha, part of the pilot in France, revealed the narrative identity themes of agency (empowerment) and communion (care).[39] For example, Porsha sets out to live her father's dream, rejecting the American dream ideal.

The creative process also entails embodying life experiences in ritualistic performing of identity in a specific context and to a specific audience. For example, in the pilot interviews from the World Poetry Slam Championship, Porsha's poem "American Dream" she recreated a memory based on the experience of witnessing her father's deportation from the USA to Nigeria. This experience is retold in the form of a poem through the lens of the socio-cultural discourse of the "American dream" which had a detrimental effect to her family. I noted that the voice of the narrator in the poem has a more empowered role than the poet in actual life. For example, the poetry narrator is strongly shunning the "American dream" and embracing the dreams of the father without concern for social pressure. However, in the interview, Porsha revealed that the pain and struggle associated with maintaining the relationship with her father is difficult which she tries to reflect on, and develop agency through her voice in the poem.

The open-ended creative process, is supported by Weinstein's observation that is problematic to identify the poem directly with the poet's autobiographical identity (Weinstein & West, 2012). The distinction should be made between the autobiographical and actual identity, and what the poem performer: the "what if" or desired identity. The bridge between the two is the process of writing, rehearsing and performing as well as

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[37] I also trialled narrative identity analysis of young offenders' life stories collected during the pilot in the prison included in 5.2.3 For narrative identity theme descriptors, see Appendix B

[38] A narrative evaluation study concerning a music programme for men in an English prison applies thematic analysis both to the interviews with the participants and to their song lyrics seeking to locate similarities (Maruna and Cursley, 2015). I was prompted by this to trial the thematic analysis of poetry to gauge the potential of narrative identity analysis to both individual life story interviews as well as the poems.

[39] In the case of empowerment, the person voices a transformative experience associated to an event or usually an influential figure in their lives, which may be an educator or a spiritual guide as well as a dedication to faith. The themes of communion usually manifest as life events or episodes surrounding love and friendship, establishing a dialogue, helping/caring and the expression of unity/togetherness.

audience interaction, which in turn enable identity development, voice, empowerment, awareness (Camangian, 2008; Fisher, 2005; Herndon & Weiss, 2001).

**Table 5.3 Thematic Analysis Trial of Narrative Identity Coding Constructs**

| Themes based on Narrative Identity Coding Constructs (McAdams, 2001; McAdams & McLean, 2013a). | Sub-themes based on Narrative Identity sub-constructs | Illustrative Poem Excerpts |
|---|---|---|
| **Agency** | Empowerment (rejecting the "undesired self") | "I refuse to become another high-school dropout, success cop out, high on drugs and in love with a thug, or a teen mother".<br><br>"I graduated [...] I picked up the pieces of a broken dream that seemed to demean my father's worth". |
| | Status/Identification | "The bills picked up so my mother picked up two jobs and she's been working them ever since/she was convinced that we will make it". |
| **Communion** | Family love and care | "[My father] didn't say to hell with his family and walk out on my mother [...] he bought us the house we lived in so I knew that he loved her [...]".<br><br>"My Daddy got shipped back to Nigeria". |
| | Unity/togetherness | "Imagine my little brother, three and a half, who didn't have a clue but was afraid to go to bed because he thought his mother would be gone" |

The maintenance of this identity in the making depends on other socio-cultural factors. It also should reflect the complex and nuanced exploration as well as attempt at representation in the context of young people's poetry practices.

Creating poems can be an event of creating, reminiscing or discovering self-defining memories based on our own pool of meaningful memories or ones that become meaningful in the creative process. These can be culturally or socially relevant memories that impact our own life stories. Self-defining memories become the nuclear episodes (McAdams, 2001a) which drive the situated story which helps us develop the "self" (McLean et al., 2007a; Singer & Blagov, 2001). This informed my thinking of the programme's elicitation of autobiographical memories in individual interviews to be grounded in eliciting an arts-based experience of reminiscing on life events. I saw that poetry may engage life experience through a one-step removed process – that is, without focusing on narrative self-development per se. Rather, through exploring the experience and responses elicited through creative poetic processes, which may have implications for how young offenders' see themselves in a given context.

To further support my analysis orientation towards the arts-based approach, I decided to trial narrative identity analysis further with some of the young offenders' own individual life story data discussed further in this chapter.[40] Seeing the US cultural references to the 'American Dream' in Porsha's poem, and her stress on poetry as a way of connecting cross-culturally, I wondered what this cultural expression may look like for the programme participants. Mainly, given that the Macedonian poetry slam scene has not yet developed into a sound spoken word poetry practice, I carefully evaluated my decision to signpost spoken word poetry to male young offenders through Macedonian hip hop culture. I was aware of the proliferation of toxic masculinities[41] within mainstream hip hope culture, and the male domination within the US poetry slam and spoken word (Olson, 2007).

As a result, for the programme I recognised that Macedonian mainstream rap, apart from being a male dominated culture, often promoted sexism[42]. Also, some alternative rap examples, could easily be viewed as caught up within narratives of crime and victimhood. I focused on rap artists whose work portrayed masculinity within the social critique of

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[40] See 5.3.3.3

[41] The term 'toxic masculinity' highlights a particular specific set of norms, expectations and practices to do with masculinity which are toxic and unhealthy […] constraining, dangerous […] The term thus does not mean that there is something fundamentally wrong about being male (Flood, 2018).

[42] Earlier songs and song videos by Toni Zen, D.N.K.

disadvantaged communities including challenging stereotypes of the exclusion of young people as well as school leavers. For this, negotiated with participants, I chose artist performances who offered alternatives to toxic masculinity and sexual objectification of women. This was then troubled through strategic storytelling and arts-based tools, as well as eliciting reflections across the shared poetry and rap[43].

To inform the programme's workshop facilitation, I specifically wanted to learn what poets valued in their educational practice. Porsha had been mentoring youth teams for the national slams for 4 years. She made me aware that the rules of conduct in the learning environment and levels of creative experimentation should not be confused with espousing inappropriate behaviour. In the pilot interview regarding Porsha's slam-coaching practice, a young boy in her spoken word poetry workshop wrote a praising poem about rap, which was about praising marihuana and its effects. The issues she found with his poem were his real-life and poetic dishonesty about the theme of the poem.

In this regard, the pilot signposted pedagogical issues in working on the borders of the personal. This is one example where a participant in the community violated the agreed learning space expectations that spoken word poetry is about being honest, and sharing the subjective truth. Had he stood behind his theme and poetic eulogy of marihuana, he would've not broken the poetic contract with the community. Porsha felt that there was a break in the communication between them as she was not the person to establish rapport or didn't feel equipped to counsel the boy on this matter as well as his illegal use of marihuana. Hence, she invited a suitable third party to speak with the youth. This example illustrates the importance to negotiate the nature of the learning space with participants at the start and throughout. Also, the ability of the researcher to recognize the need for support from trained staff for a situation outside the scope of researcher's expertise and capacity.

A pilot lesson for the programme pedagogy is to provide a platform for exploring relevant themes and experiences in a creative and artistic manner, as opposed to targeting deeply triggering themes. To safeguard participants' wellbeing, the pilot showed that such

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[43] See 6.2.3  and 7.2.3

themes should be best directed for discussion and processing during therapy with prison psychologists as gatekeepers. Hence, this reinforced my view that making sense of experiences through art to trigger a new perspective in a performance piece is not "to reproduce the personal experiences, events or narratives […] [but] rewrite those experiences" (Bowman & Bowman, 2002, p. 162). Porsha stressed that rewriting experience in poetry was a subjective event.

Specifically, as an organic part of the creative process, Porsha encouraged her mentees to write truthfully *'even if that meant walking to the yellow door'.* Writing truthfully from one's subjective point of view and emotional world was key regardless whether this is based on lived experience, vicarious or imaginary response. The value that she found in eliciting students' personal experience indicates that her poetic practice guided pedagogic orientation that values the lives and voices of her mentees as central to the practice. This reaffirmed my decision to position the programme's artistic practice as well as participants' elicited poetry responses as 'artistic' in their own right.[44] While not at the forefront of the piloting, later through the study, I was able to connect these debates surrounding artfulness of slam and spoken word and its potential within the arts-based research practices.

*5.1.2 Social Workers' Workshop Lessons: Macedonian Centre for Social Initiatives*

I the pilot aspect with 4 social workers at the Centre for Social Initiatives "Hope" in North Macedonia, I trialled suitability of workshop format with embedded arts-based tools in the work with vulnerable and marginalised young people in Macedonia. I had run arts-based workshops in the centre with an ethnically mixed group of Romani and Albanian children between the ages of 10-18. Hence, I was familiar with the centre's extensive work with ethnically marginalised and culturally disadvantaged children predominantly from the largest Roma population in the Macedonian capital. I chose the centre for the pilot, given that the reviews of the prison system in Macedonia showed a disproportionate imprisonment of young men from the Roma community.

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[44] Overviewed in literature review as embracing a notion of 'literariness' which recognises the variation in creative types that arise in practice encompassing arts cultures beyond canonical view of literariness.

**Table 5.4 Workshop Overview: Trialling Arts-Based Methods and Facilitation Approaches**

| Workshop activity | Description of aim | Trialling focus | Implemented Lessons |
|---|---|---|---|
| Aims and introductions | Group sharing of personal beliefs with symbols | -suitability of for trust building | -adopted accessible drama-based trust activity and discussion |
| Activity 1: Self-portrait (after Bagnolli) | Draw a portrait of yourself including important people/objects for you | -accessibility of instructions -the challenges of self-portrait task | -revised with feedback from prison staff and participants -changed to mask-making (in study mask painting was favoured) |
| Activity 2: Life Timeline (after Bagnolli) | Draw a timeline of the most important events in your life, the past, present and future expectations | -accessibility of the concept of timeline | -adapted the river journey with visual metaphors of memories orally elicited with the help of Dixit cards |
| Activity 3: Dixit cards self-identity reflection task (researcher selected visual stimuli) | Personal reflection (e.g. pick a card that you relate to the most/ a card that reminds you of you/ a card that has any connection to you) | -clarity -working style (pairs or groups) -generativity of imagery | -expanded variants of visual elicitation with Magritte's paintings -clarified poetic imagery with Youth Speaks' guide[45] |
| Activity 4: Use of Mask for Character Building (after Geese Theatre professional development course) | Developing a poetic/dramatic personal (e.g. 1) participant developed, acted by facilitator 2) facilitator-modelled 3) group developed, participant acted) | Testing three modes of mask use to build a character | -mask wasn't used, as this was underdeveloped -built in activities of mime, emotional sculpts, group role-play modelled by educators, then, play by participants. |
| Activity 5: Short surreal film "Lunch" | The task is to elicit the film's 1) literal/chronological description 2) interpretation 3) explore personal choices from the characters perspectives | content suitability and its cultural relevance | -changed to short videos and film scene of spoken word on education, prison, racial injustice (e.g. Suli Breaks; Saul Williams) -task was changed to participants' acting as 'poetry slam' judges for the poetry videos watched. |

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[45] In addition to relying on the Youth Speaks Guide activity for poetry imagery, I took part in music and spoken word workshops in two prisons in England which together with conversations with arts practitioners in prison informed the programme design and facilitation approaches with regards to the use of surreal compositional prompts as low risk exercises.

Particularly I elicited relevant responses form my study based on the expertise and experience of social workers with ethnic minority children who were also coming from difficult family backgrounds and at risk of leaving school. Table 5.4 summarises the trialled workshops and how it informed the programme design.

The key lessons that enabled to refine the programme and data collection process were the prioritisation of simple, accessible and well-developed arts-based actives. In addition, meetings of planning and debriefing with educators and artists before and after workshops was key for sharing responsibilities based on our strengths and expertise. Finally, I also decided to use the river journey tool with visual cards as well as focus the programme content centrally on examples of spoken word poetry, for which I contextualised spoken word and its US influence within the oral traditions of poetry in Africa and the African American experience in hip hop culture through Macedonian rap as well as guided discussions.

## 5.2 PERforming an Artographic Research Design

To illustrate the overlaps across the artographic research design and the programme development, as well as the arts-based data collection built into the creative practice, I created two figures. Figure 5.2 signposts the fieldwork, both research and programme implementation over time, on the horizontal axis. The depth of experience and artistic responses elicited through the programme practice and arts-based data collection is represented on the vertical axis to capture the spatial dimension of the programme in the prison site[46].

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[46] The illustration of the programme horizontally to refer to it over time, and vertically to refer to the nature of relations and experiences in space, was a pragmatic one. I recognise that my thought was influenced by linguistic notions of language's paradigmatic (horizontal) and vertical (syntagmatic) functions, and that these translate well to Bernstein's conception of pedagogy. As these are, to some extent, structuralist influences, I did not set out to explore them further within the artographic design, rather, I see the programme's arising in time and space as a living thing affecting experiences that are layered and relational, much in the vein of A/R/Tographic theory influenced by French philosophy, like Derrida and Deleuze and Guattari (Springay and Irwin, 2007). But, my artographic methodology was not framed directly with the A/R/Tographic theoretical stream as explained in Chapter 4, it was shaped by my poetic practices and their manifestations in my teaching engagements.
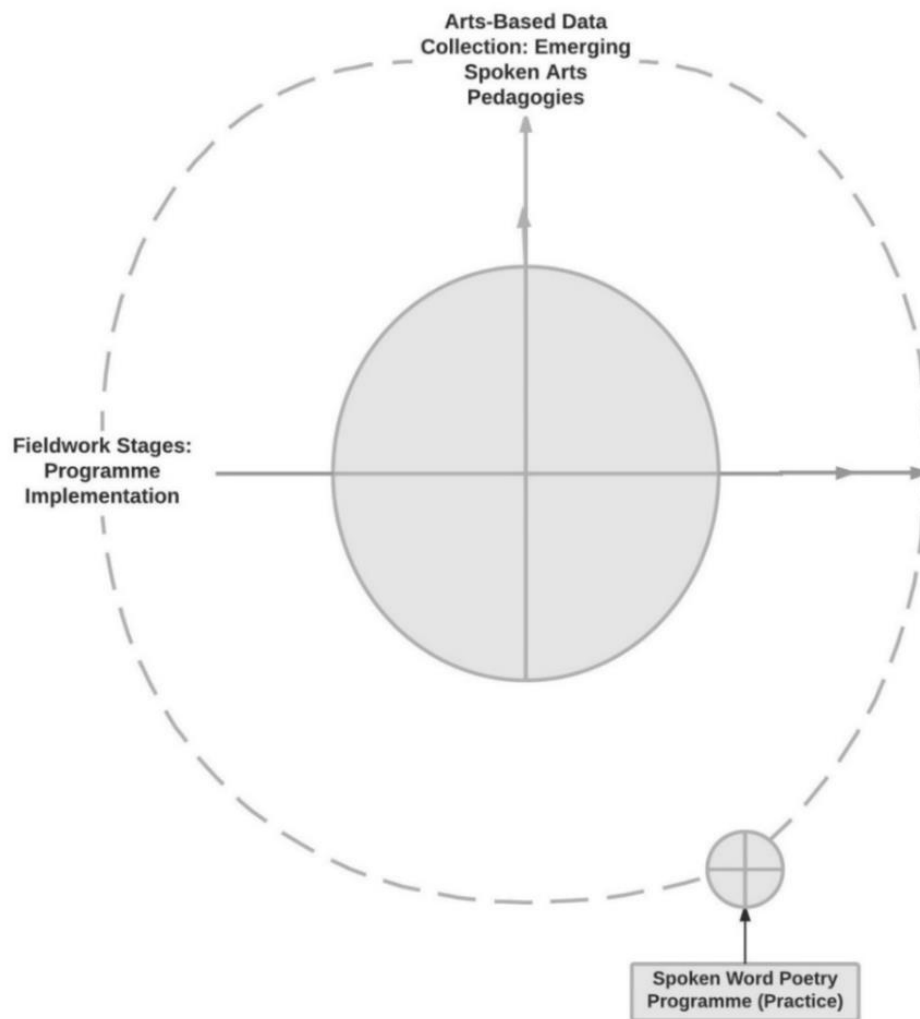
**Figure 5.2 Spoken Word Poetry Programme and Research Processes: Temporal, Spatial and Relational Dimensions**

Having represented the research design and programme practice's two dimensions of time and space, I then illustrated the actual time frame and activities undertaken during fieldwork in Figure 5.3.

The first stage of the fieldwork consisted of entering the field through piloting at the actual research site of the Macedonian prison. Piloting and post-pilot planning, focused on revising and refining the workshop content, craft and rehearsals collaboratively with the artists, prison staff and young offenders. The planning entailed in-person and online meetings which enabled me to screen and select suitable workshop facilitators.
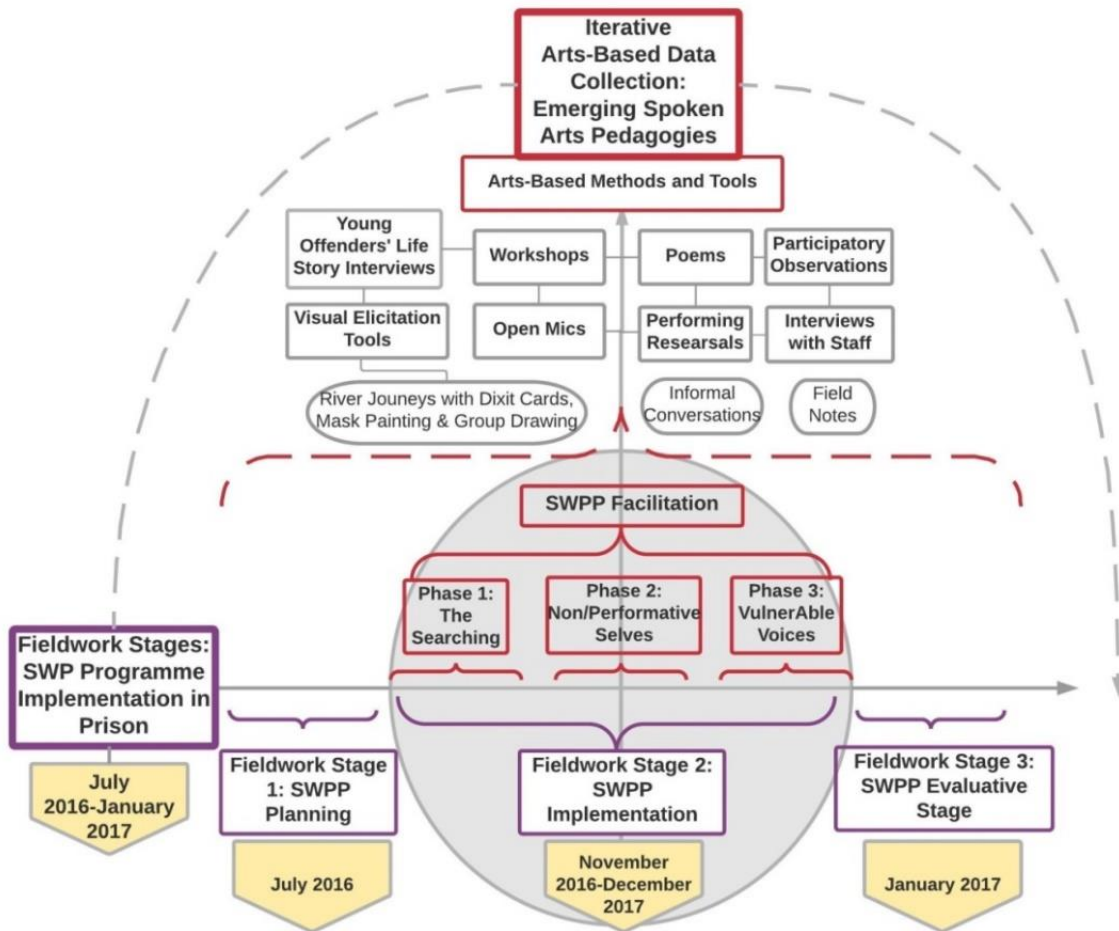
**Figure 5.3 Research Design with Spoken Word Poetry Programme Implementation**

The second stage of fieldwork, being in the field, involved the implementation of the three-stage programme. Each of the three stages included the facilitation of three three-hour-long workshops and two one-hour-long rehearsals followed by a performance event. The three-stages of the programme were crucial in providing emergent data for informed-decision making in the sampling of data for two individual cases.

The third stage aimed to add more layer to the collected data overt time, and enhance ethical responsibility, embodying what Leibling calls "a kind of 'theology of the person' – best prison research" is characterized by a humaneness and respect to personhood (2014, p. 484). It focused on a follow up of managing participants' expectations

realistically. The potential implications of the programme included personal, institutional and potentially socio-cultural gains, so this stage also negotiated possible directions for poetry and practice dissemination with participants.

### 5.2.1 Fieldwork Preamble: Obtaining Access

The process of gaining approval and access to conduct the present study in a Macedonian young offender institution was lengthy. I engaged in informal conversations with Macedonian criminologists, and submitted a formal application addressed to the Directorate for Execution of Sanctions (DES), at the Macedonian Ministry of Justice. The governor of the DES is responsible for the decision-making process of externally proposed projects and overseeing internal prison activities for North Macedonia.

For the purpose of obtaining relevant information concerning the application process, during a pilot stage based in Macedonia, I liaised with a criminologist at the Macedonian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights and an assistant professor at the Department of Criminal Law and Criminology, at the state Faculty of Law in the Macedonian capital. I contacted these two professionals, because the former is involved in the implementation of a current educational project in two Macedonian young offender's institutions, while the latter has extensive experience in Macedonian prison research.  In the paragraphs below, I provide a summary of the key lessons from the informal conversations and the process of obtaining access.

Obtaining prison research approval in Macedonia has been a challenging endeavour according to the associate professor whose PhD research focused on the effects of imprisonment on recidivism in an adult prison in North Macedonia. During our informal conversation, the professor informed me that the faculty's partnership with the DES, at the Ministry of Justice, was a lengthy process with the Law students' prison visits taking months of planning and correspondence to come to fruition.[47] The Helsinki committee criminologist was instrumental in learning about the rare example of informal role-play devised by young offenders, which indicated a gap between official reports and real-

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[47] In-person conversation, July 3rd, 2015. Note I have not named the professor to protect her privacy.

world practice. I took this as encouraging that the prison would potentially be interested to collaborate with me and the artist team for the present study.

Thus, I decided to submit the application for access at the Ministry much in advance after securing the guidance and feedback of my PhD mid-progress examiner Dr Caroline Lanskey, who is a Lecturer at the Institute of Criminology, at the University of Cambridge. Dr Lanskey's guidance yielded formative feedback, which enabled me to enhance the consideration of the legal and ethical frames as well as the power dynamics associated with prison research approval. In the case of Macedonia, it became clear that the Governor of the DES was the main decision-maker in granting the approval. While an in-person meeting with the governor or her assistant was not possible to arrange, I was advised to submit a detailed proposal for consideration.

Hence, I submitted the following paperwork at the DES:

- Outline of programme activities, research aims, and potential benefits with a formal application requesting approval for the researcher, educator and artist team to establish partnership with the young offender's institution and the resocialisation staff in the period September, 2015-September, 2016[48]
- a support letter from the supervisor of the present study, Professor Pam Burnard, on my behalf as the doctoral student researcher
- a confirmation letter of my status as a full-time student at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge.

In response to the application, the researcher received a letter of confirmation for approval to conduct the study and programme in collaboration with prison staff at the Macedonian prison, by the governor of DES, granting access for the implementation of the proposed programme.[49]

This section discussed briefly the process of acquiring approval from the DES to carry out the present study in a Macedonian young offender's institution. The process revealed that approval to prison research may be subject to line of informal inquiry with the key researchers and project administrators in the field as well as framing the project as non-threatening to the reputation of the institution. It also made me aware that players in the

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[48] In subsequent correspondence with the Ministry official that was a point of contact after the approval of the study, the time frame was re-negotiated.
[49] See Appendix C

relevant field, both the institutions, the policy-makers, academia, the practitioners in the NGO sector come with different agendas not only in the professional, but also in the political sense. This was not surprising given unstable political climate in Macedonia during 2016-2018.[50] As a result, I made it imperative to ensure the community I developed with collaborators for the present study was grounded in a trustworthy work ethic.

### 5.2.1.1 Selecting Artographic Collaborators: Poets, Artists, Educators

Finding a long-term collaborator for the full programme delivery was challenging given the uncertainties regarding time of implementation and artists' commitments. Moreover, the politics of expanding this partnership with the resocialisation staff involved presenting and negotiating these diverse and intertwined roles of poet, educator, and researcher. I anticipated the artographic inquiry, seeking mutual learning towards forming and re-forming our own practices, would require strong collaborative effort as we come in contact with potential institutional differences or insider-outsider role barriers. With this in mind, from the outset of the programme planning, I realized that effective workshop facilitation would require more than one facilitator as well as establishing a respectful and horizontal collaboration with the prison staff (Dowden & Andrews, 2004). Arts interventions and projects in prisons (Hurry, Lawrence, Wilson, & Plant, 2014b) as well as the Geese Theatre work (Baim, Brookes, & Mountford, 2002; Bergman & Hawish, 1996b) and training, enhanced my decision to seek two co-facilitators for the programme workshops to develop a team that has a range of experience in performing arts and teaching.

Seeking a performing poet, I soon realized that the workshop facilitation practice is not very well developed in Macedonia, apart from the academic creative writing workshops taught by academic professors or writers. Because of the popularized nature of spoken word poetry as inclusive, oral and rap-informed, I was not looking for a creative writing teacher, but a performing artist. Initially I was in conversation with a local and male local

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[50] Country wide protests followed the publicly revealed political wire-tapping scandal which precipitated the formation of a technical government with new government elected after the completion of the fieldwork. As a result, I made a decision not to implicate the study while ongoing in any form of media coverage that may promote any form of political agenda.

hip hop artist collaborator which I thought would be a good gender balance, but the artist couldn't commit due to work commitments. Following further reflection after the pilot, I decided to focus on the poets within the Macedonian national poetry slam scene, as I there was an opportunity to coordinate the schedule with the leading spoken word poet and slam organiser Elena Prendzova, who was able to commit to the programme and commute to the prison.

In addition, given my teaching and artistic background facilitating both creative writing and spoken word poetry workshops, both in academic and non-academic contexts, I decided that one of the collaborators should be a principally a teacher, as a distinct background from mine. This was well supported by the evidence that teacher-artist partnerships can create improvisatory teaching and learning spaces conducive to creativity (Burnard, 2011). Apart from the rationale of teacher-artists' pedagogic partnerships as teaching for creativity, I approached a colleague from my undergraduate teaching degree, Nikola Gelincheski, who was also a drama educator because we both have already had established mutual trust from working together within the university drama club. While Nikola's contribution during the piloting phases was constructive in community development and programme refinement, due to his teaching commitments, he was not able to adapt to the programme. Following this, I was able to get in contact with a local teacher, also a peer from undergraduate studies, Ivana Leveska, who became an essential member of the core team of artographers.

In terms of selecting guest artists, I was able to collaborate with poets from the slam scene. In addition, having previously reviewed the latest album by the rap group "Divizija", I was prompted by their social themes and our good relationship to approach one of the rap artists, Kinder, who joined me for the piloting workshop in the prison. After my discussion with each of the artists, I realized that most of them were keen to perform or join a workshop on a one-off basis. The group of artists from "Divizija" were deeply committed to the values of the programme and in addition to their role as guest artists, they were also formative in establishing collaboration with several other well established hip hop artists from the Macedonian alternative rap scene. Building on this rationale for building an artographic community, I now turn to present the programme development process.

## 5.2.3 Entering the Field: Piloting at the Prison Site for a Shared Community of Practice

The stage of entering the field, illustrated in Figure 5.4, aimed to cultivate a community of practice among the key stakeholders (Wenger, 1998), and trial aspects of the proposed programme practices and data collection methods inside prison.
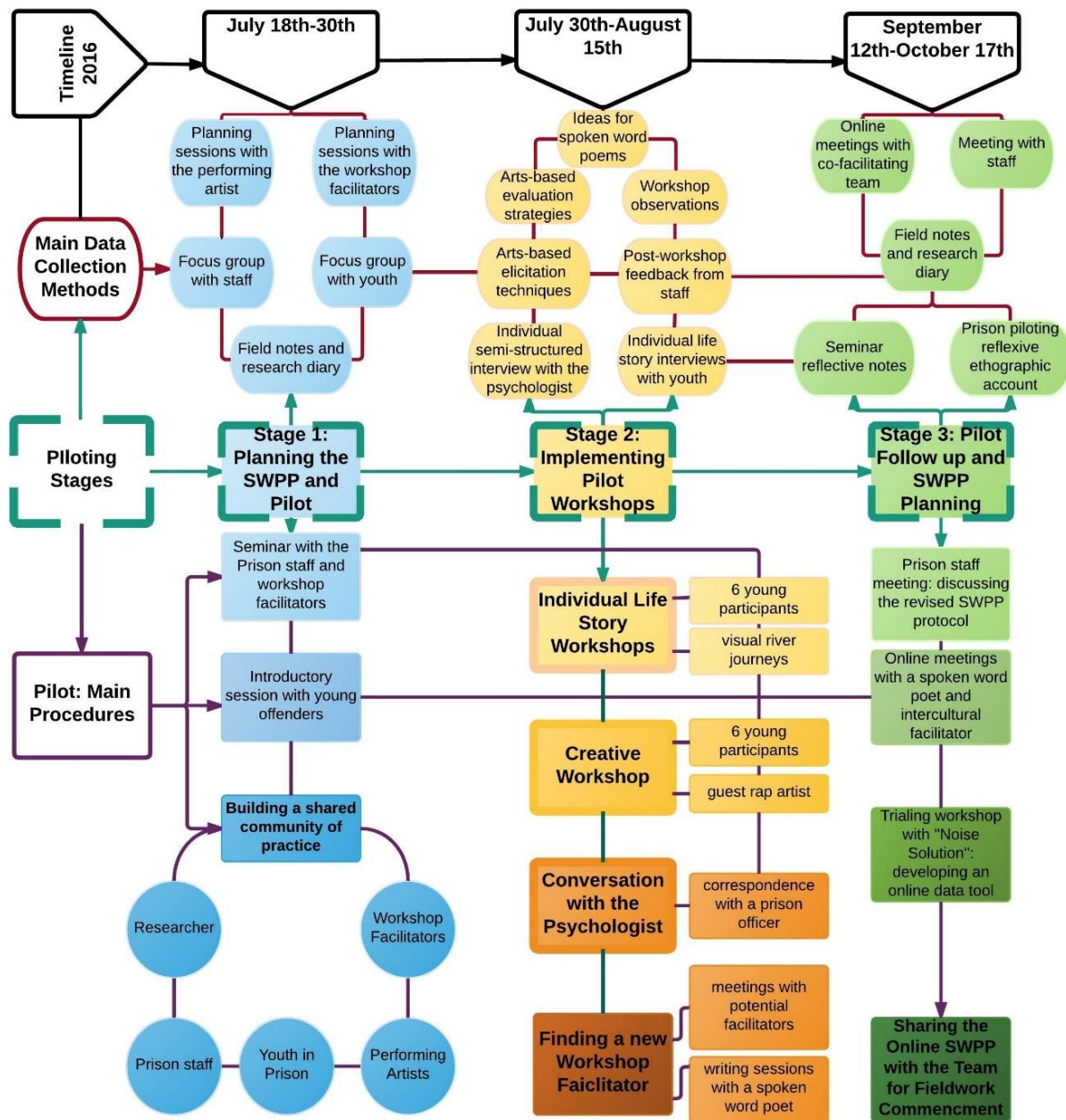
**Figure 5.4 Entering the Field: Building a Shared Community of Practice in Prison**

This involved the period of planning and organising a seminar with the prison staff and artists educator mid-July, 2018, followed by two prison visits that enabled me to introduce the programme and its research component in a thorough and informed manner, as well as invite participants' active role in the programme development. Following the piloting, in early autumn I returned to Cambridge and had opportunity to consolidate and informally trial parts of the piloting lessons. I also kept in touch with the core educators online, and networked with artists in Macedonia to finalise the programme of guest artists who visited on a one-off basis. I here present piloting lessons from building a shared community of practice with selected artists educators, the prison staff, and six young offenders all of whom took part in the programme and study. First, the sections below describe the decision-making process in establishing the core team of local teacher and a spoken word educator that facilitated the programme workshops.

Second, the pilot with prison staff as well as the individual conversation with one of the psychologists, showed that staff felt unmotivated and highly dissatisfied with their jobs. In spite of this, they contributed insightful feedback during the pilot, and offered their support during the programme deliver. Third, I discuss how the programme and data collection methods were refined with the direct input from participants.

### 5.2.3.1 Reflections on Collaborating with Artographers

The core collaborators for the programme were the local teacher Ivana, and the spoken word poet Elena. I worked closely with the local teacher for all aspects of the programme both the arts practice, pedagogy and research. Hence, we spent extensive time on coordinating shared responsibility across workshop tasks, and I briefed her on the research component of the programme. Ivana was adept at time keeping and efficient completion of tasks aligned with the required flexible and sensitive pedagogies (Rendón & Nepo, 2014). Spoken word poet Elena brought in a feminist lens in artistic practice, and technical expertise in both performance and teaching approaches. Reflecting on our past collaboration and discussion of the roles of the teacher and artist informed my awareness

for a structured approach to the programme facilitation, which was complemented by other artists' improvisatory approach to teaching.[51]

Collaborating with both Elena and Igor, who had established themselves as the slam master organisers for the Macedonian national slam since 2011, meant that the programme was grounded within the Macedonian poetry slam scene. The spoken word poetry aesthetic Elena brought was firmly rooted within the US influence of 3-minute timing and incisive social critique, with an authentic Macedonian cultural take. Igor's performance aesthetic was a mix of drama-based and page poetry influences, which he cultivated into a distinctive spoken word sound. Both Elena and Igor have had extensive background in arts workshop facilitation. Elena had also taken the lead to organise poetry slams in Macedonian secondary schools. Also, the three of us are the only Macedonian poets who have performed at the European Poetry Slam Championship.

Considering the gendered perception of poetry as lacking in masculinity (Greig & Hughes, 2009) on the one hand, and rap as hyper-masculine on the other (Krims, 2000), the design of the programme aimed to problematise this binary. To this end, harnessed the vulnerability of the "reality rap" which concentrates on social struggles, and humanising relationships, like for example the rap by the Macedonian rap group "Divizija" as well as the rap artists from Kup De Gras. For example, one of the songs on the album "Second Chance" released in 2014, the band has a song titled "Curse and Talent" concerning the undervalued perception of the arts as opposed to the appeal of material wealth. In this song, Kinder's verse talk about the internal motivation for the creative process in rap unravelling through images from childhood memories. His line "I asked Aphrodite about the beauty in our music" is a reference to the Greek goddess of beauty to assess the aesthetics of their art. It is also a result of our conversations about aesthetics and the intersections of poetry and rap lyrics.

In terms of rap and the diversity of genre, I collaborated with members from the rap band "Shutka Roma Rap" based in Macedonia, known for their unique sound mixing Balkan Roma music and local hip-hop. The band modelled a life performance during the one of

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[51] See Table 5.6

the rehearsals, which was followed by an open mic where participants presented their own poems. In addition to involving rap artists to model performances as an entry into some of the intersecting linguistic and compositional tools with spoken word poetry, the programme included model poems by contemporary spoken word artists. Each of the workshops included a model poem or a rap song as a starting point, either as live performance or supported with audio-visual examples.[52]

To conclude, the programme was facilitated by a community of artographers, where I took on the roles of the researcher, participant observer, performing poet and educator. The rationale for this type of artistic, pedagogical partnership was driven by the artographic design as well as the communal spirit of slam. This type of design aims to immerse participants not only in the theoretical, but in the experiential and creative aspect of the real-world phenomenon of spoken word poetry as well as performance communities (Springgay, Irwin, & Leggo, 2007) and Ulmer's textshop pedagogy (Ulmer, Saper, & Vitanza, 2015). Garoian contends that when curriculum, pedagogy and their interaction is conceived of through the lens of collage as a narrative which is always in the making and creates silences types of liminal spaces where assumptions can be challenged and changes can take place. Hence, "the disjunctive narrative of collage suggests the impossibility of curriculum and pedagogy as opposing binaries" (Garoian, 2004b, p. 28). This means that I approached the artographic design of the programme in a fluid manner, guided by the participants' input and artistic practices, and how they unfolded into the prison space and emergent relations.

The reviewed literatures, and the pilot study lessons informed the design of the programme for the Macedonian context, discussed in the next three sections.

### 5.2.3.2 Reflections on Piloting Seminar with Prison Staff

The seminar aimed at consolidating the programme as a shared community of practice with artists and prison staff, commenced with all the stakeholders present. The prison staff had familiarised themselves with the programme booklet I had sent in advance.

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[52] The detailed content and activities are presented in Table 5.6.

There was a U shape seating arrangement in the conference room, a projector and a white board as well as a lap top I used to navigate through the introductory power point presentation. I introduced myself and ensured everyone agreed with the proposed schedule. Then we all proceeded with introducing our professional roles.

Following the ministry's main approval of the study, the governor was the main person of contact for negotiating the programme delivery. The governor took the role of the main gatekeeper for prison access of guest artists, emergent communication with the prison staff and safeguarding participants. The governor's role throughout the seminar proved to be that of a mediator of the communication among myself as the researcher and the prison staff, which provided solid ground for establishing a working relationship with the two prison psychologists as active gatekeepers of participants' wellbeing. Particularly, he balanced the discussion in the instances when prison officers were not convinced of the potential benefits of the project because they said the young people in the prison were "not like us" and "they wouldn't understand". The prison governor commented "perhaps you will be surprised". The prison officers thought it was surprising that I would be focusing on work in a Macedonian prison, given that they saw my studies abroad as an offering more opportunities than the national context. The prison governor reminded them that my interest followed after my experience working in the educational sector in general and specifically as a university lecturer in Macedonia. Having the governor assume a positive attitude as well as show trust in the project was conducive for balancing the power dynamics arising from age gap as well as lack of prison experience among artists, educator and myself.

The psychologist Katerina was in late adulthood and has worked for the prison for 40 years since the time it used to be an adult offender institution. She's been working in the prison with young offenders ever since it was founded. Katerina struck me as a fulfilled professional, a pleasant and respectful person, offering insightful and incisive feedback. I didn't get the chance to collaborate with her during the pilot study because she was away at the time. Katrina's presentation and feedback while useful and realistic, it was still decidedly selective of the positive experiences. Soon to retire, perhaps Katerina didn't feel the need to express job dissatisfaction or dwell on work challenges as opposed to the other staff members.

I saw the psychologist Leni as a perceptive and quick-witted middle-aged woman, who had worked in the young offender institution for 10 years at the time. She actively contributed to the seminar discussion points with what seemed like a raw honesty and pragmatic and focused directions. Leni had completed a master's degree studying Macedonian young offenders' risks for reoffending drawing on her extensive practice. I had the chance to collaborate with her during the pilot study and concluded that her dissatisfaction with the job may have diminished her faith in adjunct projects. I noticed that she was selective in attending workshops, but she strategically offered gentle directions in sessions based on her long-standing relationships with some of the participants. This meant, she was able to quickly read the youth's reactions and respond to their needs when required, offering encouraging feedback to participants with low literacy skills.

The prison officer Ania was a pleasant middle-aged woman, mostly reserved throughout the seminar, but warm and supportive in our online correspondence as well as throughout the programme delivery. My impression was that the staff contributions during the seminar reflected their power dynamics and communication in general. Comparing the role and presence all prison officers' had during the piloting sessions, which was mostly observing from a seat in the background, I noticed that the prison officer Ania was more gentle and taciturn. Perhaps this is a reflection of the gender differences in prison officers' professional positioning. Her opinions, as well as the rest of the staff's, surfaced most during the river journey discussion discussed in detail below.

The prison officer Yane, in his early 40s, looked like a confident middle-aged man, with categorical views. He was helpful during the discussion, despite his pessimistic attitude for young offenders' resocialisation. The prison officer Rajko in his late 50s, was collaborative if also pessimistic about any positive change in young offenders' lives. He stressed that the age gap and his work experience in the prison context has worn out any traces of hope and willpower for positive change in the prison. There were instances when I felt that his comments regarding the prison work as well as the seminar context showed implications of a punitive view towards offender treatment. Overall, there was an understanding that the age gap and work experience was a difference between the

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prison staff and the young team of artist, educator and researcher. The facilitators and myself, welcomed this with respect and acceptance to show credit for staff's experience, but also preserve ourselves by using our youth as advantage (Poulton, 2014). For example, the drama educator said because we are not worn out yet, we are willing to try while also learn in the process, which the staff accepted positively.

I run the second day of the seminar with the prison staff on my own, as the two workshop facilitators had work commitments. I found this advantageous in terms of the freedom it created for the staff to express themselves during a group workshop trialling the use of the visual river journey tool to elicit life experiences artistically. I instructed the staff to represent and write down three positive and three negative memories or events related to their work with young offenders. The negative example I provided from my work experience was an incident where an aggressive first year university student tore his test and threw it by my desk in front of the whole class because I disqualified him due to cheating on an exam.

**Box 5.1 Trialling Workshop with River Journey Tool with Prison Staff: Field Note Themes**

- *scarring and resilience/vulnerability*
- *job dissatisfaction*
- *feeling underappreciated*
- *pessimistic view of offender rehabilitation*
- *a sense of pride in work*
- *empathetic feedback for work with young offenders*
- *a sense of crushed hopes and enthusiasm*
- *some instances of othering of young offenders*
- *a sense of communion among staff based on mutual witness of loss and trauma*

*July, 18-19th, 2016*

Prison officer Rajko thought that the river journey would be suitable for the participants but not for the staff. Specifically, he explained that it felt unfair to write down what the staff had been through on a river journey, because of the scope and seriousness of their experiences. He summed up his view saying "what positive experiences, there are so many negative ones that I don't know which to choose". I explained to staff that they can

opt out of the activity if it feels discomforting and that they have the choice to select the nature of information they wish to discussed and disclose. I thought that the psychologist Katerina was the most reserved about it, refusing to dwell on the negative. Through this activity the prison staff decided to share some of their vulnerabilities which provided an opportunity to reflect on the realities of prison life and build rapport.

The discussion indicated the bonds the staff had created through shared knowledge of traumatic incidents in their prison work. The prison officer Rajko talked about the three key memories: an offender who hung herself in the prison (at the time when there were adult female offenders in the institution); his sadness about the insufficient appreciation and respect towards one of his close prison officer colleagues who had passed away, and about the powerlessness and fear the staff had felt during a young offenders' riot inside the prison. The female prison officer Ania also related to the suicide and the riot as a significant trauma, because the riot affected her professional identity as she said in disbelief "and it happened on my watch". Hence, the story of prison officer Rajko, coming from a lower economic background, and identifying as a farmer, rendered a less flexible and articulate outlook to his work. His story was characterised by rigidity, disillusionment and bitterness, which was reflected in his pessimistic practice in relation to young offenders' treatment.

Conversely, while prison officer Ania highlighted the professional challenges, she framed her story within a positive discourse. Specifically, I was under the impression that her story fitted well within the Macedonian cultural tendency to redeem the bad as a necessary part for ensuring the better good in the long run. The prison officer Yane appeared more cautious as to what aspects he was revealing in the group that the rest of the staff. His story was centred on professional integrity and success as a core value in his professional identity. He shared experiences of suspected betrayal from colleagues when one offender escaped from the prison on his watch at the start of his career. Moreover, he provided an example of catching prisoners smuggle tobacco in the prison and built a narrative which celebrated his professional astuteness and capability to navigate the prison environment. I observed that participants were at their best behaviour during his presence at the piloting workshops, which made me note that he had established greater authority in participants eyes compared to other prison officers.

The psychologist Leni's story was a narrative of great aspirations to make a change in offenders' lives to a story of disillusionment and powerlessness in the prison system which "sucks the light at the end of tunnel". She used the gate and the light metaphor to express her journey from lightness toward darkness, what the prison environment grew to represent. She'd recalled a negative experience with one offender when she felt unsafe but did not wish to elaborate. The prison officer Rajko was visibly concerned about this event, and I felt that there was an unspoken contract between these two members of the prison staff. During the break as we reflected on the seminar over coffee I empathetically enquired into staff's views of the river journey reflection, because I felt it was overwhelming to reminisce on difficult aspect of their job, which was well received.

The psychologist Katerina rounded the discussion by dwelling on a positive experience from her long-term career in the prison. She recalled a significant event where one of the men, an ex-offender, invited her to his daughter's wedding years after he was released. She remembered the celebration dearly, both as her personal courageous achievement to show up at the wedding "because that would've been unconventional for a woman at the time". She explained this man was one of the rare ones who managed to rebuild his life.

The professional stories that prison officers and the psychologists chose to present and discuss revealed aspects of their professional identities. As I too took part of the activities, I felt that this enabled us to share personal and professional experience towards building a shared practice and good relationships. Specifically, in terms of gender, I felt that there was a sense of equality among the male and female members of prison staff with mutual respect and support. I felt the staff extended the same attitude toward me, as another female professional. As discussed above, the power imbalance in our relationship, particularly the prison officers, was based on the tensions of being a young and inexperienced 'outsider' to the prison work. I tried to mitigate this by sharing my past work experience, my Geese Theatre prison training and visits to English prisons, while balancing potential perception of privilege due to my association with an elite university. To my advantage, staff felt positively to be collaborating on a project from an educationally respected institution. I felt that I achieved initial rapport because of staff' engaged feedback, and I believe they were open to contribute to the study as they also

saw that I was "flexible" in negotiating the practicalities of prison visit. I understood this was perceived as a good trait in contrast to other criminologists or practitioners they've collaborated with previously, who are also primarily focused on evaluating prison staff work and monitoring offender resocialisation as well as overall state of the prison.

*5.2.3.3 Reflections on Piloting Workshops with Participants in the Prison*

The present section offers an overview of the lessons from working with the participants, who are briefly introduced in Table 5.4, during the piloting inside the prison – the stage of entering in the field. The piloting lessons are drawn from two prison visits, one introductory workshop, and the other comprised of trialling a creative group creative workshops as well as individual life story interviews with the visual river journey tool.

The six participants formed a diverse group in terms of ethnicity, class, education, offence type, and sentence length. Five participants were 18, while one was over 20 at the time of the programme. The longest sentence was 9 years while the shortest 1 year. Specifically, the programme involved performing arts practice, pedagogy, research together with six young men: Luani, Jess, Spear, Deki, MCB, and Koni. Most of the young men were at the cusp of 18, forming an ethnically mixed group of Romani, Albanian, and, ethnic Macedonian backgrounds.[53] Supporting an ethnically and culturally diverse community with the programme was an imperative and challenging endeavour because the prison had no such existing mechanisms.

As a result, as much as the time frame and field budget permitted, I designed the programme content to include diverse array of poetry and music in Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, Romani language and examples of intercultural collaboration. Initially, I planned to encourage writing in one's mother tongue by inviting an intercultural facilitator to join the core educator team of the programme. However, due to pragmatic reasons this didn't come to fruition. Hence, I encouraged peer support of participants who are fluent in Romani, Macedonian and Albanian. Also, I instructed artists creating in

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[53] See Appendix O

**Table 5.5 Overview of Participants**

| Participants | Age | Ethnic and Socio-economic background/Family | Offence Type | Criminal History | Education and Language | Data removed for confidentiality reason. The data contained sensitive information about participants psychological profile. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MCB | 17 | Romani Lower-class/criminogenic family | Attempted murder of the prison GP; sentence of 2 years | -Serving detention and training orders from the age of 9 -Property offences -Dismissed rape charges | -Completed 5th grade -fluent Macedonian/ not fluent in Romani | |
| Jess (Second Portrait in Chapter 7) | 18 | Albanian Middle class/supportive family | Drug dealing (marihuana, cocaine and possession of illegal weapons; sentence of 1 year | Police detention/no previous sentences Dismissed charges of racketeering | Attended high school disrupted with the prison sentence -fluent Macedonian/spoken Albanian | |
| Koni | 18 | Albanian Middle class/supportive family with educational capital/no criminal history | Murder of a young adult person in affect; sentence of 9 years | No previous record | -Attended high school disrupted with prison -fluent Albanian and Macedonian | |
| Luani (First portrait: Chapter 6) | 19 | Albanian Middle class/criminogenic and disruptive family structures/organised crime/raised mainly by his mother | Kidnapping; Theft and Robbery; sentence of 3 years | Serving periods of detention and training orders as well as prison sentences in Belgium and Republic of Macedonia theft and robbery related | No completed formal education. -fluent Albanian/spoken Macedonian | |
| Spear | 22 | Macedonian Middle class/supportive family/no criminal history | Robbery with murder (offence committed at 16); sentence of 5 years | No previous offences. | Completed chef training; finishing up high school from prison. -fluent Macedonian | |
| Deki | 18 | Romani Lower class/raised mainly by his grandparents | Theft and robbery; sentence of 2 years | N/A | Completed 3rd grade. -fluent spoken Macedonian/fluent Romani Turkish variant | |

ethnic minority languages to support participants own work in their mother tongues, and I recruited the help of external translators for selected poems.

The piloting session, as well as the programme, took place in the prison classroom of the Macedonian prison. The classroom interior was newly refurbished, with a white board and tiled floor. For the group workshops, as well as individual interview with visual elicitation tool, I brought into the classroom materials, like notebooks, visual images, paper and pencils, which were stored in the classroom cabinets. The pilot confirmed that the group was able to use the iPad for the purposes of visually documenting outputs, as well as rely on audio-recording to create poetry ideas and poems.[54] I carried over a principle of dynamic-decision making into the programme as the pilot indicted the practice has to be continuously rediscovered and adapted to participants' needs.

The introductory session of the programme involved mutually negotiating the aims and objectives of the programme in which I also introduced the research aspect of the programme.[55] In addition, the focus included negotiating expectations for behaviour and ways of relating in the classroom. To do this, educators facilitated two activities directly incorporated from the Geese Theatre handbook with clear outline for facilitation. One was 'trust walking' (Baim, Brookes and Mountford, 2002, p. 65) and the other 'relationship ladder' (Baim, Brookes and Mountford, 2002, p. 109). Participants created a name for the group calling themselves "The strong ones" and wrote down three group values of: mutual respect for everyone in the group, listening to everyone's voice as an equal, and coming together to enjoy the arts. For the programme, the agreed goal was that participants would work towards three self-authored poems and participate in a final performance event. Participants' personal expectations expressed at this session ranged from learning something new, diversifying the monotony of prison life, building harmonious relationship and community in the prison to publishing their poetry.

The creative workshop trialled the structure of working with a guest artist to explore spoken word and its connection to rap in acapella. Both the guest hip hop artist Kinder and I performed an acrostic poem of our names, then participants created their poems.

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[54] Note that for ethical reasons of confidentiality the iPad was not used to take photographs or audio-visual data of participants

[55] See explanation under ethics discussion in 5.6.1

**Table 5.6 Pilot Lessons from Creative Workshop at the Prison Site**

| Participant | Workshop responses | Pilot lessons from participant observation incorporated in the programme |
|---|---|---|
| MCB | -enjoyed the guest artist<br>-respect: let each speak one at a time | Rely on the shared expectations written collaboratively during the pilot to dynamically review the sense of safety and respect for all participants. For example, the activity 'silent debate' where participants silently write on a piece of paper was used at the end of the programme. Also, a circle seating was employed to reflect and articulate to aspects everyone respects in other group members together with psychologist Katerina. |
| Jess | -keen to see more rap artists perform<br>-educator Ivana should write poetry or rap as well | I closely followed and documented Jess' aesthetic and personal interest in the Macedonian alternative rap scene. I collaborated with the rap artists from the rap bands "Zad Agolot" and "Kup De Gras", both rooted in the Macedonian alternative rap culture. In addition, in a rehearsal with rap artist Kiskin, I encouraged poet educator Elena to share her poetry, and both educator Ivana and I took part in the activities. |
| Koni | -eager to gain feedback and approval<br>-more confidence in assisted writing task than own ideas | Constructive feedback was focused towards encouraging participants' own writing and oral creative process, and diverse poetry examples were modelled from Macedonian guest artists. |
| Luani | -enjoyed having a guest artists and was eager to impress<br>-poem noted down by the psychologist as he couldn't spell in Cyrillic<br>-tried using the iPad to rap in Albanian<br>-forgets about time passage | Sensitivity to language barriers was enhanced by collaborating with an Albanian translator to have one of the example poems used in the workshops in Albanian language, and a guest artists Artan Koza modelled work in Albanian language. In addition, Luani was encouraged to compose in Albanian language with the choice to have his work translated in Macedonian. He worked closely with his psychologist Katerina and opted out to write in Macedonian using Latin alphabet initially and throughout the programme he started writing in Cyrillic as well (Note: Albanian language uses Latin alphabet, whereas Macedonian is noted with Cyrillic alphabet). |
| Spear | -performance makes him feel nervous<br>-feels that the rest of the group hate him because he works in the kitchen and he's "strong" | The programme created the rehearsals as both performance development spaces as well as open mics to practice performance skills with a trusted audience of the group. Some of the rehearsals involved guest artists as audience, and the rap ban concert in the prison incorporated performance with participants with constructive feedback to build performance confidence. |
| Deki | -writing as challenging<br>-rhythm exercise as enjoyable | Ivana worked closely with Deki to compose oral poems with the recorded with the use of the iPad when he found it helpful to document ideas. In addition I worked closely with Deki in our two river journey interviews, supported development of his poem "Difficult Destiny". The band member Mendo, from Shutka Roma Rap, encouraged Deki's singing in Turkish language the rehearsal with the band. |

The team offered support for the development of an acrostic poem after processing the performances for content and aesthetic features. The guest artist modelled an improvisatory and conversational style to the acrostic poem explaining to participants that there is no right or wrong way in introducing themselves through an acrostic poem. The team of psychologists also supported the writing process, particularly through the second activity of creating a poem from a mix of random rhyming words, which they advised was challenging for participants. Hence, I embraced low-risk activities at the initial programme stage. The second part comprised of introducing the concept of open mic and constructive feedback, for which I reminded participants of our shared values agreed at the introductory session to ensure the open mic is a safe space. Some of the participants performed their acrostic poetry eager to share their writing which was positively welcomed by the artists and prison staff.[56]

The piloted individual river journey interviews, one with each of the six participants, enabled me to test the use of the Dixit cards, which showed affinity for responding to the cards orally and create metaphors for life experience. As a result, I did not seek extensive written notes, but opted out for visual metaphor and oral narrative elicitation with the cards of participant's experiences. The trialling of inductive narrative identity constructs, while useful in organising participants' interview data in a meaningful and coherent manner, I felt these failed to capture the organic movement across themes, like the survival at the early age being connected with criminal activity coming of age[57].

Also, one jarring theme that was apparently present in young offenders' accounts was redemption, but as it was redemption of negative experiences of adversity. I observed that this didn't correspond to the narrative identity's construct of redemption, which referred to redeeming criminal pasts. As a result, I decided to adopt an integrative approach to analysis blending thematic, with axial, and poetic inquiry, which evolved into an adapted form of artographic analysis described later in this chapter.

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[56] The pilot lessons from this workshop which informed the programme development are presented in Table 5.6
[57] See Table 5.7

**Table 5.7 Trialling Narrative Identity Inductive Coding: Initial Themes Matched to Interview Notes for Two Participants**

| Initial Codes | Interview (Notes) Extracts | Clustered Themes |
|---|---|---|
| Regret | MCB: "I was jealous of [the thought] she might find someone else [talking about his former girlfriend], that she will stray from the right path…I introduced her to my family. I was wrong, if I can go back I would change things." | Self-condemnation |
| | Jess: "I made a lot of rush decisions in the past" [Yet he said he doesn't regret and he "would go through it all over again"] | |
| Family bad influence | MCB: "I was caught up in a bad crowd…I didn't plan to go back home so that they [his family] won't introduce her [his girlfriend] to a bad life, my father is a drug-dealer, I have a better relationship with my mum, I was in for a surprise [with a negative connotation and refuses to explain what happened because he said he "feels ashamed" to talk about it]"; "My friend slapped her [his 'to be 'girlfriend] a couple of times it was interesting […] I had never seen anyone do that 'she liked it' [the slapping] | Disempowerment and Deviance |
| | Jess: "They found [the police] illegal stuff in my room…I was beaten and tortured, it's a bad feeling…and the rap songs remind me of that. I can't sit still when I enter my room Déjà vu [after name of Serbian rap]. I would still listen to those songs although they remind me of the bad things" (betrayed by friends) When prompted he says: "I'm writing a book of revenge. […] I've thought it through" | |
| Family support | MCB: "It was fun and beautiful, I was flying with her [his girlfriend]" "The psychologist said to me 'Well done, O. I can see you now" she supported me, I saw someone being there for me, those were important words for me" | Communion/Harmony |
| | Jess: "Her father [his former girlfriend's father] didn't approve but we run away and had fun time" [he explained in the previous session that she was a doctor and took good care of him when he was ill] | |
| Resilience | MCB: "I had to make tough decisions very early on in my life, to survive and to be independent" "I believe in myself my notebook [of poetry and rap writing] is my dream[…] and I am happy that the ongoing proceeding against me has been withdrawn" | Positive Transformation |
| | Jess: "I like listening to music at home, it reminds me of the things I've done, the drugs, the shit I've been through, [rap] songs like "Perseverant" by Tonyo San" | |
| Hope for the future | MCB: "I want to live with my aunt make new friends and learn new things, not to go in the "cursed" house [his parents' home]. I can work at a friends' business for laminate flooring in my home town" | (UN)Realistic Future Selves |
| | Jess: "The best thing would be to go outside of the country, to go to Kosovo [at his uncle's], I can understand the language [Albanian] have a nice life […] I feel the safest at my uncle's [from the other future plans he mentioned] ["Worst thing that could happen is not to find a job and not to finish school. Even though I am not good at school, nothing can stop me" | |

In the interim between entering the field and preparing for the stage of being in the field, I was able to further explore some of the pilot lessons. For example, in a one-off workshop with "Noise Solution", a social enterprise working with young people at risk of offending, I adopted one of the enterprise's online practitioner training tools in the present study's programme design. I set up an online teaching archive using the platform "Teachable" that functioned as a password protected blog. "Teachable" thus served as a central line for communication among the researcher, prison staff, and workshop facilitators at the initial stages of being in the field, which became as prominent because I felt the in-person discussions and briefing were more pragmatic as the programme progressed.

## 5.3 PERforming the Programme with Arts-Based Data Collection Methods

The data collection methods harness an array of arts-based tool subsumed under three overarching data collection approaches: the spoken poetry workshop, the life story interview, and, the poetic processes and outputs.

### 5.3.1 Being in the Field: Programme Overview

The programme entailed three stages comprising of 21 prison visits comprising of 11 group workshops, 6 performance rehearsals, and 4 visits for individual interviews[58] with the river journey tool. I here give a brief overview of the three stages content and aims. The first stage of the programme thematically focused on eliciting first person exploration, tapping into the personal. Given participants interest in Tupac, the introduction to spoken word poetry was facilitated through discussion of Tupac's poem "The Rose that Grew from Concrete" supported with a related song by Nikki Giovanni. In addition, I performed two poems which explored the process of self-growth and alternative views to social exclusion. The former was explored through the metaphor of driving a car as persevering though obstacles, while the latter adopted the phrase 'I don't believe' to question stereotypical categorisation like 'the nerd' and 'the scum'. This stage was a high point for trust-building and eliciting rich responses from visual elicitation of poetic imagery as well as developing full poems.

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[58] Note that I also conducted individual interviews before and after group workshops.
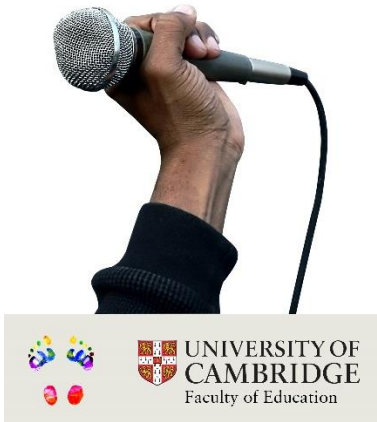
The central theme of the second stage of the programme emerged as the need to perform the tension between the socially desirable identities and searching one's authentic voice. Two of the workshops, run by spoken word poet and actor Igor Trpche, who offered a complex blend of poetic craft and language, as well as skilled performance with improvisatory and conversational approach to pedagogy. Participants bonded very quickly with Igor, likely because of his shared experience of contact with the justice system when young, and persevering through school and an acting degree which led him to an acting career in theatre as well as national TV. In addition, Igor's poetry chapbook explored themes of overcoming personal adversity that participants related to strongly. While this phase saw participants perform 'macho personas' in their poetry and rap with the guest band "Shutka Roma Rap", it also saw the example these rappers modelled as alternative to such sexist rap tendencies in the mainstream. In a discussion with the participants, the band also attempted to challenge the view that substance use is connected to rap industry. These artistic models, prompted non-judgemental workshop discussions with core poet Elena who shared feminist poetry, and invited broad parallaxes to gender-based and ethnic discrimination among participants who reconsidered some of their poetry lines and style of expression[59].

The third stage of the programme, saw themes of exploring vulnerability and difficulty to imagine social acceptance with a criminal past in participants' poetic responses and conversations. These were explored further with artists' feedback and alternative narratives of freedom. Rap artists from the band "Kup De Gras" offered an insightful cross-cultural parallel of the notion of freedom in the African American history of slavery and how this influenced their ideas of freedom as Macedonian artists. Rap artist from the band "Zad Agolot" offered a song which imagined the possibilities of psychological freedom in the face of adversity. Participants were able to further explore the links across spoken word poetry and rap in a session with the rap artists Kiskin, who enabled participants to try out rapping to a beat, and offered valuable feedback to participants' own poetry performances before the final performance event.

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[59] Chapters 6 and 7 of findings present some instances of male domination in participants programme responses. Artographers aimed to safeguard and trouble structural injustice and discriminatory content sensitively throughout the programme. The scope of the study did not allow for evidence to discuss how the programme affected participants' view of masculinity and relationship to women over time.

**Table 5.8 Being in the Field: Programme at a Glance**

| Time frame | Programme Stages: Workshops | Weekly Narrative Identity Focus |
|---|---|---|
| Summer, 2016 | ***Entering the Field: Building a Shared Community of Practice*** *(Seminar; Introductory Sessions; use of online platform Teachable for artists and prison staff shared practice)* | |
| Autumn, 2016 | ***Being in the Field: Per(e)forming the Programme*** | |
| Nov 10-20 | ***Stage 1: Me-Searching/We-Searching: "The lost traveler in quest of his own freedom"*** | Images removed for copyright reasons, Copyright holders are artists Katerina Nikolova and Ivana Pirkovska. Note; the artists offered oral clearance for the use of their work as part of the programme. |
| | *10/11– **Workshop 1: Introducing Spoken Arts**, (song and poem: "The Rose that Grew from Concrete", Tupac Shakur)* *11/11– **Workshop 2: Possibilities of Macedonian Spoken Word Poetry** (poem: "How to Drive a Car", performer Afrodita)* *15/11– **Rehearsal 1: Me-Searching** – **River Journey** with MCB* *17/11– **Workshop 3: Alternative Narratives: Challenging Stereotypes** (poem: "I don't Believe", performer Afrodita)* *18/11– **River Journeys** with Koni, Spear, and Jess.* | |
| Nov 21-Dec 6 | ***Stage 2: Non/Performative Selves: "I can rap without a mic"*** | |
| | *29/11– **Workshop 4: Willpower in Action**, slam master, poet and actor, Igor Trpche (poem: "Now I Have to")* *01/12 – **Workshop 5: The Artist in Context**, slam master, poet and actor, Igor Trpche (poem: "I am Canned")* *02/12 – **Workshop 6: Creating, Re-Creating Poetry*** *06/12 – **Rehearsal 2: Performing Possibilities** – **Mask Painting** with Luani* *09/12 – **Rehearsal 3: Live Performances**, a concert by rap band Shutka Roma Rap, (album: "Me Sijum Undergound/I am underground")* | |

| Dec 7-26 | **Stage 3: VulnerAble Voices "My voice rises on the mic"** |  |
|---|---|---|
| | *13/12 – **Workshop 7: From Page to Stage** with poet/performer Istok Ulchar (poems: "I Want to Wake Up"/ "In my world"/"The Time when I didn't Listen to the News")* | |
| | *15/12 – **Workshop 8: Exploring Ideas of Self-Love**, with musician Artan Koza (poems: "How to Love Yourself" by Dean Atta in Macedonian, Albanian and Turkish translation)* | |
| | *16/12 – **Rehearsal 4: Different Types of Freedoms**, hip hop artist Venko from the rap band Kup de Gras, and, hip hop artist Pavle from the rap band "Zad Agolot" (songs: "Freedoms", and, "The Freedom is at Another Place")* | |
| | *20/12 – **River Journey** with Deki* | |
| | *21/12 – **River Journey** with MCB* | |
| | *22/12 – **Workshop 9: Voices in Performance** (Expectations/ Revisions)* | *Planning a Final Performance Event Open Mic* |
| | *23/12 – **Rehearsal 5: Moving Between Poetry and Rap**, hip hop artist Kiskin from the rap band "Divizija" ("A Champion", a rap song in response to participants' poetry)* | *Managing Expectations* |
| Dec/Jan 2017 | ***Leaving the Field: Performances with Arts-Based Follow-Up*** | |
| Dec 26 | ***Final Poetry Performance and Open Mic:***<br><br>***"I am baby that waits to grow up and make things right – Is there a way out?"*** | 26/12 – **Rehearsal 6: Honing Performance**<br>          – **Follow-up Group Workshop 10: Performance Reflections**<br>27/12 – **River Journey** and Evaluation Circle with Luani<br>28/12 – **River Journey** and Evaluation Circle with MCB, Kasper, and Koni<br>17/01 – **Follow-up Group Workshop 11: Reflections with Diplomas**<br>          (present: Koni, Luani, and Kasper);<br>          – **River Journeys** with Luani, and Spear<br>          – *Final reflections and negotiating dissemination pathways* |

The programme's practice-driven and multi-method data collection is presented in the next three headings, while the programme's emergent lessons plans with detailed activities are included in the appendices.

*5.3.2 Workshops with Open Mics and Rehearsals as Participant Observations*

While I adopted the popular US model to the workshop in spoken word, extensively considered in my literature review and justified within the piloting stages, the model was used as a guidepost.[60] The team of educators and artists reinvented the workshop dynamically through the emergent artographic practice. The workshop was conceived as a participatory space to get exposed to a range of poetry and rap in performance, learning about it cognitively and affectively through scaffolding, the unpacking of themes, emotions and form of poems. The scaffolding technique is well developed in the workshop protocol described by Weinstein as pioneered by the oldest US organisation working with young people and spoken word, Youth Speaks. For example, the question "what caught your attention?" is used to elicit conscious reflection as to where participants' attention is directed, be it a cognitive or affective aspect of the poem. In Whitley's analysis of the oral recitation and performance of a poem he argues that the mindfulness and flow in performing poems out loud offers in-depth insight into the poem. This is implicated in the process ritual of becoming part of the spoken word poetry 'insider' circle. The process ritual reinforces the value of the lived experience of participants as part of the audience in discussion with the educators and the poets.

Each workshop lasted from 2 to three hours, divided into two parts. Part one aimed to expose the youth to poetry and rap examples and guide participants' poetry composition. The second workshop part aimed to introduce the concept of open mics, sharing poems voluntarily with the group in a safe space. The open mic aimed to cultivate a performance community for sharing poetry and constructive feedback. The blueprint for the workshop protocol commonly used in the US youth spoken word practices (Weinstein, 2010) is shown in Table 5.8 through an illustrative example of the initial workshop planning, with full lessons plans provided in the appendices.

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**Table 5.9 Workshops and Rehearsal Protocols**

| Aim | Procedures | Workshop Example Activity |
|---|---|---|
| First Workshop Session | | |
| -set up and coordinate roles | -test equipment/materials (iPad, videos, white board)<br>-scheme through the lesson plan | |
| -Manage expectations<br>-ensure successful communication | Sharing aims, objectives and expectations | |
| -Elicit and share workshop related knowledge<br>-hone concentration | Lead-in activity | Group character building (who, what, where) |
| -provide example of diverse performances | Model performance (poem or rap song) | "City Fog", a poem by Istok Ulchar |
| -guide participants' understanding of the poem<br>-support learning poetry techniques<br>-explore relevant themes | Process the poetry themes and craft | -harmonious society<br>-the use of repetition e.g. "I want to wake up in…"<br>-Use the method detail-hunting: "What part of the poem you enjoyed? Why?" (Herndon & Weiss, 2001) |
| -support participants' poetry composition<br>-encourage the exploration of possible selves<br>-reflect on future expectations | Compositional activity | -If you can wake up anywhere you want where would it be?<br>-Write 5 to 10 lines starting with "I want to wake up in…"<br>-Writing support: What does the place look like? What can you see and hear? What are you doing and with whom? |
| Break 15 min | | |
| Second Workshop Session (Rehearsal protocol) | | |
| -encourage and support performance related skills (sense of rhythm, presence on stage, audience interaction, voice) | Performance activity | Forum theatre based on the model poem |
| -develop and support a performance community space | Share the poems and provide constructive feedback | Constructive feedback guidance: |
| -obtain feedback and perceived workshop experience | Drama-based evaluation strategy | Building frozen scenes about the workshop |
| -obtain data about staff's workshop perceptions | Post-workshop focus group | -a post-workshop feedback session with staff |

The workshop plans were revised substantially through dynamic and collaborative decision making with artographers, prison staff and participants. For example, during the compositional process the educator can be flexible in their guidance, focusing on participant's voice development as opposed to rote rules for crafting poems. One strategy that was used to do this was "instead of direct instruction to make the poem's parts more specific, the facilitator can achieve the same by praising the participant's image.

Particularly, the opportunity they've created for describing this image in more detail" (Herndon & Weiss, 2001, p. 12). In addition to delivering the two-part workshops, the programme also included workshop geared solely towards honing performance, referred to as rehearsals to distinguish them from open mic performances within the two-part workshops. Each workshop and rehearsal concluded with the use of arts-based activities aimed at evaluating participants' perceived experience.

The participant observation focus of the workshops and rehearsals was open-ended directed both by the research questions as well as recording unintended responses by way of artographic attention and intuitive inquiry through narrative and poetic field notes. In addition, the workshop was the central mode of conducting multi-method data collection. Specifically, the workshop format as participant observation, enabled three data sets:

- Participant observations of participants' artistic responses and experiences arising from the practice of the programme
- Participants personal life experiences and artistic responses through individual workshops
- Visual elicitation of participants artistic and life responses in the form of visual metaphors and visual data outputs[61]

In this way the practice-driven research design entailed participatory elements to engage participants responses following the view that:

> Participation is what sets workshops apart from traditional concepts of lectures or lessons because it is about involving people in a structured situation where everyone can contribute and learn from one another (Campbell, 2011, p. 2).

Moreover, the benefit of the workshop as a creative format enables the data collection process to follow more organically with the implementation of the programme. This means that the main data collection methods: participant observations including group conversational data, and the individual interviews were a built-in part of the design, together with the arts-based evaluative activities focused on the experience of the programme from participants' point of view. Thus, the multi-method data collection process was thus creatively and sensitively weaved into the programme practice. This

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[61] See Table 5.6 for an overview of the data corpus

meant taking extra case for ensuring ethical imperatives of dynamically communicating with the participants how the aspects of the practice formed a part of a research project.[62] I framed the workshops as participant observations in order to experience, inquire into and examine participants' artistic responses assisted with casual conversations as form of interviewing (Wolcott, 1999). The method of participant observation is a reliable and commonly used in qualitative data collection in studies relying on ethnography (Kindon, Pain, & Kesby, 2007; Stewart, 1998). In the vein of the study's artographic design, the participant observer role was dynamically embodied as part of my artographic practice. This means, acting as a poet and educator I was navigating different levels of workshop immersion when performing, while also taking a stand back to observe in a less involved manner when the educators would take the lead in offering constructive feedback to participants' performances. The level of participation and observation was implicated in the core features of participant observations like the trustworthy relating with participants and recreating workshops based on emergent understanding of their responses, which was in line with the artographic practice,

In summary, the workshop format enabled the programme delivery as artographic practice as well as multi-method data collection with arts-based research methods and tools. This enabled the generation of rich data in a creative manner, which demanded careful and dynamic ethical communication with participants of the nature of the data collection process.

### 5.3.2.1 Arts-Based Evaluative Methods

The workshop format by incorporating arts-based evaluative tools enabled me to elicit participants' responses to the programme often in the form of group discussions at the end of workshops. Specifically, while these evaluative tools were built in throughout the programme, the evaluative activity called 'circles of distance' was critical at the follow up stage of the programme. As part of this activity, participants were asked to draw a set of concentric circles and populate each of the circles with an aspect of the programme. Things that participants valued the most were positioned closer to the inner circles, while

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[62] For discussion of ethics in this context see 5.6.1

the things they valued the least were at the borders of outers circles, or outside of the outer circle. As explained thus far, the arts-based activities from the practice of the Geese theatre company, offered evaluative data as well. One such activity was also used at the follow up stage, called 'invisible obstacle course', in order to evaluate participants' perceptions of their present and future life trajectories (Baim, Brookes and Mountford, 2002, p 112). I chose to use the arts-based evaluative tools as organic to the artographic design which afforded perceived impact tracking of participants' artistic experiences, and offered an alternative to the clinical process evaluations that were found to be less generative and more prone to socially desirable responses within the arts in prison[63].

The importance of conversations for data collection, links to the conception of interviews in feminist criminological research, which stresses the flexibility and conversional quality (Gelsthorpe, 1990). Thus, this meant that participants' potential anxieties voiced during workshops could alter a pre-planned workshop direction or discussion. Additionally, I was aware that gender could influence the interview style. Research conjectures that male offenders see female researchers as "good listeners" or "counsellors" (Cheliotis, 2014; Gelsthorpe, 1990). Feminists encourage an "interactive approach" in interviews which means negotiating the interview content and being open to a two-directional communication (Rapoport, 1976). This is also an attempt at balancing the power dynamics in traditional roles of researcher-interviewer and participant-interviewee.

Thus, in the learning process from conversations the key elements to focus as researcher included: 1. trust building and listening skills 2. providing initial guidance 3. triggering relevant topics 4. enabling spontaneity 5. appreciate diverse voices 6. specify the lessons from the conversation 7. challenge assumptions and 8. examine power relations (Hollingsworth & Dybdahi, 2007). For example, the built-in drama-based activities like role-play and emotional sculpts, involved creating one or a set of frozen pictures, enacted static scenes exploring a certain topic. At the end of the workshop I explained to participants that we are going to play a game to share how we felt during the workshops through immobile sculpts using bodily and facial expressions like posture, gestures and mimicking. Each emotional sculpt entails an aspect of processing participants' responses

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[63] See Chapter 2.

for meaning. In the use of evaluative arts-based activities, I was mindful of the need for sensitivity in embodied practice, as well as allowing sufficient time for participants to develop a number of frozen pictures to correspond to separate workshop segments. Overall, mindful facilitation of evaluative arts-based methods enriched the data corpus.

*5.3.3 Spoken Word Poems: Blueprints of Subjectivities*

Participants' self-authored poems were documented throughout from initial ideas, fragments to revised full draft and poems completed for the final performance event. The poems as data thus reflected the process of writing and refining poem over time, and rehearsing and developing the poem in performance. The artographic programme practice did not target participants' personal experiences directly through the poetry writing – it instead focused on creating poems as an invitation for participants to discover their creative process and guide the choice of their own themes based on what felt truthful to them. As the programme elicited also participants life experiences, the poems had the potential of acting as blueprints of participants' creative exploration of imaginative or personal life experiences if this was their chosen area of interest. Participants' poems were thus used as blueprint of subjectivities not necessarily indicating autobiographical accounts, but rather as indicators of participants' worlds, and potential emotional responses to subjective views of explored experiences and themes. Complemented with the rest of the data sets, poems were treated as organically connected to participants overall response to the programme. This meant, that poems were used as prompts for discussions in the individual interviews and informal conversations, to link this to participants' lives and probe their view of their own emergent poems.

*5.3.4 Individual Life Story Interviews with Young Offenders*

The workshop was also adapted as an individual life story interview which focused on documenting participants' critical life experiences from childhood to adolescence. While inspired by the narrative identity interview protocol to collect life memories, interviews deviated from this standardised form (McAdams, 1988). As I have demonstrated through the various piloting of narrative identity analysis, I found this approach limiting to my

research goals. As a result, I adopted arts-based elicitation of participants' life experiences through metaphorical account of memories and events. Specifically, I used the Dixit illustrated cards as prompts for visual metaphors to chart critical life experiences with the river journey tool. This enabled me to approach the life story data collection in a one step removed way by departing from the participants' metaphors and poems to move into their own view of personal life experiences. Even though the format of the interviews was an arts-based workshop, they were introduced to participants from the start of the programme as research component. Following the unrecorded piloting of interviews, the participants opted out for programme interviews to be audio-recorded. Also, this was used flexibly throughout the programme, with participants being able to choose not to be recorded for certain aspects of their accounts. Because of this, I was reassured that participants understood that their accounts of their lives through the arts workshop was part of the data for the study. The individual life story workshop was also a crucial data collection method that informed my emergent decision-making for developing individual case studies.

### 5.3.3.1 Arts-Based Elicitation Tools: Visual River Journey and Mask Painting

The main visual elicitation tool that I adopted was the river journey tool with the use of the visually illustrated Dixit cards as an arts-based tool.[64] Specifically, I followed Stevenson's adaption of the river journey as an artographic method which used poetic notes attached to participants' comments. In addition, Stevenson used the river journey as a poetic journey of her own artographic experience (Stevenson, 2013). This informed my own adoption of the river journey to explore my artographic identity and acknowledge how my own view of my life story was malleable and entangled with the research journey and lives of participants. Also, seeing Burnard's adaptation of the river journey to track pupils' and teacher's creative journeys of musical experience, I was inspired to adapt the tool for the purposes of the present study (Burnard, 2012).

Before taken into the field of arts research as a river journey tool, the tool was well developed in psychology for mapping out critical incidents, first introduced by David

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[64] The Dixit card images are meticulous surrealist illustrations by Marie Cardouat, a part of the storytelling card game called Dixit; created by Jean-Louis Roubira and published by Libellud.

Tripp for charting critical traumatic events (1993). My choice to adapt the river journey tool with the Dixit cards, was to adopt a literacy inclusive tool which favoured participants' oral storytelling of life events. Also, I found the Dixit cards to be suitable as visually assisted prompts because of their evocative and generative effect during piloting.

Initially, I also explored the possibility of adapting the tool as a collage river journey (Van Schalkwyk, 2010). Schalkwyk's collage life story elicitation technique, embedded in a social constructionist theory, views the narrative-meaning making process as both recalling life story episodes and autobiographical memories. However, after seeing that prompts for collage making was not very engaging among participants during the pilot, choice of the Dixit cards was further reinforced and aligned to the artographic methodology.

Following Creatief Schrijven's arts in prison project "Parol!" implemented in five European countries, particularly the arts in prison branch in Serbia, I considered an additional visual elicitation tool of mask-making.[65]However, for ethical reasons and security, craft-making and collage seemed daunting. Given that at the pilot participants were not stimulated by crafts, and possibly maybe my own approach to it being not rooted in my artistic practice, I decided to explore the ideas of the mask further as I found it very helpful as a metaphor for revealing and challenging self-perceptions (Zoss, Smagorinsky, & O'Donnell-Allen, 2007). The mask painting was contextualised in the account of the Geese unique use of masks as metaphors for people's defence mechanisms, like the 'good one', 'the tough one', 'the victim'[66]. This was designed as an activity to paint a self-portrait of the self in relation to the 'masks' participants wear, or aspects that are hidden under those 'masks'.

The arts-based elicitation tools yielded rich data through artographic approach to human inquiry that blended visual with textual through metaphor and oral storytelling.

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[65] Initially considered as a potential way to provide a sense of anonymity for the participants in the event there would've been possible to obtain audio-visual data. For example, the Serbian organization "ApsArt" used the masks in their dissemination documentary-animated film "Unwanted" with children cared by the state as part of the anonymity protocol "Dokumentarno – animirani film", (2015).

[66] Note that the Geese theatre doesn't classify the masks as types, but rather as defence mechanisms of for instance 'stonewalling'. However, for accessibility, I described the masks through everyday examples, rather than delving into the concept of defence mechanism.

*5.3.5 Leaving the Field: Performance Event and Follow-up Visit*

The artographic design from entering the field through the delivery of the programme signposted the centrality of a final performance event to be held inside the prison as well as the gradual movement across the three stages of the programme. The choice to include follow up visit after the performance event was to enhance the ethical practice of sensitive conclusion of the project.

The space for the event was negotiated throughout fieldwork to be a large and spacious classroom that the prison used as a TV room.[67] This classroom was also negotiated as a space for performance rehearsals that required the use of sound equipment supported through the programme. This meant that the performance event was dynamically and meticulously planned throughout the programme in negotiation with participants and prison staff geared towards an authentic experience of a spoken word poetry performance with a livre audience. The audience of over 40 people comprised of prison residents, prison staff, guest artists and a local NGO art representative. The performance event included a short break dance opening by a one of the young people from the prison residents, who called himself the Iron Dance.[68] From the 6 participants in the study, 5 performed one poem of their own choice.

The programme included a group discussion following the performance to reflect on the experience. In addition, two weeks after the performance the educator Ivana and I conducted a group workshop and individual interviews with three of the participants.[69] This was also an opportunity to officially congratulate participants for their participation and contribution to programme development.[70]

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[67] This classroom was different from the smaller newly refurbished classroom for workshops

[68] While not taking part of the study, The Iron Dance expressed an interest to join at several workshops sharing his dance skills. As there was an interest among the participants in the break dance in connection to performance and rap, we developed a short group movement that introduced the Iron Dance as an opening act for the performance event.

[69] Two participants were on a permitted leave, while one was released before the performance event.

[70] Participants received a letter of confirmation as a recognition of graduation from the programme. Also, I informed participants that their psychologists will act as a point of further contact with me, if they wished to obtain feedback on their future poetry, as well as follow up on the study in terms of how they are being represented as well as receiving the executive summary in Macedonian.

*5.3.6 Data Corpus Overview and Sampling Rationale*

The selection of the programme's 6 participants was guided by purposive sampling and by the prison staff's lead following the piloting seminar that introduced and trialled aspects of the programme. After the seminar, the prison staff undertook the task to present the project to the group of 9 male young offenders in total serving a prison sentence for the territory of North Macedonia. Given staff's power over initially briefing participants, I felt that the sample of the six young men was influenced by the prison politics. That said, at the seminar there was a mutual agreement to focus on the group of 9 young offenders serving time in the prison, as opposed to the larger group of over 30 young men serving a detention and training order. The larger group of young men were temporarily dislocated from their correctional facility into the prison at the time of the seminar, and staff were uncertain of the duration of their residence in the prison. In this sense, it can be argued that the sample of the 6 young men was a small case of imprisoned young men in the country.

However, given that I did not set out to have a representative sample within the artographic design, my study reported on two of the six cases. The decision to report on two cases evolved from my interest in the range of unique responses from participants (Small, 2009). Particularly, I was keen to fill the gap in knowledge concerning the in-depth artistic and life experiences that young offenders have as part of arts in prison (Maruna and Cursley, 2013). Also, a focus on range and unique cases was best suited in illuminating how the programme sits within the social context of the prison life and community of artists, as guided by the recognition that the responses to the arts were implicated in the feedback of artists and prison staff. Also, this meant acknowledging the influence of participants' different backgrounds, and life trajectories intersecting uniquely across ethnicity, race, gender, socio-economic status, geographical and cultural upbringing, family dynamics and history of contact with the criminal justice system.

My approach to offering an empirically sound response to the research questions was to adopt an emergent approach to case selection, used to personalise evaluation of programmes which resonated with my artographic inquiry into participants' subjective

arts responses (Kushner, 2000).[71] Given that the nature of the data was difficult to assess at the initial stages as well as throughout the fieldwork, I was dynamically reflecting on the number of participants as well as the choice of participants to include in the final cases for the study. Because I was interested in what happens when participants have investment in the arts programmes, the key criteria in my choice included richness of data and a diverse range of cases that may also offer a unique understanding of the experience of the arts.

**Table 5.10 Data Corpus Overview across Participants**

| Data Sets | | Participants | | | | | | Gatekeepers | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Spear | Luani | MCB | Koni | Deki | Jess | Luani's psychologist Katerina | Jess' psychologist Leni |
| Group creative workshops *Total: 17* | | 14 | 16 | 16 | 17 | 17 | 15 | 8 | 10 |
| Performance Rehearsal *Total: 6* | | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| Poem *Total: 32* | | 5 | 5 | 10 | 4 | 3 | 5 | / | / |
| Individual Life Story Interviews (number of which are not recorded marked with asterisk) *Total: 22* | | 4 1* | 5 1* | 4 2* | 4 | 2* | 3 3* | / | / |
| Individual Interview with gatekeepers Total: 2 | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Artefacts (visual) | River Journey *Total: 14* | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | / | / |
| | Circle of Distance *Total: 5* | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | / | / | / | / |
| | Mask Painting *Total: 1* | / | 1 | / | / | / | / | / | / |
| | Group drawing *Total: 1* | 1 | 1 | / | 1 | / | / | / | / |
| | Digital story *Total: 1* | / | / | 1 | / | / | / | / | / |

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[71] Emerging sampling, as Kushner explains in the cases of personalized evaluation, allows for the researcher to use a multiplicity of methods and data sources to accumulate knowledge about the reliability of the data over time (2000). Hence, the selection of a case study is an informed decision within the dynamic and performative fieldwork context of the prison.

I wanted to apply the principle of saturation in deciding the number of cases, as this was in line with my interest in an in-depth account. Initially I felt that rich data may difficult to obtain due to visit time being limited by the prison house rules and working schedule, the intensity of contact with the participants should be managed for the emotional and sometimes physical safety of both the participants and the researcher. Also, I was initially concerned about the reliability of data being jeopardised by lack of trust and socially desirable answers, which I saw shift throughout the programme for some of the participants. Post-fieldwork I was able to further consider the full data corpus, presented in table 5.9. The data included 18 life story interviews with six young offenders with a visual elicitation tool; 23 participant observations of workshops and rehearsals including arts-based evaluative tools; and, participants' 32 self-authored poems.

Staying closely with the data through analyses, enabled me to emergently recognise that the two cases I came to choose yielded rich enough data for the study. Alternatively, one could argue I could've focused on 3 or 4 cases to show variability while focusing less on the debt of experience, but as I present my rationale further below, I found that the two cases in themselves showed variability across multiple intersecting areas of Luani and Jess' lives. As a result, the study reports findings from the programme's contributions in two Albanian young offenders' lives based on 8 individual life story interviews with 2 visual river journeys and 1 painting, 23 participant observations, and 7 participant poems.

This emergent case selection approach depended on the changing nature of the researcher-participant relationship as well as the familiarisation with the participants and the prison context over time. For example, initially, Spear's responses appeared to form an interesting case because of his resonant and reflective poetry, and gradual trust development which I felt increased the openness in his responses. However, midway through the programme I felt that Spear was increasingly guided by a romantic attachment towards me, which required my distancing. Even though educator Ivana took the lead in working more closely with Spear, I noted that he too felt the need to have a slight distance from the programme by skipping three workshops. Arguably, Spear's responses to the programme showed most positive alignment with his commitment to complete an ongoing educational degree and future plan to work as a chef. Spear's

positive feedback to the programme's role as strengthening his relationship with his mother, and motivation for learning was appealing to include in the findings. However, in spite of this, my decision not to include the data from Spear was because his account of his life remained thin which made it hard to convincingly evidence and contextualise his experience of the programme.

The data collection process with the participant MCB provided a good amount of data and investment in the programme through poetry and rap lyrics, although it appeared that he was highly skilled in giving socially desirable answers, a view his psychologist supported. The data collected from workshop observations and the prison staff served as a mitigating factor in making sense of the reliability of his data.

The participant Koni's reserved interaction proved difficult to engage for the duration of the programme which coincided with his first-time imprisonment for a high sentence of 9 years. This raises questions as to how the length and possibly nature of imprisonment may affect artistic responses in young offenders, when considered also against the length and nature of programmes.

Similarly, working closely with Deki required a longer period of time to be able to offer sufficient safe space to support Deki's creative process. I saw a strong progress in Deki's confidence to create oral poems in Macedonian as well as feel less reluctant to share songs in Turkish. In Deki's responses I sensed a history of long-standing ethnic and socio-economic exclusion Deki encountered before prison. I believe this raises issues about the role of cultural relevance in artistic programmes, and the extent to which culturally, ethnically mixed and multi-lingual team of core artists and educators could influence participants' artistic experiences.[72]

However, the collected data from the artistic response by both Luani and Jess, I felt best enabled me to examine the research problem of the present study. While highly skilled at

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[72] Particularly, even as the programme was culturally and artistically diverse in performances, the core team of the present study was ethnically Macedonian white female team. That said, ethnic and racial exclusion, being deeply woven into the social fabric, meant that participants themselves seemed to value Roma rap music for instance less than Macedonian.

impression management, Luani emerged as a compelling case because of the rich data he disclosed with unique intersection of in-depth accounts across family, life, ethnic views, and crime and arts experiences. While the data was rich across most of the five participants, but two, Luani's investment in the programme as well as revelation of self, had a depth that went beyond the biographical and socially desirable storyline.[73] His criminal self-perception was strongly emerging through the arts responses to the programme. This particularly merited exploration alongside a psychological view of his personality as 'unempathetic', which was little understood in the context of arts experience, and the social and judicial labelling of young offenders in particular, where social exclusion is multifaceted.

In a similar vein, Jess[74]' life narrative signposted a unique case of a young man who has had different life experiences from Luani growing up within an ethnically Macedonian community as ethnically Albanian. Vulnerability and a history of a long-term and potentially illuminative connection to Macedonian social reality rap, was richly woven in Jess account alongside criminal activity in the drug-dealing community which shaped his sense of self uniquely, and showed how criminal lifestyle varied across the two cases, with Luani being raised in organised family crime. Given that Luani's body of work was greater, and his participation was followed from beginning to end, his portrait took a more central place than Jess' who was released a week before the final performance event.

In summary, I adopted emergent approach to selecting two cases by way of data saturation, which were unique and offered a range of their artistic and life experiences on a subjective and socio-cultural level. Hence, the study reports on findings for Luani and Jess, in order to provide a personalised approach to their experience of the programme which was less understood in the literatures of arts in prison.

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[73] "It is too simplistic to equate an individualistic perspective with biographical techniques […] Portrayal […] paints a picture of the individual as they are in the here-and-now, as they live and work and reason and enter into social exchange […] portrayal allows us to interpret pasts and measure the significance of futures through the lens of the immediate" (Kushner, p. 63, 2000).

[74] That said, Jess' portrait arising from a more pliable narrative account than Luani's, preserves an equal weight in terms of affording insights into the programmes' contributions to narrative identity. Also, he researcher's encounter with the life story of Luani which revealed layers of ambivalence, complex trauma, and violence into direct focus demanded a larger space to untangle his sense of self.

## 5.4 Analysing Multiple Data Sets: PERforming Portraiture as an Artographic Method

The emergence of artographic portraiture as analysis approach in the present study is based on the integration and dynamic hybridization of poetic and collage inquiry driven by a range of poetic and visual strategies that informed the narrative account of findings. [75.] Departing from my poetic practice, in artographic portraiture I harness the multiplicity of poetic inquiry not restricted to the verbal[76]. Artographic portraiture is thus grounded in the ontological development of my poetic inquiry, and through the assemblage approach also evokes the artographic understanding of 'graphem': seeing through the blend of language and the imagery (Springgay, Irwin, & Leggo, 2007).[77]

Artographic portraiture was adapted from Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis' ground-breaking method of portraiture and its aspects of 1) place/context 2) voice 3) relationship 4) themes 5) aesthetics, and the ways in which these are weaved and generated as a whole (1997). Through poetic inquiry, also used with portraiture in a study of female teachers' identity (Hill, 2005), the initial thematic and axial coding, was being actively weaved into a narrative portrait. The reconfiguring of the portrait was iterative, non-linear, moving across different modes of inquiry throughout the several stages of the research process from data collection, to data analysis. In this context, I decided to work with the data in its native form, in Macedonian language and allow translation to emerge as an organic, simultaneous process, rather than will the translation of clinically selected passages. Following from my own experience with the powerful role of language in forming heritage, I was aware that stifling linguistic plurality is implicated in larger forms of silencing and oppression.[78] For this, I sought the support of a colleague who translated poetry across Albanian and Macedonian language[79], whereas for interview data I sought a linguist colleague's opinion on my translation's

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[76] For example, cubist poetry practices reinforced the visual movements which informed it

[77] I use the term assemblages echoing the complexity of the arts form as it was developed during the visual arts movements surrounding Cubism. The assemblage was a post cubist invention and related to similar movements and techniques in movements like dada, surrealism, impressionism.
See postludes in chapters 6, 7

[78] See 4.2

[79] Greatly indebted to Juljana Mandra's translation efforts

credibility of participants' voice, equivalency of meaning in context.[80] The key aspects of artographic portraiture distinct from the original portraiture method are summarised in Table 5.11.

**Table 5.11 PERforming Artographic Portraiture: Assembled Poetic Inquiry for Wholeness**

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|---|
| ***Artographic assemblages of poetic inquiry*** <br> It responds to the participants' life stories' unique textures, cultures and voices through harnessing the versatility of poetic inquiry. It assembles a plurality of poetic styles as research, beyond the obvious genre boundaries, guided by the poetic and narrative voices of participants. It shapes poetic research medium of inquiry as dialogue with participants by staying closely with the wonder in the data – dwelling in the glow moments to listen for epistemological shatterings (MacLure, 2013). |
| ***Artographic assemblages of relational dwelling with data and participants*** <br> The assemblage of data throughout the narrative account aims to embody data as living actuality of participants' worlds and lives. In staying with the data through the concept of assemblage as multi-dimensional and through harnessing therapeutic relational approaches to research processes, being present with data by engaging in reflexive embodied empathy in order to generate non-pathologising expanded seeing into young lives (Finley, 2009). |
| ***Artographic assemblages of programme's multi-dimensional time-space*** <br> Inquiry into programme sites and artistic responses aims to capture the centrality of space and time to understanding wholeness of artistic experience and life events across the life span situated within the programme and prison life. It is interested in the possibilities of agency and relations over time and how they are shaped spatially. As such, the inquiry involves repetitions, configurations and refractions of data in order to push the possibilities of themes, clarify and capture findings in a non-linear manner beyond a search for identity change in a conversion and linear sense (Hickey-Moody, 2016) |

I use the term artography as already encompassing the plural possibilities of the arts, inclusive of spoken word and poetry in performance, following an impetus to free my artographic methodology of elitist and simple genre constraints – to free my poetic inquiry from epistemic violence. As such, my artographic methodology drives a poetic inquiry for wholesomeness, which assumes that lives of imprisoned young men are whole even as they are disrupted by trauma, criminal upbringing, social exclusion and cultural violence. Similarly, arts-based research in education was challenged to re-evaluate its conception of 'art', predominantly situated in elicits discourse, towards participatory and inclusive approach to the arts as cultural and social movement (Pathmanathan, 2014).[81]

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[80] Grateful for translation feedback to Afrodita Bojadzieva
[81] To capture this Pathmanathan used the term 'un-art', with 'art' referring to 'elitist' notions of art, with my emphasis being on liberating art-based research as she concludes: "slam poetry needs to be accepted as a whole art form rather than attempting to fit it within the canon of a Westernized 'art' practice. It is not

Assemblage captures both the process and the product of the poetic inquiry and multidimensional movement in time and space. As the Cubist approach relies on fragmentation, I found this approach to be particularly conducive for studying the wholeness of experience that feels fragmented, as the experience of violence creates a devastating and deeply entrenched sense of fragmented self (Sen, 2007). Cubist poems can juxtapose fragmented perspectives from the same phenomenon, or be assembled out of actual or textual fragments. In the cubist poetic inquiry, where I adopted the juxtaposition of textual data visually, I follow Appolinaire' calligrammatic style:

> Psychologically it is of no importance that this visible image be composed of fragments of spoken language, for the bond between these fragments is no longer the logic of grammar but an ideographic logic culminating in an order of spatial disposition totally opposed to discursive juxtaposition. It is the opposite of narration, is of all literary forms the one that most requires discursive logic (Seitz, p. 15, 1961).

To do so in my artographic portraiture, in addition to relational narrative aesthetic account of the themes and findings situated in prison life, I harnessed the versatility of poetic inquiry as research. Specifically, my portraiture analysed multiple data sets of individual life stories, workshop observations, participants' poems and visual outputs with assemblages of poetic inquiry. These included: data-remixed found poems, which I later found that Denmead argued can be a methodology in its own right borrowing from DJ practices to subvert canonical scholarship (Denmead, 2015); cubist poems (Seitz, 1961); poetic collaging (Heaton, 2018), assemblages of visual metaphors, dialogic and performative spoken word poetry (Johnson, 2018, Nikolova, 2018), therapeutically-guided drawing with poetic symbols.

I was drawn to the assemblage as a poetic medium to develop poetic inquiry that juxtaposes data as the material – but data are not objects, they are the living actuality of young people's lived realities:

> In thought-provoking ways assemblage is poetic rather than realistic, for each constituent element can be transformed. Physical materials and their auras are transmuted into a new amalgam that both transcends and includes its parts. When, as in a primitive cult object, a shell becomes a human eye because of its context, the accepted hierarchy of categories

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enough to allow pieces of slam poetry into academic work to comply with the agenda of publishers. It must be accepted in its entirety in order to fully uncover the potential of a slam research methodology (Pathmanathan, p. 64, 2014)". To do this, she harnessed lessons from participatory action research as well as anti-oppressive research (feminist and indigenous theories) that trouble power imbalance and discriminatory exclusion on the grounds of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, disability.

(as the surrealists delighted in pointing out) is disrupted. When the meanings of highly charged units impinge on a poetic as well as on physical or visual level, significant expression becomes possible. The assembler, therefore, can be a metaphysician (because his units are loosely related rather than expository) and a poet who mingles attraction and repulsion, natural and human identification (Seitz, p. 83, 1961).

My poetic inquiry approach modelled on cubist artistic clarification and perception of things, relied on a process of intentional simplification and 'objectification' of data in order to then engage with complexification and potential avenues of complex insights through perspective-taking, harnessing embodied responses to data. Thus, I argue how the combination of different ways of knowing, the multiplicity of methods and tools and modalities opened up the data in surprising ways valuable to exposing artistic depth.

The potential of artographic portraiture in relation to the community of spoken word poets, educators, researchers, draws on the arts-based research developments. For example, a recent theorisation of poetic inquiry as a research method, reviewed its history and functions (Vincent, 2018) and concluded its continuing versatility in research. In addition, throughout the analysis I also discovered collaborative poetics, which enhanced the ways in which I revisited the role of my artographic-therapeutic collaboration to enhance empathy and trouble my own prejudices presented within the findings chapters to come (Johnson, 2018).

## 5.5 Revisiting the Programme's Artographic Design in the Context of Criminology

The choice of artographic research design in the present study, as argued thus far supported though the presented piloting lessons, places the arts' aesthetics, imagination, diversity and creativity centre stage to capture the multiple contributions of the arts in prison reviewed in Chapter 2. The programme focuses on the creativity of poetic practice and its potential reach in young offenders' lives. For example, thinking with existing creativity knowledge, some important aspects to consider is humanising dialogue as the generative channel of new ideas at its core. The importance of memories for the present study is thus in relation to how young people recall and reflect on past experience as well as how they narrate and incorporate this in their life stories through poetry and the arts-based programme workshops.

As a result, criminological revitalised interest in the arts, can be informed by arts-based and creativity approaches to arts in prison. For example, given the narrative criminology and narrative identity study of offender distance, the following model introduces creativity as potential aspect of offender personal and social being. Specifically, I adapted the narrative process of self-development to include ways in which life experience is not only told through stories in everyday life, but it is also voiced through the creative process of writing and performing poetry (McLean et al., 2007a).
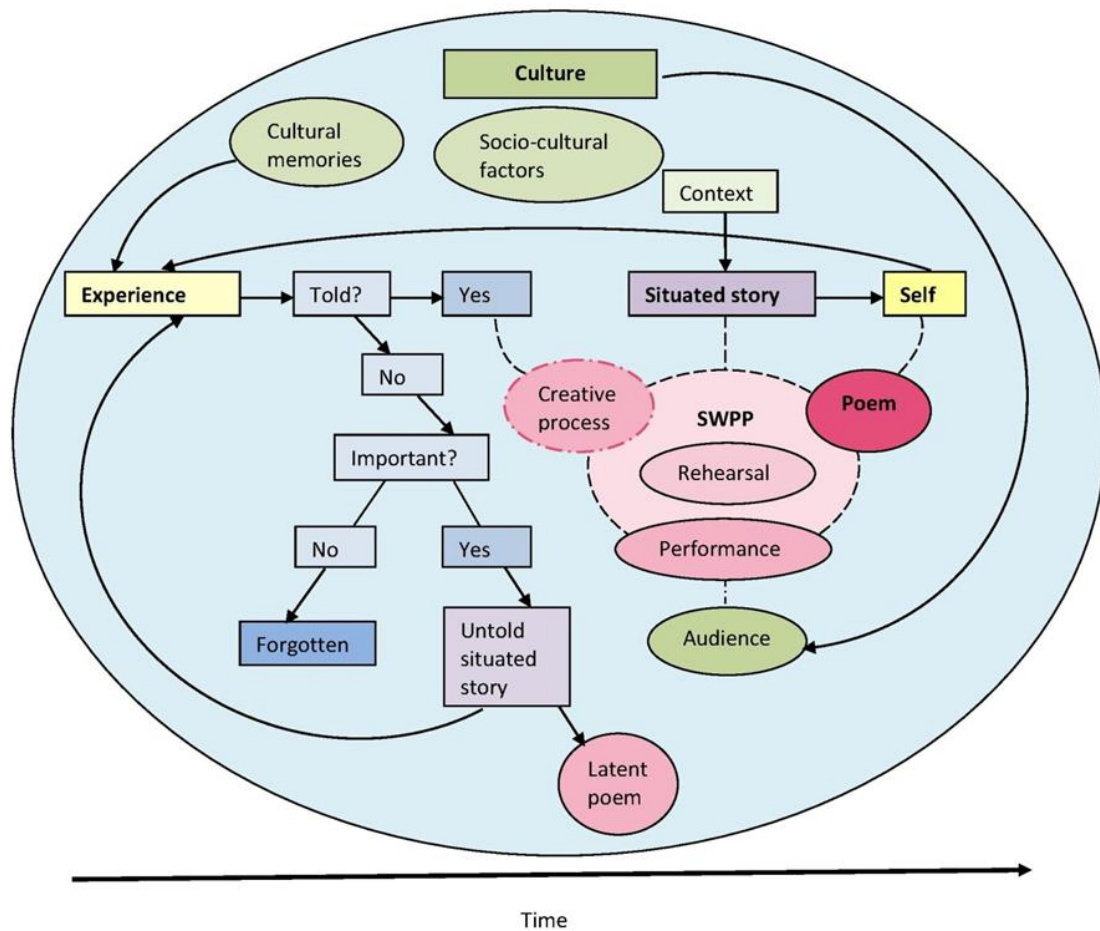


**Figure 5.5 Refocusing on Creativity of Spoken Word Practices – Adapted from the Narrative Process Model for Self-Development (McLean, Pasupathi & Pals, 2007)**

The model is adapted from McLean, Pasupathi and Pals' narrative process-model for self-development which centres on "the flow from experience to self (2007, p. 264).[82] The life story, an autobiographical account of experiences, entails the situated stories that people cultivate over time relationally in a given socio-cultural context. Self-defining autobiographical memories enable the examination of the life story in terms of its details (specificity), participants' meaning making processes (meaning), emotional response to memories or experiences (affective dimension), the central themes (content) (Blagov & Singer, 2004).

This process model of creative arts practice, argues that the world and discourse of the programme has some overlaps with the process of narrating life stories but does not set out to target narrative identity per se. The story elicited through the creative process may also be situated because it is developed in a specific context. The narrative models' account for the feedback of parents, close relatives and friends, may be also relevant for the role of the audience response in a programme which becomes crucial in providing a similar feedback for the poems. The poems are a vehicle for creating fictional selves or desired selves the process of which may potentially provide a bridge for reflecting on the real-world identity (Weinstein & West, 2012). Forgotten experiences still carry a latent poem in them which with may be recalled and given importance with the help of arts stimuli and the arts community.

The adapted process model here proposes that through an artographic design focusing on the creativity of spoken word poetry in practice, life experience may become a situated story as part of the creative process when voiced in a poem. This adapted model reconsiders literary proposition for narrative work with offenders by opening up ideas of literariness to include the aesthetic of spoken word. Also, thinking of the overviewed criminological streams that account for the personal, social and communal aspect of rehabilitation, the model aims to expand the position of the arts beyond narrative and literary domains. It does so by situating the design within the wider creativities of spoken

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[82] The process-model for narrative self-development also entails elements of the self, like self-concept and self-esteem, beyond the present study's scope (McLean et al., 2007), which focuses on life story in performance.

word poets' own practices, which require further research if the full scope and reach of the arts in prison can be credibly described.

## 5.6 Staying with the Ethical Imperatives of Artographic Prison Research

While this section offers a discussion of the process of ensuring ethical practice in the study, I have made attempts to weave ethical considerations and my reflexivity throughout the thesis.[83]Ensuring ethics with the arts in a prison setting required careful and extensive consideration of the state of prison practice and research in Macedonia[84]. I adopted an approach to ethics as a process in the work with the imprisoned young men participating in the programme (Liamputtong, 2006). The ethics process entailed several dimensions, which I discuss here from informed consent and legal responsibilities, through risk management and safeguarding of participants and myself, to training collaborators. I conclude with a reflection on my own role as a female and vulnerable researcher with vulnerable and marginalised participants, informed by the pilot I conducted in the actual prison site in Macedonia.

### 5.6.1 Managing Risks and Safeguarding

I approached informed consent in a holistic manner. This meant I obtained multiple consent forms from various stakeholders prior to the delivery of programme activities, which was informed by my understanding of the prison system hierarchy in North Macedonia[85]. Specifically, first I obtained informed consent form for the study from the acting director of the Directorate for Sanctions at the Ministry of Justice in 2016, who has the overarching authority over the work of all prisons in North Macedonia. Second, I

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[83] In accordance with the ethical guidance by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011) and the UK Social Research Association (SRA)

[84] In 5.2.1 I explained the expert guidance of my PhD mid-progress viva examiner Dr Caroline Lanskey was key in establishing a robust foundation for considering informed ways to engage with ethics as a poet and educator new to arts research in a prison setting. As a result, I sought information from criminologists, human rights practitioners and academics from Macedonia which was crucial in devising a plan for collaboration with the Macedonian Ministry of Justice as well as with the Macedonian prison staff.

[85] Note that I indicate 'acting' to describe stakeholder roles, because since the government transition in North Macedonia in 2018, both Ministry of Justice director as well as prison governor posts have been filled by other individuals.

obtained an informed consent from the acting prison governor in 2016, given that he acted as the main gate-keeper of young offender participants, in addition to the two prison psychologists. Following the pilot, I also obtained informed consent forms from invited guest artists, which involved informal briefing of their legal responsibilities to abide by the ethics code of education research as well as the Macedonian law for data protection[86].  For example, the programme practice entailed pre and post workshop debriefing with core educator Ivana and core poet educator Elena, as well as informal conversations with prison psychologists and prisons staff. In this I sought to identify ethical issues as well as increase reflexivity in a dynamic manner.

To increase the moral validity of the written informed consent by the prison governor as gatekeeper, I involved participants and their assigned psychologists through the process of informed consent[87]. Particularly, the introductory session in the prison made sure to offer direct disclosure of programme aims and negotiation of programme objectives with participants. I also checked participants understand the research aspect of the programme, and that they can voluntarily opt in and out of the study or certain programme activities as the programme progresses[88].

In this session, even though all of the participants were fluent in Macedonian language, I relied on participants' own cultural input (Dickson-Swift, 2005). I welcomed the proficiency of some of the participants in both Albanian and Macedonian to mediate and clarify meaning in translation across languages. Also, given the cultural diversity and social marginalised of participants, I spoke in my own dialect, inviting discussion in Macedonian dialectal variations to ensure mutual understanding.  This was weaved throughout the programme, by including Albanian and Turkish translations of English poems, as well as representing leading artistic examples created in these languages.

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[86] Documented in Macedonian on university letterhead, for pragmatic reasons only two key informed consent forms are included in appendices. Artists forms available if required in future research correspondence

[87] See 5.2.3

[88] One of the participants decided to opt out of the final performance event of the study. Also, one of the participants, whose participation in the programme I discuss as part of the two cases in the study, was released a week prior to the performance event. While as a result, this participant decided not to take part in it, when managing expectations with his, we decided that he would work on developing his poems, and performance at main rehearsal with artists.

From the start, I informed participants of the limits to my ability to ensure confidentiality of their responses in instances of legal matters. Particularly, I explained to participants that should they wish to discuss an undisclosed criminal activity as part of the programme, I have a legal duty to inform the authorities. In addition, concerning confidentiality, I stated that recording of our interview conversations while helpful for my record was not a requirement. For trust building as well as to mitigate socially desirable answers and the likelihood that participants consent to recording due to power imbalance, I did not record the interviews during the pilot stage. However, I explained to participants that my educator collaborator would take notes for research purposes. I made sure to remind participants of their right to decide how much and what they wish to disclose of their pasts throughout. In this context, I was aware of potential dilemmas that may arise in my analysis and findings presentation process concerning participants' reference to criminal pasts. While I took reasonable steps to establish clear and open flow of communication with participants and prison staff with regards to any potential ethical concerns, in the findings presentation I decided to redact some details of sensitive information that I felt would best protect participants' autonomy while ensuring the integrity of the research remained intact (Melrose 2002).

In terms of risk management, a key priority for safeguarding participants was adapting the programme in a way that would not further marginalise participants or cause harm. To do so, the programme had built in activities for trust building throughout, and I relied on the psychologists' expertise in areas where my own was limited to discern and respond to potential mental health support for participants. For this I conducted interviews with the prison psychologists, midway through the programme, to ensure I had sufficient knowledge to be responsive to participants' needs; while at the same time I didn't with the knowledge of participants' psychological profile to influence my views very early on into the programme. This approach meant that I aimed to relate to participants primarily through our interaction, while gradually enhancing my understanding of their criminal and psychological background from both their own accounts as well as gatekeepers' input. Thus, I developed multiple relations in the prison and felt reassured that participants would have access to mental health support throughout as well as after the programme completion.

While studies such as this one aim to empower participants, often they pose the risk of potential re-traumatisation of vulnerable and marginalised participants. It was encouraging during the pilot that some of the participants were open to trust and talk to me and the educator. However, the pilot indicated the responsibility we had in drawing undrawable boundaries to make the programme a safe and secure space for both researcher and educator, as well as participants. For example, the trust activity showed me the need for progressive sensitivity in modelling consistency and negotiating expectations with participants, especially as some discussed hurt as a result of broken trust by friends and family.

In negotiating expectations, participants said that reciprocity could be achieved if they felt that I saw their input as part of the programme as valuable for the research aspect of the study. As a result, I emphasised that many of the artists they will work alongside, myself included, some of whom have had history of either contact with the criminal justice system or social marginalisation themselves, connect through our art and poetry. I hoped that this reassured participants not to feel pressure to disclose personal information for the research aspect, as their own artistic responses were of central value to the programme.

Regarding participants' wellbeing, the pilot study indicated the arts-based design of the programme, both the creative workshops with creative data collection methods could be potentially therapeutic for participants. Mainly, given the effort to build trust during the pilot, participants particularly enjoyed the individual life story workshop we trialled. This was because outside of the group, they felt more comfortable to share their stories with the educator Ivana and myself only. Similarly, given my choice to conduct partnered interviews to support participants and the research process better, I felt that this was also conducive to my own wellbeing. For example, it enabled me to draw boundaries when necessary by sharing responsibilities with the educator Ivana in our work with participants.

Additional aspect of ensuring personal safety both for participants and myself, was adopting strategies that borrowed from ethnographic research, summarised as follows:

> Ethnographers have written about passing a series of "character tests" to gain acceptance (Ayala 1996; Dordick 1997; Horowitz 1995; Marquart 1986) [...] [In addition to non-judgmental listening, some strategies involve] "becoming a non-expert, refusing to witness, and taking a stand" [...] Distancing is defined as withdrawing from participant activities to avoid over involvement with members. Anchoring is defined as deepening involvement in participant activities to gain acceptance into member culture (in Castellano, p.171, 2007).

Following Poulton's practice in gendered research with football hooligans, I also implemented common sense strategies like carrying a mobile phone, and informing a close friend of my whereabouts at all times (Poulton, 2014). Inside the prison, I made sure I was aware of the prison spaces, and surveillance points, and was aware of my right to refuse to inhabit unknown spaces. Familiarity with the prison site, however facilitated I felt my ability to simultaneously to trust and show respect to participants who took part of the study. For instance, we would walk together towards the wing area where the psychologists' offices were located, but I refused to witness participants' private spaces to preserve not only their privacy but also participants' dignity as I was aware that wings were crammed and in poor shape based on reports of prison conditions[89].

Gender influenced what themes and topics of prison life were readily available for discussion with female educators. Based on the pilot, it appeared that young offenders considered revealing instances of prison deprivation to be 'too rough' for educators and artists who were female. Arguably, this could've also been implicated in the need to build trust over time. To create a space for trust building across insider-outsider divisions, for the programme I relied on strategic introduction of prison themes like ideas of freedom through artistic examples.[90] I sensed that some of the participants were surprised by my informal communication in my own dialect as well as positioning myself as their equal in the educator participant dynamic. Some of the participants as a result said this was different from their past experiences of training programmes. Specifically, they thought female educators were more empathetic than male, and that educators and artists were more relaxed and approachable than other practitioners.

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[89] Throughout fieldwork however, as I discuss in the findings, the programme enabled participants to discuss prison deprivations without feeling judged.

[90] I introduced a book written by Serbian ex-offenders in one of our classroom discussions. Mutual exploration of the pains of imprisonment and power dynamics in Serbian prison context, enabled young offenders to see the workshops as a non-judgmental space and thus talk to female educators about prison life.

I was mindful that participants' voiced perception while positive, approachability may be interpreted by some as grounds for taking a romantic interest in educators. For this the team elicited reflections on gender indirectly where appropriate, particularly participants' reflection on their relation to female figures in their lives, in order to clearly state our role as educators and artists came with responsibility to uphold professional and ethical relations. I realised in hindsight how a more explicit awareness of my feminist artographic standpoint during fieldwork data collection would have illuminated a stronger recognition of how my researcher self was shaping the interactions with marginalised young men (Grand, 2014). I was able to hone in on my artographic practice progressively after fieldwork as well as after writing the thesis. This practice was key in troubling my perception of imprisoned young men's masculinities as secluded from the prison realities or popular culture. Also, this helped me reconsider how the men in the study may have perceived me not only through the gendered lens in my role as artographer but also through the lens of the intersecting qualities of my identity as a working-class white minority woman from an elite university.[91]

In a prison infrastructure falling short of meeting prison residents' needs, the programme aimed to offer access to and participation in the arts and education as a human and cultural right (Hughes, 2005). Also, to invite voluntary commitment to workshops and interest in the arts primarily, the programme was not attached to any privileges like sentence reduction or parole incentive. In the seminar with prison staff, workshops were scheduled in line with the prison's activities, which meant that the programme wouldn't disrupt participants lifestyle and for some their work commitments in the prison.[92]

Specifically, some of the programme delivery factors that supported the ethical practice were also in line with the guidance for prison visit conduct by the Directorate for Sanctions:

- the staff's familiarity with participants' needs

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[91] See Chapter 4 for discussion of my evolving artographic standpoint

[92] A criminologist from the Helsinki committee involved in a project for staff's professional development concerning correctional education, thought that the young people in the correctional institution were less committed to the project than those in the prison possibly due to the shorter nature of their sentences.

- staff's expertise to respond adequately in emergencies
- prison officers' experience of supporting the resocialisation process activities
- the workshop plans were rehearsed and coordinated well with the local teacher acting as a core collaborator for smooth delivery
- artographers were briefed in advance about the research and practice components and ethical responsibility with mutually agreed protocol for handling unpredictable situations

For instance, there was a shared understanding among artists that in potential situations of emotional distress at workshops, of feeling threatened during fieldwork, the emphasis should remain on staying calm in order to clearly think and decide on the best course of action. For example, one option is the use of "de-escalation and disengagement techniques" (Parker & O'Reilly, 2013, p. 351) built into the one step removed activities I adopted from the Geese Theatre training[93]. Another strategy to prevent potential conflicts, was also inspired by Geese Theatre practitioners' use of contracts with participants particularly when working with men to tackle violent behaviour (Bergman & Hawish, 1996). Similarly, during the piloting in the prison, the introductory session enabled artographers to elicit from the group to create and write down a set of shared values and expectations for workshop behaviour, which meant we could evoke and go back to the values as required.

Finally, while I did consider having built-in counselling debriefing throughout the fieldwork, this option turned out unavailable to me at the time. After fieldwork, I attended group counselling for PhD students at the University of Cambridge. I concluded that artists as well as sensitive researchers working with vulnerable and marginalised communities which involves emotional exposure, require integral systems in place for our own resilience. This is an ethical imperative, if we wish to create as safe and as secure artistic spaces as possible both for our participants as well as ourselves.

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[93] Completing a three-day intensive training with the Geese Theatre company practitioners raised my awareness to be sensitive as to how far participants are comfortable and willing to share on a given topic. One aspect that was stressed for the interactive activities like role-play or ice-breakers which require movement was the specification not to touch people in the group without their permission. The facilitators' responsibility was to layout these expectations for everyone to respect the personal space of others and their opinions. Another precaution when using role-play was also not to dwell too long on the victim, which may trigger guilt and embarrassment among participants.

## 5.6 Narrative Stop: Revisiting Methodological turns, Research Design, and Methods

## Table 5.12 Summary of Methodological Decisions

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|---|---|
| **Methodology** | • Artographic methodology<br>• Social constructivist => Arts-based research paradigm<br>• Two artographic portraiture case studies of Macedonian Albanian male young offenders |
| **Position of the Researcher** | • Relational research: being present and responsive to participants' needs while seeking to establish an emotionally, psychologically, and physically safe space for harmonious relationships<br>• Actively seeking to relate with reflexive (embodied) empathy with support from an artographic community of practice<br>• Artographic approaches to relationship building with participants navigating the roles of poet performer/educator/researcher<br>• Ethnographic strategies for navigating the challenges of prison research<br>• Guided by feminist lens to embodying artographic practice in the programme facilitation |
| **Data Collection Methods** | Multi-method data collection:<br>• Workshop observations<br>• individual life story and follow-up interviews using arts-based elicitation and evaluative tools<br>• self-authored poems |
| **Pilot Studies** | • World poetry slam championship (Paris, 2015) – interviews with competing poets yielded insight into slam community, diverse poets' views on the competition, and their pedagogical practices:<br>    o Poetry slam as a rite of passage into the artistry of spoken word poetry<br>    o Poetry slam pedagogy is rooted in being real and sharing personal stories with accepting diverse communities<br>    o Performance is an aesthetic and mindful experience of bearing witness to personal and collective cultural memories<br>• Centre for Social Initiatives "Hope" (Skopje, 2015): piloting workshop with social workers and teachers offered insight into revising the facilitation approach to activities with precise and assessable instructions.<br>• Prison workshops (HPM Wayland, 2015; HPM Grendon, 2016): gaining confidence in workshop facilitation in a prison setting. |
| **Research Design** | • Emergent sampling: actively seeking to dynamically select two or three participants for case study analysis from 6 participants in total;<br>• Practice driven research design: the new programme served as the research design entailing the data collection methods as part of the programme facilitation, which afforded a sensitive and ethical approach to data collection |
| **Analysis** | Analysis using the artographic portraiture method involved three interlinked phases involving going back and forth:<br>• thematic and axial coding<br>• therapeutic embodied approaches<br>• narrative/poetic/collage inquiry. |

The present study's research design follows three fieldwork stages: entering the field, being in the field and leaving the field entailed the programme delivery. The programme's key stakeholders include 6 young offenders, 3 core workshop co-facilitators including the researcher, 2 prison psychologists, and a number of prison officers. Table 5.4 offers an overview of the methodological decisions, and the research design performed as a new programme integrating arts-based data collection methods as part of the arts practice.

**Contextual Preamble to Luani and Jess' Artistic Responses to the Programme**

*Chain link fence surrounds the prison yard. As we step foot inside the prison the educator Ivana and I are greeted by a group of expectant young men. A narrow path between the fence and the prison wall leads to the entrance of the prison classroom on the ground floor. The classroom that will become the heart and soul of our performing community. Left of the main entrance gate there is a door to the prison kitchen. Jess and Deki make it a welcoming and parting ritual to stand by the kitchen door smoking cigarettes on our way in and out of the prison: a wave of smiles washing over all of our faces. The prison yard is a place to relax outdoors, or gamble over a game of chess to earn some money. As Luani likes to boast "I do business, I can make 10 denars into 50, only go up never go down, even the psychologists they see me here and say 'don't do that'". The "Do's and Don'ts" of prison are not the business of educators, Luani is quick to explain – months into the programme we find ourselves sitting across the table and reading stories by Serbian ex-offenders from a book titled "A beginner's guide to prison". The stories unfold more stories: "It's just like here, it's all the same in our prison as well, especially about the junkies queuing for their meds" – explains Deki in disbelief. Koni clings to the book as he awaits a long-term sentence, but for a brief moment the "ex" in "offenders" announces another part of the prison stories: the prospect of rebuilding one's life. The prison classroom on the ground floor appeared to be the only warm place over winter during workshop hours when prison residents would flock in and gather around the stove to keep warm. Only four months back into the summer, the same classroom saw MCB jump onto a chair to perform his acrostic poem as part of our introductory sessions.*

July, 2016

Geographically, the prison is located in the city centre within a residential area – the prison yard is easily overlooked from the terraces of the neighbouring buildings. Moreover, the prison café is located outside the prison gate by a back street opposite a local hostel. The city of Ohrid is a tourist city located by the Ohrid lake one of the oldest European lakes. Participants can acquire a privilege to sit at the café before lunch and sometimes they walk up to the lake or through the market which affords them another experience of freedom. For example, Deki talks in his poem about the meditative or reflective moments he has had sitting by the lake beholding its beauty and reflecting on his life and what the future may hold.

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The prison cells are rooms for four people crammed together. The young men kept some of the New Year and final performance decorations from the final performance the prison in their own rooms. The prison spaces appeared divided in participants' views according to how they identified individuals. For example, the young men attending substance misuse treatment were referred to as the "junkies". Context is important in terms of delineating the power dynamics among the researcher and participants. For example, as a female researcher I was led into the 'nice' spaces of the prison that participants made sure to maintain well in order that we felt comfortable. Luani would sweep the floor clean before many of the workshops, prison officers or participant would have had the fire burning and the classroom warm and cosy, and some of them like Deki would bring us some freshly brewed Turkish coffee from the kitchen. Thus, there was a sense of homeliness and hospitality for the educators and guest artists in the prison which is not the part of the common daily routine of the prison environment.

Upon a visit after the end of the programme, we found the classroom abandoned, floors littered and dirty, transformed from the workshop learning space into space approximating a messy living room, with socks drying on the wooden hangers by the door and male shorts drying on the chairs by the desks. This was one instance indicating that the spaces of the prison have different aesthetic and organization affording disparate roles to people occupying the same and the other way around.

The portraits of Luani and Jess, unfold evidence of the ways in which they harnessed the programme spaces to build their artistic practice and new relationships with educators/artists. The three stages of the programme saw participants engage with a range of artistic performances, experimenting with styles by way of emulation, and uncensored expression. Hence, the final performance reflected a range of distinct and resonant voices.

# CHAPTER 6: LUANI'S ARTOGRAPHIC PORTRAIT – "MY VOICE RISES ON THE MIC"

This chapter traces Luani's responses to the programme over time, which elicited exploration of his life story and his artistic experience within the prison life, with reference to the socio-cultural and political context in Macedonia. Luani's narrative and poetry enabled me to see Luani as a multifaceted young man, a child, a son, a student of life, a human being, an offender, a poet performer. The chapter's organisation presents three findings in response to the two research questions of the present study[94]. The three thematic streams of the findings include Arts Practice: A Narrative of Survival and Creative Agency[95], Emergent Practice-Based Pedagogy: Traumatic and Alternative Narratives[96], Performance Community: Validating Artistic Ways of Being[97]. The three findings are thus twofold. One part of the finding captures the programme development with artistic responses and experiences it elicits; the other part enquiries into Luani's personal meanings of his artistic experience. The narrative account that follows also weaves my voice in visual and poetic form which invites a dialogue with Luani's own visuals and poetry to enquire into hard-to-reach meanings. I also explore therapeutic approaches to embodied empathy in relation to Luani's sensitive life experiences.

## Prelude: Meeting Luani, 'The Cool Lad'

The prelude provides a bridge across the first encounter with Luani, and, the river journeying with him along the narrative of his life. Poetic enquiry into the glow moments of our emerging relationship revealed my preconceived beliefs about prison and young offenders – it signposted Luani's ways of being in the world. Luani was neither secluded from popular culture nor was he out of touch with the realities of a criminal justice system. In fact, he had been adept at navigating prison from a very young age, and astute at impression management. If anything, as a poet new to prison research, I was the one that was out of touch with the cultural politics of prison.

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[94] See p. 54
[95] See 6.1
[96] See 6.2
[97] See 6.3

**Box 6.1 Artographic Reflection – First Encounter with Luani**

*A young man in a purple tank top, aged 18, walked away from a game of chess with the swagger of a 'cool lad' and grinned at me from behind the chain-link fence of the prison yard. His inquisitive gaze followed mine as I made my way towards the prison classroom accompanied by the educator, Ivana. Luani's unmistakable presence was permeated by a seductive laid-back attitude. His exaggerated confidence was balanced by a soft voice, a tall lean figure with a 'baby face' and light blue-green eyes. He approached us amusedly together with another contained and a serious looking young man who called himself MCB. We exchanged simple greetings and then in the classroom met the two together with the rest of the participants for an introductory session to the programme. It was a bright summer day in July 2016. I noticed a group of young men dressed in worn-out clothes, unlike Luani and MCB's, were watching timidly from a distant area in the yard. Luani introduced himself during an individual river journey interview. As we sat by the classroom desk conversing I noticed a set of deteriorated upper teeth, and a tinge of subdued huskiness to his voice. I later came to learn about his history of substance misuse and active chain smoking. Luani assumed the role of 'the fool' in the group, making a light-hearted first impression with humour and childlike insistence on having all eyes on him. Often taciturn, he would test the group's and educators' responses with provocative comments. Luani's playfulness announced his affinity for affecting the energy in the group, which I gradually began to see as his affinity for calculated impression management.*

*Introductory workshop, July, 2016*

Reassembling the first impressions of Luani with poetic enquiry revealed the ways of relating we both brought into the spaces of the programme.

**Box 6.2 Poetic Enquiry – Reassembling First Encounter with Luani[98]**

*The flow of the river engulfs the warm walls of a prison classroom which is otherwise a living room built in the likes of homes, in a god-forsaking country, a god-forsaken home, a sort of aching without the sharp edges of a blade, the sharpness of being ablaze – the yard is the heart – the yard is in the heart of the prison. "A rose that grew from concrete" is 'a philosophy, I don't like philosophies'", I only write about what I know" – "I will draw the mirrors and lights to reflect what I want" – says Luani, rose petalled syllables of sound, concrete, his body bent over the chessboard in the middle of the prison yard, his body could've been anyone's. A game of play. A play of game. "I am not game" – the researcher thought. "If I wanted you to be, you would've been".*

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[98] Luani's voice quoted from interviews, indicated in orange, is a form of poetic intuiting of meaning behind his words and evoking the affective space of our relation through my subjective lens, to open up the account.

Alluded to in the poem, the prison setting's substandard conditions (e.g. crammed cells, heating turned off in winter) disrupted my view of the programme. I realised the programme took a life of its own in the real-world being in the prison moment to moment and artistically that announced the potential for re-inventing prison spaces. Inhabiting those spaces of shared artistic journeying enabled us to re-create new ways of relating.

Later in the year Luani, Ivana and I sat around a desk in the middle of the prison classroom in front of a blackboard. Logs were burning in the stove, warmth permeating the air. The fabric of our coats would absorb the stove smoke long after the session had ended. Weeks after, the smell of the smoke evoked the seamless flux of conversations during workshops, and the mix of emotions flowing from young men's voices at open mics. I proposed that Luani imagine life as a river, at which he playfully stated, *"Yes, you can imagine it as a river or as anything you wish".*
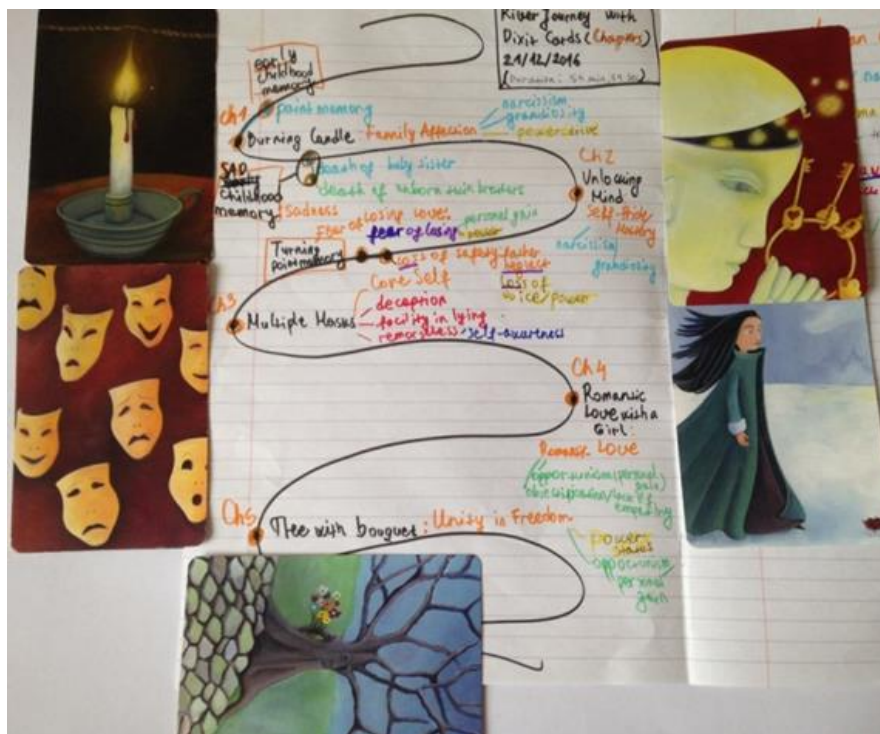


**Figure 6.1 Luani's River Journey with Visual Metaphors[99]**

Half-way through the programme we have already developed a shared understanding of the river journey interview as charting critical life events. Luani sifted through the pack

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[99] I created the notes in English during my analysis.

of illustrated Dixit cards, unravelling the story of his life from childhood through to his future.

## 6.1 Arts Practice: Narrative of Survival, Crime and Creative Agency

Luani was born in an average Albanian household to parents involved in organised intergenerational family crime passed on from his mother's family. In Luani's early years the family moved from the territory of Kosovo around 2002, a Macedonian city predominately Albanian.

**Table 6.1 Survival and Criminal Agency: River Journey Visual Metaphors**

| Metaphor for intimacy 'Votive Candle ' | Metaphor for deception 'Wearing Masks' | Metaphor for romantic love 'Ideal Woman' |
|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |
| Luani's believes his father's secret lover cares for his wellbeing through prayer and lighting candles. Knowledge of his father's secret extra-marital affair is one example of Luani's **embodiment of spatiotemporal agency,** explored further in the context of childhood bereavement.[100] | *Wearing masks* stands for Luani's independence through his learned lifestyle **self-interest and crime**. He perfects his lifestyle through multiple forms of **deception.[101]** | For Luani, the *'Ideal' Woman* is a metaphor of a patriarchal ideal of femininity. Such a woman is physically beautiful, pious, virtuous, and submissive to her husband. The 'ideal' woman shows Luani's affinity for **male domination[102]**, and it thus reveals multiple forms of gender violence in Luani's relations with women. |

He is the youngest of four siblings, two sisters and one brother. Luani's fifth and youngest sister died in infancy when he was nine. Family power dynamics of organised crime, perceived patriarchal social norms in Albanian ethnicity emerged in Luani's narrative of resilient survival of adversity from early childhood, and a resistance to unspoken parental neglect began to surface in Luani's creative agency through poetic voice. The

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[100] See 6.1.1
[101] See 6.1.2
[102] See 6.1.2

visual metaphors helped Luani narrate personal meanings of life experiences, three of which form part of the present account shown in Table 6.1.

Emerging from the toxic family environment, Luani's account and artistic engagement unravel a complex way of being. If Luani navigated a violent patriarchal home with a spatiotemporal presence and devised means of survival as captured in his metaphor of the 'votive candle', adolescence is wrought with trauma and mastery of problematic lifestyle, often morally wrong and criminal. Particularly, Luani mastered the art of deception and self-interested motive in relationships, captured in Luani's own visual and orally described metaphor of 'wearing masks'[103]. The pursuit of independence from family created the pressure to uphold an unsustainable scripted masculinity manifested interpersonal relations. The present section traces the context of such masculinity and its ramifications in the form of multiple forms of gender violence foregrounded in Luani's metaphor of the 'ideal' woman.

*6.1.1 Spatiotemporal Agency: "It's how my soul is"*

Traced in the present section are the multiple ways Luani devised to navigate a restrictive home environment embroiled in a patriarchal worldview. On the one hand, family crime and trauma are disempowering. On the other, Luani devices survival agency relying on space and time to minimise the devastating effects of adversity. Critical memories of navigating adversity include Luani's secret bond with his father; his dropping out of school; and the loss of his baby sister. The memory of loss complicates the centrality of the father figure unfolding the decentralised yet formative role of Luani's mother as his primary caregiver. Nonetheless, Luani's sense of self emerges through his idealised relationship with his father. The survival strategy from Luani's childhood unfolded as problematic and criminal lifestyle in his adolescence.

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[103] See Table 6.1. And 6.1.2

The votive candle represents Luani's father's love, his shield from childhood to the present moment. The centrality of fatherly love emerges in a male bond between Luani and his father. Luani's knowledge of his father's extramarital affair is the kernel of the memory, which becomes evident in the repetitions Luani uses in the excerpt below like 'I don't know'[104]. The memory is not as much based on Luani's relationship to his father's lover as it is on Luani's male bond with his father. Ultimately, the male bond provides an avenue for Luani to form a perceived intimacy with his father:

**Box 6.3 River Journey Visual Metaphor 'Votive Candle'**

*The image of the Votive candle metaphor depicts a tall white burning candle in a grey old-fashioned handle holder resting on a flat surface that appears to be a brown wooden table. Instead of melting wax, there are two lines of blood-red drops dripping from the burning candle's wick. The intense flame is placed against a dark grey background with nothing else in sight but a thin horizontal rope. The rope is burnt by the candle flame. The votive candle metaphor evokes sorrow, peril and fragility. The imagery evokes Luani's woundedness, which fundamentally erupts from the account of his childhood. The candle as a source of love can be interpreted as Luani's desire to heal the wounds of abuse and unacknowledged lovelessness.*

*Luani:*        *for example, the **candle** I see, for example, you see, I am **born Muslim**, **I don't know** what, **my father** has **something with her**, **I don't know, some woman** lights plenty of candles in the church, **she** was **praying** for me, **some woman** – **I don't know who**, it's what **father** told me and **she loves me a lot this woman, I don't know** what **she** is to me, **she's no family** to me, **she's a friend**, **I don't know what she is to Dad**.*
(Interview 3)

The secret bond requires a non-explicit language of communication. Luani has learned to weave meanings between the lines, and in his body language. Seemingly invisible and esoteric, Luani devises a voice that is spatiotemporally embodied as a form of agency and avenue to feel a sense of parental care from his father.

After dropping out of school, Luani felt undermined by his father, but began to value informal modes of learning:

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[104] Luani has a tendency to say "I don't know" when he doesn't want to discuss a given subject in detail, often likely socially undesirable content, or when discussing instances of past crime. For example, instead of saying "dealing drugs" he says 'I don't know' often followed by "you understand what I'm saying".

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> Luani:      *[father]* ***started saying stuff to me*** *like* ***I*** *was* ***a fool*** *you know stuff like that and* ***to learn*** *something to see even though* ***I don't go to school at least to go for a day father says*** *even* ***if one day you'll learn something.***
> (Interview 2)

To live up to his father's expectations Luani consented to attend school informally as a member of his older brother's class. As Luani relied on candlelight to do his homework in the evenings the image also stands for his pursuit of knowledge. Between dropping out of school and wishing to acquire self-worth, Luani began to regard his father as the ultimate authority on life. The father's authority overshadowed and encouraged Luani's early rule-breaking behaviour, dictating Luani's sense of self.

In the early years Luani is already devising alternative ways for self-expression. To do so Luani devised agency covertly, spatiotemporally embodying rule-breaking and, power intimidation derived from his father's reputation:

> Luani:      *for example when* ***I go to school to collect my brother's rucksack****, because you know the* ***younger for the older [age power hierarchy]****–and there was this* ***I begun not showing up in school*** *for five weeks then I'd show up once and then I copy all, I go at my brother's and he's older and I go to school with him and I study with his class and he tells the teacher –* ***sit here because you know what father's like*** *and you know she [****the teacher****]* ***fears*** *for example*
> Afrodita:   ***who*** *fears?*
> Luani:      ***they fear my father*** *you know they know he's [****father's****]* ***mad*** *if he [father] comes to school* ***he'll beat everyone up****.*
> (Interview 3)

Luani's denial of difficult emotions to survive childhood adversity is particularly evident in his account of the loss of his baby sister. Luani's narrated his account of loss through the story of perceived spiritual anticipation of his sister's death:

> Luani:      *my* ***sister died*** *you see,* ***I was the first*** *to get up in the morning, it's* ***the worst thing****,* ***I'm the first*** *to get up in the morning and see she's sleeping and* ***I*** *try to* ***move her, I*** *was* ***only 10****, 9, 8 years old, and* ***I heard Allah 'to die'****, I worried all the time 'she can't die, she can't die',* ***I got up*** *in the morning, I* ***touch her, she's neither breathing nor opening her eyes, I want to wake her up.***
> (Interview 3)

The shock of witnessing his sister's death merges with Luani's story of divine premonition of it, which is narrated with iterative phrases and disrupted syntax[105]. Luani's use of language clearly outlines his response to loss with a voiced sense of agency through the divine anticipation, which is sustained spatiotemporally: *"I was the first, I was only 10, I heard Allah, I got up, I touch her, I want to wake her up".* The spatiotemporal agency in Luani's account may be seen as a form of necessary shield from the disorienting feeling of loss and lack of control over it. Luani felt he wasn't able to engage his inner emotional landscape unlike his witness of his father's response described to loss:

> Luani: **I** *go to* **wake up Dad** *(Luani laughs),* **I tell** *him [***Dad***] 'get up', you know, 'she's dead', he [father] pressed and pressed, blew air [to resuscitate her] no use. She stopped breathing* **father** *started* **screaming out loud** *and* **crying breaking** *windows* **the whole house, the whole house resounding, really** *you know, he [***father***] went to the car and he [***father***] started the car I don't know and [***father***] took off.*
> (Interview 3)

Luani shifts his account from the 'I', to the 'he' referring to his father: he…screaming, he…crying, he…breaking, he went, he started, and, he took off. The portrayal of his father's agency renders the living space suspended in time as a space of apprehension. Apprehension engulfs the home through the grief-stricken voice of Luani's father: "the whole house, the whole house resounding". I expressed my sadness for his loss, giving Luani space to pace his account, while enquiring into his emotional state at the time:

> Afrodita: *you told me how your father* **felt [about your sister's death]***, breaking windows,* **what about you***?*
> Luani: **nothing, what about me, how dare I, in our home** *for example* **the kid***, when the* **father gets up** *or* **does** *something* **no one else is allowed** *to* **do anything** *to* **get up** *or* **scream** *or* **say** *something,* **nothing, we** *just* **sit, heads bent downward** *and* **you are not allowed** *to do things.*
> (Interview 3)

The external self-censorship was a major breach in Luani's autonomy. Also, the masculine age-based hierarchy intersecting with Albanian ethnicity intensified Luani's regard for

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[105] Given that Macedonian is Luani's additional language, his expression is restricted. However, my overall observation is that Luani's use of language precisely conveys what he means, even when the narrative appears disjointed and messy.

his father's authority. Surviving this hardship for Luani felt like having no space to have an emotional response at the time, which he also didn't wish to dwell on in the present:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Afrodita:* | *you can't do things and how do you **feel inside?*** |
| *Luani:* | ***I don't know inside** when **I saw** my **father cry, I** started to **laugh*** |
| *Afrodita:* | *yes?* |
| *Luani:* | *well **I was a kid I didn't know I was** around **10** it's not like having 6 **if I were 6** maybe I would've **sat down properly as I should, I wasn't allowed*** |
| *Afrodita:* | *and how did your father react to that?* |
| *Luani:* | *nothing 3 to 4 minutes he was struggling and then I don't know* |
| *Afrodita:* | *did he [your **father**] not **say anything** to you?* |
| *Luani:* | ***no*** |
| *Afrodita:* | ***now** when you recall this moment **how do you feel**?* |
| *Luani:* | *well, **nothing, it's in the past.*** |
| (Interview 3) | |

Luani's self-narrative indicates that survival of adversity was at the cost of detachment from his inwardness. In a violent home, Luani struggled not only to reclaim a sense of agency but also of belonging. The quote below captures Luani's ability to device spatiotemporal agency as he constructed a voice of his own through divine association. He seems to reach out to his father during this vulnerable period of his life, who ascribed death to God's will:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Luani:* | ***I had these things [had a feeling] she might die** I don't know what **I had it's how my soul is*** |
| *Afrodita:* | *right, so did you and your family fear she might die?* |
| *Luani:* | *no no **I did, I did as a kid** I had 8, 9, 10 years **and I feared, not my mother**, **I had the feeling, I told dad** you know and **I really felt it** you know, he says – **no matter son, you didn't feel anything** it was God's will– he **[father]** **doesn't believe me** it's so you know, I don't know, **my sister will die, I was fully taken up by these feelings for two three days I was completely overcome** I don't know.* |
| (Interview 3) | |

Luani's perceived intimacy with his father in these critical moments of his childhood, is enmeshed with his narrative of survival – it appears Luani's relationship with his father is a central aspect to his narrative of survival and trauma.

The trauma that Luani had to endure encompasses not only child bereavement, but also bearing witness to his mother's own struggle. His mother's stress-induced miscarriage of

two male twins occurred amidst a police investigation in Luani's home[106]. The following quote indicates Luani's awareness of his mother's substance misuse and mental health difficulties as much as it alludes to her involvement in crime. The quote also captures both Luani's exposure to further trauma at a very sensitive time of his life:

Luani: ***out of the belly twins*** *when* **the inspectors** *came,* **I don't know what kind of investigation**, *they [the* **inspectors**] **deported** *them [***the twins***] they [the inspectors] took them [the twins] out she [mother] couldn't handle the stress[107]*

Afrodita: *why?*

Luani: **how can** *she [***mother***]* **handle the stress drugs at home some say** *she [***mother***] has* **her own problems** *too you know* **what she makes up in her head** *and* **snap**.

(Interview 3)

Prompted to voice his feelings towards his mother, Luani said: "I **love** [**mother**] she **takes care of me the most**, she **helps me go through everything**". Despite Luani's acknowledgement of his mother's formative role, his relations with his father remain at the heart of his evolving life story.

Even though Luani's account foregrounds grief, he appeared disconnected from his account of the loss as 'the worst thing'. In this context, I sought Luani's psychologist's views, who acted as a gatekeeper in the study, to contextualise Luani's account and my views, as well as ensure that the programme can support Luani's artistic and personal exploration in an informed and safe manner. I recalled being in the space of the office of Luani's psychologist Katerina, located in a corridor that is separate and outside of the offender wing area, which was not the case for the office of Jess' psychologist Leni located within the wing area.[108] Her office is also a small room insignificantly more spacious Leni's office and also containing a high horizontal window. She had some books and decorations on her desk one of which was a handmade steel figurine, a gift made by an offender during a Dutch prison project involving crafts with prison residents. She seemed to be more satisfied with her office than Jess' psychologist, but also expressed

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[106] Luani didn't discuss the nature of the police investigation. Organised family crime must have occasioned contact with the authorities on that occasion given that Luani informed me of his mother's imprisonment midway through the programme. Also, his psychologist explained that family crime was found to be present on the side of Luani's mother's extended family. (see 6.1.3)

[107] Luani's graphic metaphor 'deport twins out of the stomach' refers to his mother's miscarriage.

[108] For Leni's views see Chapter 7

dissatisfaction with the disorganized schedule and shouting coming from the prison yard and wings.

**Box 6.4 Poetic Enquiry into Lack of Parental Nurture in Childhood Trauma**

*"Mother is All"*

*Panelled the living room blue in the heart of orange, a sunset ranging as if colour torn asunder from the mouth of the doorway: a stairwell, poking in the bifurcated story, hold it, a thought in the mind – to cradle to crave, a whisper of a sort, for hours for hours on end flowers won't wither – it's all there, in the mind – [data] you lacerate the stalks instead of gold, milk fires, pours into liquid embers, a solitude never louder than on the bookshelves, a walled silence, as if swayed out of questioning as if scented to replenish to plead to place "I don't know what an interrogation is, even though, you know, mother is evvv-ry-thing, mother is aaaallll, the whole house the whole house resounding", palliative, sounds of breaking windows, in one go – breaking himself free, of, what? – a will broke down, broken-down like a will – "you didn't hear anything son". "How dare I" – vase chips falling into the sink like milk teeth ~ the brazen smile, a micro-expression ~ bygone, never lived on my face, "father is always, do you get it", in the mouth like a bone, a betrayal, like gravity, this spine pushes a nerve, this throat clearing seals a window reflection to the ceiling this running water is unbearable ~~dad stop screaming~~ the sound is a milky way pouring into the dining room "NOthing we lacked NOthing, running naked" like pure milk bottles spilling, "not mother, me, who knows what the investigation was about/a picture of health/an empty sky/bright blue eyes/not breathing/a baby/a voice/just a baby/Allah's voice/a picture of my sister/the inspectors came/not moving/neither breathing/nor moving/deported/the twins/father didn't believe/I had a feeling/nothing/no reason/ it took over me/ I tried to wake her up/ for a few days I worried/it's sad/really/NOT mother, Iiiiiii did ~ son you didn't hear anything ~ you try to heal, you struggle, you try to heal what you have done but a trace remains ~ you can hate it all if you want, you can, it it's all good, I see it as good"*

*Key reflections:*

- *The formative role of Luani's mother's neglect and lovelessness in trauma*
- *The complexity of trauma and violence in dehumanising childhood*
- *Idealisation of parental care and denial of trauma as necessary for survival*

The words of Luani's psychologist Katerina, from our conversational interview about Luani's background, resonated loudly in my mind. *'His childhood was terribly syncopated',* she observed seriously. I could sense an empathetic understanding when she added *'he*

*was a child who was introduced into an adult world too soon – when he shouldn't have been'* (November, 2016). I understood what she meant by 'syncopated' referred to the disruptive nature of parental care. I was surprised to hear about the psychologist view of Luani's mother as a dominant and authoritative figure as Luani's didn't focus much on his mother in his account[109]. The psychologist's impression during a prison visit was that Luani's mother *'grabbed him to hug him then ordered him to sit down'.* Poetic enquiry in Box 6.4 helped me see the connective tissue between Luani's and his psychologist's views.

The poetic enquiry showed me the need to consider Luani's emotionally disconnected account off loss separate from the fact I was aware he had been psychologically evaluated as 'unempathetic'. I felt it ethical to consider multiple viewpoints, as I understood that often people who discuss traumatic events may smile in order to protect the conversationalist from harm. That said, with Luani, I was under the impression that there was an emotional numbness to his account. I could imagine how emotional numbness may have acted as a shield from that distant memory of his baby sister's death which must have been undoubtedly a devastating loss. Especially given that Luani was a bereaved 8-year-old child, amidst other adverse experiences and no formative parental care.

Luani described his parents' sporadic absence in his life, like his father's abandonment in his own words[110]. Luani said that that was a time when his father broke his heart, and the only time when he could recall that he *'started hating [his father] a little'.* As Luani explained to me on other occasions as well, he chose not to dwell on the negative parts of his past, he only focused on the good aspects. I suspected that this was likely the only possible way to resiliently survive the rejection, so even though initially Luani's view of his past and of his father didn't make sense to me, with poetic enquiry and empathetic look I could later see how he would come to say *'you can see [the past] the way you want, I see it as good, it's all good'.*

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[109] Quotes are from one open-ended interview with Luani's psychologist Katerina focusing on his background history. While Luani's background had been documented from his contact with the justice system to his imprisonment at the time of the programme, sensitive data from Luani's psychological assessment was not disclosed to me in details to protect Luani's privacy.
[110] For a full account see 6.2.1.

I found that Luani's voiced focus on the good aspects of his life, could be understood as way of embodying agency of survival through selective affect orientation towards family members as well as the spaces within his home. Such example is the first recollection of Luani's life a sense of freedom. Carefree play was he felt a part of his preschool life:

> Luani:  **[feels] great**, my brother and **I would run naked all year round** in winter or summer **until we grew up** and went to school **we were constantly running, no rest**…

Luani's first memory of a paint accident for Luani is a time of free unconstrained self-expression in what was a rare instance he could recall of responsive family environment:

> Luani:  when **I was four**, I have a photo of it, **my father** bought some **paint** and I got hold of the paint and it went **bam into my head** and you know it was **door paint** not hair dye and it got **sticky** and **I had to sleep** with it [**the paint**] **won't come off they wanted to cut my hair off** and **I was screaming** and **crying** I don't know when **they would touch** me it would **hurt** and **they put** something so it **came off**
>
> Afrodita:  why did you recall this moment?
>
> Luani:  for example, I remember it **it's the first time of my life I can recall I** was putting **my hands over my head** I was around four
>
> (Interview 3)

Based on my understanding of children navigating adverse domestic circumstances, I saw Luani's account of his childhood as one of creative agency through manipulating space and time to survive, with poetry promising to be an avenue to voice what he couldn't when younger.

*6.1.2 Criminal Empowerment – Self-Interest, Deception, Male Domination: 'Installed chip'*

Luani uses the symbol of the mask to explain an internalised opportunistic drive: "[it] functions on its own". Most importantly, the mask is irreducible to lack of empathy, self-interest or wrongdoing:

> Luani:  My **mask** is **great**, there are many **important** things there, there is **a kind of chip**, it's **all a chip in my mask there's a chip chip chip chip chip** there's some kind of **chip installed** you know it's **all set up in my head** you see, **inside it functions on its own**; for example, no matter who I am with, if my

> chip works, **it's about what they can get from me** and w**hat I can get from them**. For example, **I should be smarter** and **gain more** than they would.
>
>     (Interview 2)

Luani told me his use of the mask term is a way of describing deceptive way of relating to others. The mask evolved as a multi-dimensional blueprint for Luani's view of himself. Self-interest for Luani is a "great" way of being in the world.

Following on from the 'wearing masks' metaphor, Luani clarifies his deceptive way of being in the world. Firstly, Luani conceals his illegal activity from the authorities by using women or legal business as a cover:

> ***Luani:*** no, **not an actual [mask]**, for example, **you work, I don't know what**, the **police notices that you're making a lot of money**, they have to establish – how come? – you have a store [...] – **the store is my mask or the girlfriend is my mask,** for example **I work all day here with drugs** they come and ask –where did you get this money bro? – **my girlfriend works**.
>
>     (Interview 2)

Secondly, Luani engages in impression management, playing 'the fool' in order to deploy what he perceives as self-interest during workshops. Even though workshops were introduced as a shared opportunity for artistic development, Luani's approach follows the rationale that he should "gain more", even if that meant appropriating a creative idea:

> *Luani:* for example **at the moment my mask is that I don't say my thoughts** I **don't use my brain in front of you**, I don't use it, **I close down** so as not to show some of what I have, **that's my mask, I play dumb**. I **just throw in words** to see **how you react, to write** something [he laughs], to see, to **analyse people's reactions**, and then **I will write** something **based on that, I will use two or three good words** and **then goodbye**, that's **what it takes** just a **couple of words** that are **good** to put in my poem.
>
>     (Interview 2)

Thirdly, Luani's deceptive behaviour involves deliberately bullying others; as he confirms, *"I know I hurt him, I'm not a fool".* Hurting others as part of deceptive strategies is exemplified in Luani's description of possible ways of using coercion and extortion to obtain material goods. Deception as a primary way of relating to others permeates Luani's interpersonal relations.

**Box 6.5 Artographic Field Reflection: Repositioning View of Luani – 'Wearing Masks'**

*Winter air mixes with the smoke from chimneys – I breathe in the familiarity of home and the biting wind cools numb my cheeks as I head to the prison. It's early December, 2016, the city is bustling with locals rushing to work – a deluge of cars and old-fashioned white taxis. The bazaar is opening its stalls and stray cats have gathered at of the city's roundabout – a well-known meeting point for tourists and visitors – I realise in some ways I am one of them. From the roundabout the prison is only 20 metres along the same street whose opposite end kisses one of the oldest European lakes. Even though central, the old building of the prison is more often than not lost in the anxious minds of Macedonian people caught up in a storm of political crisis: parliamentary elections are around the corner after a year of mass demonstrations across the country. My feet take me to the prison with a learned facility acquired in the first phase of the programme. The educator Ivana's cheerful face emerges at the roundabout with the usual punctuality and warm-hearted greetings. On our way to the prison we talk about the participants' stories and responses to the programme. Even though we've planned to talk to Luani today, given our scarce conversation with him earlier in the year, none of us thinks he will have much to say. Ivana, Luani and I sit around the ochre wooden desk in the centre of the prison classroom near a wooden stove. The classroom is warm and cosy, the desk covered with a big sheet of white paper – we're immersed in a discussion of masks based on the Geese Theatre's Handbook. I explain the masks' association with the common attitudes of stonewalling, denial, avoidance, or negative fixation. Luani reveals novel sides of his story in a layered and multi-modal manner weaving well-formed metaphors of his sense of self. Hence the mask interview comes as a surprise, disrupting our previously held assumptions.*

*Interview 2, December 6th, 2016*

Luani's relationships are mediated through a dynamic intersection of gender, ethnicity, religion and organised crime situated in the Macedonian socio-cultural milieu. Embedded in a patriarchal narrative of the Albanian family, Luani uses religion as a tool to rise to a culturally scripted masculinity oppressive to women:

> Luani: *I'm sorry to say but **we Albanians don't trust a woman** that is **not Muslim they don't** and they **won't marry***
> Afrodita: *They **want** someone who is **Albanian and Muslim?***
> Luani: ***No, Albanian** is **not related. Even if** it's **not the same faith** but to **have respect** for **the one above for Allah** whatever happens **to pray to him** for **help**. For example, **if I pray to Allah** and if **he doesn't want,** it **won't happen,** even **if I fought** with **my last breath,** if it's **not [Allah's] will,** it **won't happen** [...] And so **Albanians do so**, when **they make an oath**, it's **in God's hands.***
>
> (Interview 2)

Even though Luani separates ethnicity from religion in his description of the "ideal wife" for Albanian men, his stress on *"we"* and *"Albanians"* indicates the opposite. Being an

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Albanian man is defined both by religious practice and by marriage to a pious, virtuous woman. Moreover, emblematic of the masculinity that Luani admires in male family members as much as male public figures, is an inherent superiority to women[111]. Finally, desired masculinity requires toughness and emotional restraint. The need to prove invulnerability is inherent in Luani's account that when his mother calls him, he does not respond immediately "like a mama's boy". Furthermore, Luani's patriarchal gendered reasoning surfaces in his refusal to work in the prison kitchen because *"it is a woman's job"*; and women like his mother *"stay at home because they are not allowed to work by God"*[112]. Luani's attitude to this woman is implicated in male domination[113].

Male domination manifests in Luani's control and policing of his sisters on behalf of his father:

> Luani:     My **sister** for example is very **relaxed** with me **like a friend** when I was **16** I ended up **in prison** […] *you don't get it* **father said to me relax and control them from now on in everything,** relax and **take control** of **[your sisters]** and **when something big happens you will tell me,** stay relaxed **don't do anything without my approval** and **so I started relaxing** and **hitting them** for example.
>
> Luani:     I would **hit them jokingly** for example I would **drive them** you know **father let me** be the **first to take his car**
>
> (Interview 2)

Based on male entitlement, policing is enacted exclusively by male family members to establish male domination and control over women. Policing, as Luani explains, entails belittling and deceiving his sisters, betraying their trust which can be seen as a part of male privilege. In policing his sisters Luani affirms his worth as a man, and in return he obtains access to his father's car. The male domination in Luani's narrative account while woven as part of his perception of family life and relationship to his father, points to a major breach in Luani's relationships towards women. As a result I observed that Luani's objectification of people to enact his self-interest, when considered in the context of his affinity for male domination, becomes implicated in perpetuating gender violence and injustice.

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[111] See 6.3.1

[112] Quotes are from conversations with Luani during creative workshops.

[113] Male domination is expanded in the context of Luani's relationship with his father as criminal influence in 6.3.1.

Gender violence could be read into Luani's description of a potential marriage with a girl that may be arranged by his sister. The girl, while not Albanian, is a religious devotee waiting for Luani's release. The following quote shows Luani's objectification of the girl, measuring her worth by physical appearance:

> Luani: *we **kissed twice before** I fell in **prison** and then after **I saw her 4 times**, but **she's not good in her body,** but my **sister says she's good,** and **on the photo she's nice** and **now her face changed** and **she looks good now***.
> (Interview 2)

**Box 6.6 Artographic Reflection on Luani's Perceived Male, Ethnic and Religious Interplay**

*I felt that there was a sense of father-child hierarchy in Luani's implication of the father's role as caretaker in child rearing. This was very much in line with Luani's expressed view of the Albanian family values 'you learn from your father, not form you mother', which he qualified on many occasions as specific to his ethnic background. Luani often referred to his view of Albanian life as 'us', as in 'this is how it is with us'. While I had come across stereotypical views in ethnically Macedonian circles that all Albanian families are devout Muslims and with patriarchal values, my impression of Luani's family was that there was no particularly conservative dynamic in his parents' gender roles or religious practice. Indeed, Luani himself observed that while this was the norm among Albanian families, in reality his family was different – perhaps this was even a greater reason as to why Luani strived towards fitting into the patriarchal idea of maleness. When I asked Luani if his mother or father were religious he just laughed derisively and with a dose of light irony said 'yes, when father goes to the pub and has a beer'. Luani had seen his uncle pray kneeling, so he explained that that's something he tries for himself 'but I don't have to kneel like my uncle, I do it in my own way'. I sensed that there was another latent unspoken thread in Luani's narrative in his attempt to add some religious practice in his life, because he well understood that criminal lifestyle didn't bode well with faith. Luani began to voice the inner conflict of struggling for redemption in his poem, which was an example of speaking an unspoken part of his story through poetic rituals in 6.3.3.*

Luani's sexist and misogynist views are interlinked with his self-interested lifestyle. Even though he makes classist remarks, his motive is not material gain per se. He relates to the girl as a sexual object, and a means to his own self-empowerment:

> Luani: *today, we **don't look at soul** or inside, but we **look at** other stuff, for example a **rich person** and **a homeless** one are **not the same**. But **for me, I care what she can do for me**, to **use her**, and to **respect God**. She's **religious**,

> *and, **she thinks** that **I love her, she's stupid, I only love her 20 %** to give me some massage **[for sexual pleasure]** if I **tell her** to **stay home** even **50 years** she will, she **doesn't look friends in the eye**, she has **no permission**, not from me but **from the one above.***

      (Interview 2)

Furthermore, Luani feels a social pressure to prove he has the upper hand in the relationship which undermines the girl's power: *"I'm doing business with my bros [selling weed], and she comes and gives me crisps, I tell her throw that away […] it's a shame"*. Luani's finds it emasculating to receive care in public. Also, shame drives a fear of unfaithfulness and a motive to control which Luani misguidedly presented as establishing trust: *"I follow her to make sure she's not a whore, and then I allow her to go anywhere"*.

Avoidance of vulnerability is a practice Luani's father both modelled and encouraged. For instance, even though Luani was unsure if he was the father of his former girlfriend's unborn child, when prompted he said *"who else?"* with a sense of macho pride. Also, his initial pride swiftly turned to thorough disregard for the girl's wellbeing:

> *Luani:*             **Father told me**, he said – **what you have inside your heart take it all out** and **leave it** at **the door, throw it all away, throw it all away, don't stress out in prison**, you will get some **heart aches**—when you go **out life changes. Like father I also started putting everything outside** [being emotionally aloof] I **don't care** if she gives birth it's **her business not mine** if I can help her somehow alright **if not** I will say to her **goodbye forever.**

      (Interview 2)

The outlined instances of Luani's relations with women exemplify Luani's narrated male domination as interlinked with is understanding of being a man in a family which he perceives to be deviating from the expected social norms of patriarchal parenting and religion within Albanian ethnic culture. They also reflect how striving to attain the patriarchal version of masculinity, is negatively affecting Luani's interpersonal relationships, which guides Luani to believe that male domination is a form of empowerment that extends across his narrative account[114].

### 6.1.3 Poetic Voice as Self-Empowerment: "My voice rises on the mic"

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[114] See also Luani's view of the influence of male relatives in his life, and male domination in crime in 6.3.1

Luani's artistic practice unravelled from his desire for self-expression: to voice the unspoken aspects of his life story. In Luani's account of several traumatic memories of his father's abuse, he felt he was "not allowed" to use his voice[115]. He saw writing and performing his own poetry and lyrics as the only amenable outlet through which to confront his father: "I need to rap to my dad for the things he told me that were not true, things he told me to do"[116]. Luani's helplessness in a power-imbalanced relationship with his father underlies his problematic lifestyle in adolescence, like substance misuse referred to in his poem as being 'ablaze'.

Luani's reflection on his artistic practice indicated an intuitive understanding of his creative process. For example, he described challenges of intentionality in writing, while also touching on slowness as part of creative immersion.

> Afrodita:     you don't struggle when you create some music?
> Luani:        no I don't, who told you I did.
> Afrodita:     what about your poem "I pray to my planet…to make a song"?
> Luani:        no, that's something **before I fall asleep** you know something pops up in my head **I can sing it in my mind but I can't sing it with my mouth**. I **can't say it the way I imagine it the rhythm** and it gets **erased it goes inside my chip** I have here **a chip inside my head** and it enters inside it and it **doesn't want to open up and I say please come back** […] you don't struggle it's **something you like** and you try to make it wholeheartedly you **don't think that you are struggling**.
>
> (Interview 3)

Luani reflected on the messiness of creating, describing the early drafts of his poetry. He assessed his final performance after hearing an audio recording of it: *"It's too fast. I'm not taking any breath or making pauses".* That said, instead of immersion in the writing process Luani showed a goal-orientated approach driven by a desire for fame. *"It's what I wait for - to break through big time […] you'll see me on TV"*[117]. Chasing fame often involved exaggerating his creative output. *"I have written yes I have 2 to 3 albums ready".*

For Luani the poem is a space for emotional courage, an opportunity to voice resistance to feeling invisible at home. Luani's poetic voice embodied resistance to his father's authority. Through a re-imagined dialogue in his poem, Luani creates a space for speaking

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[115] See 6.1.1 and 6.2.1
[116] Interview 3
[117] Interview 4

up as well as speaking back to his father[118]. The father figure pleads with Luani to address his problem-behaviour, expressing concern and emotional turmoil in response to Luani's being in trouble with the authorities.

**Box 6.7 Poetry Excerpt from Luani's Self-Authored Poem "Luani's History"**

> *Hello, hello*
> *I'm coming home*
> *I'm totally blazed*
> *Hello father, hello mother*
> *Hello brother*
> *Why is nobody talking to me*
> *Are you listening*
> *Do I count in this house for anything?*
>
> *Rehearsal 2, December, 12th, 2016*

Luani's reflection on his real-life interaction with his father re-contextualised the poetic dialogue. Luani had explained that his father had sent him to carry out crimes on his behalf "to take care of some things I don't know what […] my phone died and so he pulled me aside and was like – why are you not answering and laughs"[119].

**Box 6.8 Poetry Excerpt from Luani's Self-Authored Poem "Luani's History"**

> *Dad starts walking towards me*
> *Staring dreadfully questioning me:*
>     *Where have you been this whole week?*
>     *You just disappear, who do you think you are?*
>     *Look at me, tears running down my cheeks*
>     *You don't care for us; why do you keep doing this?*
>     *Tell me, what should I do with you?*
>     *My head will explode, my heart aches*
>     *Tell me son, I can't take it anymore*
>     *For God's sake I could never leave you*
>     *I can't step outside because of you*
>     *The police lurk around looking for you*
>     *You've become a big thug*
>     *Never wants to give up—*
>
> *Dad, dad, the crime keeps me alive*
> *won't let me sink*
>     *Is there a way out,*
>     *is there a way out?*
>     *This kid has gone mad,*
>     *I can't say anymore*
>     *is there a way out?*
> *Dad, it's not hard to move on*
> *To make some money on my own*
> *To sell white or green*
> *That's not a problem for me*
> *I have learnt how to survive*
> *ever since I was kid*

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[118] See box 6.8
[119] Interview 3

At first glance Luani's portrayal of his father in the poem appears at odds with their real-life relationship. However, the inconsistences in the relationship emerged as part of their traumatic male bonding[120]. Luani's the poem expands on their real-world relationship as it speaks to the abusive father figure. Luani's poetic response subverts the locus of the tension in their relationship from his own wrongdoing, to his survival of adversity. Hence Luani's poem complicates his account of criminal lifestyle as influenced by his father.

The poem holds together several divided truths of Luani's bond with his father, enabling initial themes of Luani's life story to play out. In the thematic interplay Luani has voiced an unspoken situated story of his reproach to his father[121]. Luani's anger is a way of acknowledging part of the difficult emotions of past trauma as it devises a voice of resistance to counter childhood helplessness. This means the poem developed Luani's resisting voice as a form of agency which enabled him to take ownership in re-writing his life story.
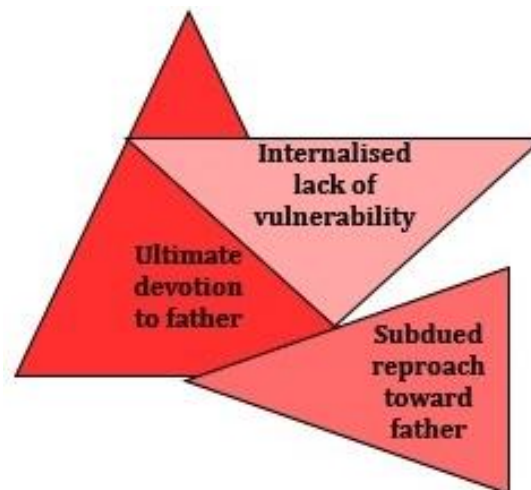


**Figure 6.2 Connecting Luani's Self-Narrative with Poetry: Latent Unspoken Story**

Luani's creative process was characterised by imaginatively rewriting experience to create his own version of the story.

> Luani:  *They shot my dad in the leg. Because **he's that type of a guy**, he **cannot sit still** [...] he was **shot from a car**, I don't know **about money**. So that's **something I like writing** about, but it's **bad** here [in prison] I **can't get** access to much **information** so I **can't think** much.*

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[120] See 6.3.1
[121] I represented the crux of Luani's indicated but not fully voiced story of the complexity of his relationship with his father in Figure 6.6 with the help of Nvivo and initial themes in Luani's narrative.

Afrodita:     You **could imagine** things?
Luani:        Yes, but I **rarely** do this, **write** about **what I imagine. I write** about the **things I know**, the **things** other **people talk** about, or what **others tell me**. So **I take** that **away**, because if **I write** about it **I don't copy** it, **I steal** it away. I take **something big** someone says and then **I tell it in my own way**.

(Interview 2)

Luani's "own way" of bearing witness to life involved altering factual details with literary play and perspective-taking. In *Luani's History* real-life memories and conversation are disassembled and rearranged into verses to reflect his subjectivity. For example, he constructed the poetic dialogue with his father from an actual exchange between his father and brother.

A crucial part of the performed agencies of survivalist and criminal self-empowerment was toxic masculinity. Luani's performance of male bonding with his favourite rap band exerted a cult of invulnerability:

**Box 6.9 Poetry Excerpt from Luani's Self-Authored Poem "Luani's History"**

*Thank God for helping me out*
*I would give everything for my bros*
*They would give everything for me*
*on my planet there's only one rap band*
*OTR: on top of the rest, nobody can touch*
*As soon as I go out I will do right by them*
*I live every day like it's the last day*

Luani's view of the rap band contextualises his unquestioned espousal of sexual objectification of women in the creative industry. At a rehearsal Luani affirmed "male rappers have women under their feet." In his vision of future musical fame Luani plans to create a music video with "women dancing", to gain "popularity". As he said, "I know what young men want". Luani's attitude to the creative industry exemplifies one of the several instances of adherence to different forms of violence perpetuated as part of the spaces of the programme.

A gendered logic surfaced in Luani's poetry writing about prison. Even as they open with an omniscient insight into the realities of prison life, the lyrics are reminiscent of pop songs. Mainly, the man is cast as the domineering figure, the woman as fragile and submissive, in line with patriarchal and feminine stereotypes. While using clichéd imagery, Luani sang the lyrics with a well-formed melody. His performances peaked rhythmically and were emotionally grabbing[122].

**Box 6.10 Poetry Excerpt from Luani's Poem "Writing about Prison"**

*I'm locked within four walls*
*Can't get no sleep all night long*
*Prison mates keep up the noise*
*Not even therapy can calm*
*Their addictions down*
*Prison officers are around…*
*My hands are cuffed*
*but I pine for you*
*Do not ever think*
*I will abandon you*
*Time turns still*
*The moon and the sun*
*This love is on fire*
*Call 998*
*You are my summer*
*I am your winter*
*Please stay put*
*If I am your interest*
*Do not ever think*
*You'll get ahead of me.*

*Rehearsal 3, December 9th, 2016*

In summary, Luani's artistic practice was multifaceted, exerting an inherent attunement to his creative process. His brave poetic self-expression and emergent resisting voice can be conceived of as stretching the possibilities of Luani's way of being.

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[122] For example, Luani's performance was singled out for its paced cadences and for "putting his heart in it" at Rehearsal 4, with rap artist Pavle from "Zad Agolot".

The section has traced Luani's spatiotemporal embodiment of survival agency in childhood which developed as criminal empowerment throughout his adolescence. Luani's view of his family was narrated through an interplay of his ideas of Albanian ethnic and religious way off being, which shaped his aspiration to fit into a patriarchal male gender role. With an expressed affinity for musical self-expression as a potential avenue to engaging his unspoken emotions, Luani saw the programme's arts practice as a site to develop a resisting voice through his creative process. Luani's poetic voice in this way became a source of self-empowerment.

**Table 6.2 Finding Overview of Programme's Artistic Site**

| Themes and Finding | |
|---|---|
| Clustered themes with key codes | *Spatiotemporal embodiment of survival*<br>        redeeming parental neglect<br>        religious voice to cope with bereavement |
| | *Problematic and criminal lifestyle*<br>        self-interest<br>        deception<br>        male domination in gendered/ethnic/religious interplay |
| | *Creative process*<br>        'slowliness' of time<br>        poetic play to re-imagine life with subjective 'truth'<br>        courage to voice difficult emotions in poetry |
| Overarching themes | • survival agency<br>• criminal empowerment<br>• creative agency |
| Finding | The programme's **artistic site** enabled Luani's **self-empowerment** through **poetic voice** as a form of **agency** |

### Interlude: "Prison is not difficult – prisoners are"

> *Luani:*          *I have **written about prison before seeing it** when I was 15 I ended up in prison so **I wrote about it** […] it's **how I work** I learned this **as a kid father taught me father gave** me this **advice.***
> (Interview 2)

The programme's workshops included river journeying with Luani and his visual metaphors at individual sessions, as well as observing his articulation of his own self-authored poetic metaphors at rehearsals in the style of open mics inside the prison

classroom. Luani performed his first full poem towards the end of the first stage of the programme, marking a turning point in his poetic expression. If the river journey unfolded his survival, announcing his adolescent move to criminal independence, the poem anticipates different depths to his sense of self.

**Box 6.11 Luani's Self-Authored Poem "Good News from a Prison Mate"**

*The day I heard*
*my sister was released from prison*
*my head was spinning*

*like a deep-lake geyser*

*I grew up in the prison yard*
*alongside different faces*
*and a mix of races*

*prison is not difficult – prisoners are*

                              *the heart*
                              *changes*

*for love and music only*
*not for anything else –*

*the patterns of the pencil*
*cannot be erased,*
*you can only write over*

*time and again –*
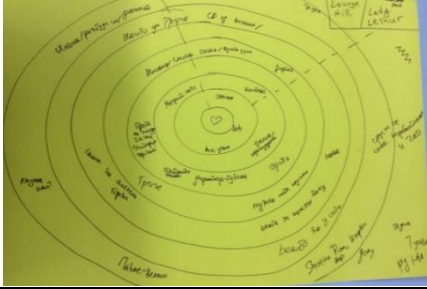
Luani's recollection of his sister's release coincided with his mother's imprisonment during the duration of the programme. The poem reveals a belief that the pains of imprisonment are felt not in isolation, but in a community that is isolating. Turning away from playing "the fool", Luani's poetry re-casts prison not only as a tragic institution, but as woven into the fabric of survival as empowerment. The poem bears witness to the normalisation of violence, and the resilience of change at the face of it.

But a "changing heart" that "cannot erase" the unacknowledged stories of the self stands still with the confusion of the present with the past. Rather than "erase", Luani's poem stands as a trace, as evidence of his emerging re-writing of the unspoken aspects of his life story.

## 6.2 Towards Practice-Based Pedagogy: Traumatic and Alternative narratives

The present thematic focus of the finding explored how Luani's saw the programme as a pedagogic site of alternative spaces arising from interaction with artists and educators. The prison classroom was a space for painting, a space for performing, for probing educators' trust and deepening the connections through an array of arts-based activities. Relations contributed to a non-judgmental space where Luani saw the workshop as an avenue to begin to voice his past trauma, as well as begin to open up more about his affinity to crime.

**Table 6.3 Luani's Painting 'Self-Portrait as a Mask' and Circle of Distance**

| Painting made by Luani | Evaluative Circle of Distance made by Luani |
|---|---|
| Painting removed for copyright reasons. Copyright owner is Luani. |  |
| Analysis of Luani's portrayal of violence unlocked Luani's **humanity** as well as **criminality** beyond criminal stigma.[123] | Luani's most important programme aspects are closer to the inner circle that included **relationship with artists and educators**. [124] |

*6.2.1 Abusive Relationship with Father: "A heart you cannot hate"*

Luani formed a traumatic attachment to his father evidenced in his unrealistic redemption of his father's abuse. The present section exemplifies the trauma bonding

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[123] See 6.2.2
[124] See 6.2.3

through two critical memories: an abandonment in childhood, and a turning-point memory of abusive parenting in adolescence.

In the present childhood memory Luani unrealistically transforms his father's traumatic abandonment into communion. Luani's quote indicates communion arises through narrative self-deception as he holds two self-truths at the same time: one, the love for his father as separate from the unspoken part of the self-narrative; two, the unspoken part of difficult emotions towards his father, which Luani believes can only voice in song[125]. The present experience took place at a border-crossing late in the evening when Luani was fleeing Macedonia with his parents. Luani remembers feeling distressed as his father abandoned both his mother and him at the border:

> Luani: for example once **I was with my mother** he **[father] left me** somewhere near Tabanovce [Macedonian-Serbian **border crossing point**] there's a railway there and **it's full of your people Macedonians** you see and **father left us** and **I** started being **scared** it started **getting dark I hear mother talking** to my sister **on the phone** and **I** started **feeling extremely anxious** and **I started crying** do you know **how hard I was crying**, and mother, **I** was **crying** you know **endlessly** and for this **I became angry** because he **[father] left** the woman [Luani's **mother**] in [**starts cursing, but stops himself**] not to say in the **middle of nowhere.**
>
> (Interview 3)

Luani described the border-crossing as a hostile and foreign environment, not only because it was dark and abandoned, but also because it was near an ethnically Macedonian residential area. The ethnic segregation, for Luani, intensifies his father's betrayal of his perceived duty as the primary care provider. Luani's distress is rooted in the disruption of the established patriarchal family hierarchy. This episode in Luani's life was very traumatic for him, as he voiced distress and anger at his father.

To preserve his sense of sense, Luani had to devise ways to redeem his father's abuse. As the excerpt below shows, Luani minimises his father's abuse to enable a sense of connection:

> Luani: **I started hating [father] a little,** but **[father] has this heart you cannot hate, [father] will break your heart, in three minutes [father] will make**

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[125] See 6.3.1

*it three times the better*, for example [let's say] you and I, I will take yours [heart] but will make you love me even more.

It seems that Luani's idealised connection shields him from the pains of not being able to express his feelings. However, the idealised connection ultimately proves dissonant as Luani began to open up about his unresolved anger towards his father throughout the programme. That anger I observed could be the wellspring of Luani's unspoken emotions, which being difficult to express also make the possibility of vulnerable self-exploration challenging. However, Luani indicated a desire to voice unspoken emotions in an indirect manner by "recit[ing] some songs to father" which links to his explanation below:

> Afrodita:      so he [your father] broke your heart in this instance and **you wanted to speak to him** about it?
> Luani:      **no what will I say how could I be allowed** to [even think to] **say anything**
> Afrodita:      **you're not allowed?**
> Luani:      **I am not allowed but the time will come** he [father] **will hear it** on his **own without me telling** him **to his face** I think he [father] has a pretty **good mind**, he has, so that [father] **will [get it] on his own**

(Interview 3)

This means that Luani believes that, once disseminated publicly, the song will create dialogue with his father. Thus, creating songs as a means of voicing unspoken emotions can be conceived as the possibility of recuperating a denied opportunity for practising vulnerability.[126]

Luani's traumatic bonding with his father emerges further in a turning-point memory which features Luani's problem behaviour and his father's poor parenting. In early adolescence Luani stole his father's gun and took it to school in his rucksack, which led to his father expelling him from home (his house). As Luani explained, being expelled from his home not only caused him fear of rejection; it was also a life-threatening event. Luani's response to being thrown out of the house is a pang of apprehensive dread followed by defiance as the excerpt below shows:

> Luani:      yes, I had something that was **a turning point** with my **father**, for example when [**father**] **scared me** one night after **I took [father's] gun**, I was some **13 years old** and **I took [father's] gun** and went **to school**, yes, I went to

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[126] See 6.3.3.

> *school with **the gun in my rucksack** I don't know, just to carry it inside **not to use** [the gun]. **Father asked** me – **the gun the gun** – I took [the gun] out as I had [the gun] and [father] started saying – **get out of the house and never set foot in it again** – and then **bam, everything started spinning** you know and I said to [father] – **ok, I won't come** back anymore – and I started walking down the road.*

(Interview 3)

Luani's fear for his safety escalates as he realises that his father's expulsion was serious. Luani felt taunted by his father's intimidating acts, like following him in his car with menacing eye contact, and forbidding his aunt to accommodate him. Luani's distress is aggravated as he is forced to leave the Albanian residential area and enter the ethnically Macedonian part of town. Outside his community and rejected by his family, Luani is traumatised by three main conflicting realisations. He fears homelessness, a denial of his basic needs by his primary caregiver. Luani begins to question his father's love, a major disruption in his sense of self-worth. He is rendered helpless to take care of himself, which cuts at core of dignity and anticipates Luani's fear for not living up to masculine expectations:

> *Luani:*      *[I] continued again downward, and in less than five minutes he **[father] came in his car** you know, he [father] comes with the car and **stares at me**, **[father] doesn't say 'come in'** he **just stares** and **that makes me even angrier,** makes **my blood boil** and I say – **ok, I will go to my aunt's** – you know and I went to my aunt's and she says – your **father said not to put you up** in my home, **come in but don't say you were here** – I say to her – **I won't come in** – and I started **going** down **towards the city centre full of Macedonians,** where Macedonians live for example **where we are there are not many Macedonians** and I started going there and then **night fell** so **I started going back** to the neighbourhood.*

(Interview 3)

The turning-point memory is evidence of the felt turmoil in Luani's relationship with his father's. While Luani's problem behaviour required parental attention, his father's actions appear as an exacerbating factor. Luani's father created an unsafe place for Luani, denied Luani safety, respect, trust, and care, among the essential components of a loving relationship. On the contrary, given Luani's age and the power imbalance, his father's parenting is detrimental.

> *Afrodita:*      *you went back home?*
> *Luani:*      *No, I went towards the neighbourhood and **my brother called me** and I went there **I sat by the door** and **father stares** at me and **laughs** he*

> *[father] stares at me and laughs but he [father] doesn't say – come on in*
> *– he [father] made me feel like my head was about to explode, I was*
> *around 12 years old and started thinking – oh, look, he doesn't love me*
> *– I started thinking – I will not live the way I used to live – I thought like*
> *others I too will live on the street.*

(Interview 3)

To survive relational trauma Luani redeems his father's abuse, focusing only on his father's expressed affection:

> *Afrodita:*     *and then you came back [home]?*
> *Luani:*     *then nothing, I came back and before going to bed father came hugged*
> *me and told me – you should not be doing this and that we will end up*
> *in prison, the police, you should know this, you are old enough, 12 years*
> *old – he [father] started talking to me the way he should you know, and*
> *I never touched it [the gun] again.*

(Interview 3)

The turning-point memory is thus another instance of Luani's survival agency to focus on the positive aspects of his relationship with his father, while the voiced traumatic event is given less consideration in Luani's narrative account[127]. Luani's father's condemnation of Luani's conduct seems to be situated in a discourse of evading contact with the authorities rather than with upholding moral values of goodness. Thus, misconduct, a part of Luani's survival agency, seems to have persisted in the context of family crime. Similarly, Luani's idealisation of his relationship with his father, while a survivalist form of agency, gradually became the cornerstone of Luani's criminal behaviour as he continued to follow in his father's footsteps.[128]

### 6.2.2 Thrill in Crime: "Ever since I was a kid"

While Luani explained he was groomed into crime by his father, he also voiced a thrill in crime himself. For example, the first time we met he said: "you need to have the heart to do it, to steal, it feels good"[129]. This thrill, however, acquires a voluminous depth with Luani's metaphor of "leaving traces". Luani used the metaphor to explain the legacy that remains as a result of your actions. When asked why he was leaving "bad traces", as he

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[127] For the unspoken story of Luani's abusive relationship with his father see 6.3.1
[128] See 6.3.1
[129] Interview 1

explained, he said "it's what I wanted ever since I was a kid". Luani emphasised the past tense in "wanted" to indicate the cessation of the criminal desire. In his account of past criminal lifestyle, Luani felt a sense of pride in the power it afforded him:

> Luani:       I want to **understand life** to have **something meaningful in life** to have a trace. I have a trace; I have many traces. In my hood on the street as a kid they they've known me how should I put it **as bad**, they **know m**e as **a bad guy**, if you were to see, my **whole generation runs for the hills when they see me**
> Afrodita:       and that's good?
> Luani:       not that I hit them ok **I have beaten some of them up** two or three but one or two see **you have money [...] they fear**
> (Interview 5)

That said, Luani's thrill in crime was intertwined with his struggles to imagine the possibility of redemption for his past crimes on multiple levels: in his own eyes, in the eyes of the victims, and in the public eye. Luani felt marked by his crimes, what he described as 'traces' of criminality. I also think that Luani's idea of 'traces' can be interpreted as 'traces' of criminal stigma, which was a large part of his perceived criminal immutability script that was socially reinforced. It was also rooted in what Luani saw an irreparable relational breach, as he described that the person harmed would not be able to 'forget':

> Luani:       **A plank**, you **put screws in** it, **how much wrong** you have done, and now **you take the screws out** but when you take the screws out **holes remain**, you are **left with the holes**, you struggle to take the screws out, but they leave holes, and **those holes are the traces**. For example, **you can forget, but if you tell the other person** to **forget he will remember it more.**
> (Interview 5)

The thrill in crime emerges as a central theme in Luani's painting of a self-portrait as a mask[130]. The painting reveals glorification of different forms of violence. Luani's final version of the painting accentuates his preoccupation with wrongdoing, with visceral rendition of crime scenes, and witnessed trauma. The black mask-face with propellers and a bloodthirsty mouth sits against a spray-painted background of Luani's self-portrait embodying scenes of violent crimes[131].

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[130] See Figure 6.3

[131] When prompted on to explain the choice to have the background splashed with paint, Luani commented "How do you mean, why? Because I've been in and out of all sorts of dirty nooks and crannies, that's why".

While reserved, Luani's brief elaboration of the final version of the painting clarifies its content, described here from the left side of the painting, from top to bottom. The blue and black encirclement in the far left top corner of the painting is the prison yard populated with prisoners. The group of three figures in purple represents the three educators. The first one leading the group is the researcher, represented by a female figure outline, in a skirt and with a ponytail. Behind the researcher are the two other regular educators, Ivana, the local teacher, and Elena, the visiting spoken word poet/educator, depicted as stick figures. Below the prison yard there is a blue object which Luani refused to describe. Further below there is a representation of two black figures positioned closely to one another. With sexual innuendo, Luani commented that one of the figures is himself. At the very bottom of the painting there is a scene of stealing. Laughing amusedly, Luani explained that the person represented with an orange-yellow stick figure "is grabbing someone's purse with one hand, while throwing a baby with the other".

The right half of the painting shows a set of disturbing scenes Luani refused to explain. In the top right-hand corner there are two blue figures representing two people fighting over something.  To its left there is a yellow figure, a person bowing in prayer. On the

right there is a hanging scene with two yellow figures, one holding the rope with which the other person is being hanged or, likely a human corpse being lifted. To the left there is big black saw positioned vertically right next to a set of five dull orange figures that appear to be stranded human corpses. Below this scene there is as small red figure, most likely a representation of an abandoned or dead baby. Finally, at the right-hand bottom of the painting, there is a blue shape smudged with paint which might indicate a gun.



**Figure 6.4 Poetic Inquiry: Probing Beyond Luani's Perceived Criminal Immutability**

The painting unfolds a complex movement through self-interested lifestyle, toxic masculinity, wrongdoing, and violent crime. Luani's belief that his criminal lifestyle is ingrained, as he explained like an 'installed chip'. This seems to be a way of keeping his narrative of survival of multiple forms of trauma and inner vulnerability separate from criminal sense of self. I wanted to probe Luani's perception of his own ingrained criminality as I sensed that there was an unspoken aspect behind it. For this, I used the remixing cubist and found poetry approach to develop a visual rose poem using Luani's own words and multiple metaphors that he used to describe his criminal way of being.

**Box 6.12 Poetic Inquiry Reflection: Cultivating Embodied Reflexive Empathy[132]**

*Using a cubist poetry aesthetic, I experimented with Luani's metaphors of "rose/fire/installed chip", to intuit glow moments and meanings. Luani described people's character with a symbol of a rose saying "I can know a rose by its scent" – people unravel their true colours the way a rose reveals its scent once you approach it and smell it. Luani's extended metaphor of fire captures a deceptive, perilous, unpredictable presence; as does his metaphor of the installed chip.. For example, in his poem "Luani's History", he says, "I burst like embers anywhere I go", explaining that people who are hidden have a tendency to "burn" others unexpectedly. Following the triad of rose/fire/installed chip, the poetic inquiry indicated the idea of a digital fiery rose as an elusive hologram which Luani intricately constructs to talk about his criminal sense of self. (Poetic) attunement into Luani's narrative voice involved selecting thematically resonant excerpts from the data as the fabric of a fiery rose poem which made me consider that:*

- *Luani's own perceived ingrained criminality, being caught up in criminal stigma failed to unify and capture the complexity of his life experiences.*

*As a result, to open up my analysis process I collaborated with a trained child therapist, and doctoral researcher, Fiona Peacock, based at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge. Fiona guided me through two main therapeutic activities: exploring emotion as data in research; and, creating a dialogue with the visual data in Luani's painting, which was audio-visually documented for my further reflection. This elicited reflexive embodied empathy through perspective taking, drawing, harnessing the wisdom of the body, and reflective practice. Thus, I was able to:*

- *Re-contextualise the data*
- *Reposition myself in the field*
- *See and relate to Luani differently—connecting as people*

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The assembled embroidery of the rose poem began with the "installed chip" at the base of the petals and sepals, the rose ovary and its pistils. The letters make up the rose's ovary, at the centre of the rose head. The rose poem follows Luani's own repetitions and rhythms evoking the hypnotic impression of his seductive word play. The iterative, cyclical and spiral-like movement of the rose's fiery petals enabled a non-linear reconstruction of Luani's life story following a reconceptualization of Luani's river journey metaphors[133]. Staying relationally with Luani's perceived criminal immutability helped me envision Luani's life story beyond his own way of partitioning his life experiences. With the help of researcher-made drawing, I felt I came to see Luani's life story as a one unified whole.

My drawing enabled me to revisit Luani's childhood of adversity and see that the programme's pedagogic practice can only engage aspects of Luani's narrative of trauma. I found that my presence in Luani's life was within the educator-participant relationship as a site for mutual self-exploration. I depicted the programme in the context of Luani's life with a small black dot at the right upper corner of my own drawing[134]. I used the dot as a visual representation of the programme within Luani's life, remembering Luani's own words at our last conversation "for example here you write songs you show me how to weave [rhyme or create a flow] it together, so if you give me a dot, I will move on from there". Focusing on the programme in this way enabled me to identify the relational aspects of artographic practice. I was disrupted by the therapist's probing question "what if [the dot] is the relationship?" The therapist guided dialogue of Luani's painting highlighted the artographic relationship as an aspect of the programme's pedagogic site.

The artographic relating to Luani's life story enabled me to return to it afresh with collage enquiry[135]. The collage further confronted me with the epistemological challenges I personally encountered when clarifying the emergent themes in Luani's criminal references.

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[133] For the linear organisation of the river journey visual metaphors see Figure 6.1 to contrast with the visual metaphor's cyclical organisation inspired by the rose poem shown in the far left image in Figure 6.4.
[134] See box 6.13
[135] See box 6.14 (Note that I used the collage for the insight it gave me, as opposed to as a visual artefact)

**Box 6.13 Artographic Reflection: Blob Tree and Researcher-Made Drawing**

*The Blob tree activity enabled me to see how little I knew about young offenders' lives, and enabled me to connect with Luani in a meaningful way. Fiona guided me in drawing the fieldwork setting, the prison, followed by an embodied perspective taking of my positioning and relating to participants. I found that Luani's self-narrative was enmeshed with the label Luani had acquired in the prison community, "a true psychopath". In seeing the extent to which Luani's sense of self exhibited a confluence with socially constructed ideas of offenders, I also began to see how much my own unconscious bias was an obstacle to connect. I began to question the extent to which his self-narrative captured the unknowns of his sense of self. Reflecting on the video of the therapist guided dialogue of Luani's self-portrait disrupted my unintelligent fears, and helped me transform my relationship to Luani. I began to grapple with the layered complexity of his life from survival of childhood adversity and perseverance through to adolescence. This exploration was synthesised in my drawing response to Luani's 'mask' painting. My drawing began from the right hand side, where I recalled Luani make the first brush stroke on his painting. The right hand side was also a place of what I perceived as death due to the depicted corpses. Here, my drawing showed a blueprint of me as the researcher peering into Luani's story. My own figure, though soon was blended with the female form that I drew evoking a mother figure based on Luani's account of his mother, on the right-hand side of my drawing. Positioned in waves of water by a canoe and a floating rooftop, the mother's head is enveloped in four green stars, and the text: "You will do as I say, Mum". Absent-minded, the mother figure stands amid a broken home, with a rocking cradle-like canoe as symbol of infancy. An infant figure appears negated under the violent red engulfing the left side of the drawing. The blue and yellow colours indicate the transition to adolescence, a transition to crime.*



Specifically, I felt that Luani's painting indicated a sensationalised allure of destruction. The bloodthirsty mouth from Luani' self-portrait surfaced in my collage as a visual

metaphor of a 'carnivorous rose': it highlighted Luani's depiction of violent death which I took as a possible allusion to homicide. Furthermore, in my collage, the allure of the rose, as well as the female hand with a flame between the fingers, evoked the soft-spokeness of Luani's deceptive relations.

**Box 6.14 Artographic Reflection: Collage Inquiry into Luani's Painting**

*The collage inquiry into Luani's self-portrait painting involved cutting up depicted scenes and aspects exploring their interaction with additional found materials. Through the collage I was searching for added layers and meaning in Luani's painting, still troubled by the offender stigma embedded in the fieldwork narratives of the prison and artographic community.*



*The collage-making process clarified the following emergent themes, which facilitated the curation of both the overarching themes and finding summarised at the end of this section:*

- *Homicidal allusions*
- *Glorification and aestheticisation of violence*
- *Confused sense of self*

The question in the collage, "Will I need my ~~play~~ tomorrow?" rendered visible the intertwined nature of violence and aesthetics in Luani's account, and brought forth Luani's criminal association as an integral part of his being. Reflecting on my drawing[136] in response to Luani's painting, I was able to hold Luani's divided truths without separating the child and the offender. I felt I grew to know Luani as a complex human which included his survival, trauma, criminality and artistic being[137].

*6.2.3 Artographic Relating: "Something remains for me to take"*

As with most participants, Luani's response to modelled artistic practice was precluded by artists' distinct creativities. Luani emphasised artists' embodied artistic creativity translated in the facilitation approach, thereby affecting pedagogic spaces. For him, sharing arts practice in a wholehearted manner can have a lasting impact. For example, Luani singled out the rap artist Kiskin's facilitation of Rehearsal 5:

> *Luani:*      the **rapper Kiskin** *was a* **good guy**, *he* **looks timid** *but he* **opens his soul** *for you,* **I sensed it immediately**, *and* **he just smiles**, *just* **wants** *to smile and* **things to work out**, *and* **for you to relax**, *and* **like Noizy**[138] *when you* **see him** *you're like –* **I can beat this guy up** *– yes,* **you think he fears** *that he's* **full of fear but he has no fear** *– boom,* **he gives you his heart** *and because he's also from an* **older generation** *and makes me* **recall** *this one [Noizy] and* **so I started listening to him**, *to* **respect him**, *to* **take his word** *for what he says, he* **puts his soul** *in it, so* **I took something away for me***.*

(Interview 4)

Artists' immersion in their own practice creates an inviting space that Luani finds enriching. Similarly, the rapper Kinder's improvisatory performance of an acrostic poem to introduce himself modelled a playfulness and ease in creative risk-taking.[139]

Poets and hip-hop artists' shared distinctive practice meant that participants had a range of lived experience on which to draw. Its range was widely appreciated by participants,

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[136] The three colours in the drawing echo the themes arising from the initial analysis of Luani's life story. Red, blue and yellow were used to code excerpts for the themes of male domination, survival, and trauma
[137] See 6.3.2
[138] Luani's favourite rap artists from the Albanian rap band OTR.
[139] Introductory session, summer, 2016

which influenced how they related to artists and forged their own voices. For example, Luani was interested in the performance aspect, observing artists' stage presence. The performance of Shutka Roma Rap also highlighted internalised biases in participants' artistic responses. Responses from the main study participants revealed a sense of distancing from the art in Romani language and the different hip hop sound[140]; while over thirty prison residents in the audience were visibly engaged[141]. Even though Luani could not understand the songs by the rap band Shutka Roma Rap, he pointed out the rap duet's flow and synchronisation of movement on stage.

**Box 6.15 Artographic Reflection on Ethnic Divides and Non-Judgemental Relating**

*At Workshop 4, performing poet Igor Trpche's decision to move into the prison yard for his poetry performance inspired curiosity for his artistic background among participants as well as prison officers on shift. Back into the prison classroom, Igor introduced the concept of 'anagram'. The discussion of language play, was an opportunity I thought for Luani to perform his 'character test' on Igor, as he did with other artists and educators at our first encounters. Particularly, Luani linked the language play to language diversity commenting 'but you know people think that Albanians wish to create Big Albania'. In the Macedonian national context, ethnic tensions discourse in the media has often portrayed the notion of "Big Albania" as a threat to Macedonian national integrity. Hence, I could imagine how Luani's comment may have been conceived by majority of ethnic Macedonians as an ethnic provocation. However, as Igor responded to Luani visibly undeterred by his proposal saying 'ok, why not have Big Albania, why fear that' with a genuine openness for dialogue. I observed the group's surprise at Igor's response, and perhaps some participants were unwilling to voice opinions on the taboo of 'Big Albania'. Significantly, Igor attempted to probe this further as he shared with the group that even as he vehemently critiques Macedonian national pitfalls in his poetry, personally he has a very fond relationship with his Macedonian roots. This encouraged a discussion on the dissatisfaction with the Macedonian national educational system that hinders social mobility for young people. Even as the focus shifted from ethnic divides, Igor's proposition for being able to hold perceived dualities without a sense of contradiction, was keenly taken up into participants' discussion of life after prison. Specifically, experiences with lack of opportunities, was the reason why participants' said they wish to leave Macedonia and rebuild their lives abroad. Hence, Igor's stress on cultivating cultural ties for participants offered a different way of seeing one's national, cultural and ethnic background. For Luani, however, I thought, Igor's response offered a non-judgmental space to voice a commonly contested topic of ethnic divide which Luani had witnessed first-hand growing up in an ethnically segregated city in Macedonia.*

*Workshop, 4, November 29th, 2016*

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[140] Shutka Roma Rap merge local hip hop with Roma music (Rehearsal 3)
[141] The distinct creativities of rap formed part of a discussion led by rap artists from Zad Agolot, whose analysis of verses of an influential rap song unfolded the daily discrimination against Romani people.

Artists' own improvisatory practice spurred collaborative spontaneity in co-creating third spaces. For example, performing actor and poet Trpche took his performance to the prison yard, which accommodated a larger audience[142]. Prison residents from another block were able to watch the performance from the windows of the prison's communal TV room. The prison yard was thus transformed into an inclusive stage for audience interaction; it stood in contrast to the presence of a surrounding chain link fence with vigilant police officers. Artistic practice thus modelled attunement to the prison space, with empathic listening to the unspoken needs of the prison community[143]. A different type of attunement to inclusivity was responding to Luani's probing throughout workshops on artists' views on crime. Luani probed the educators' attitudes with remarks such as "I don't like Tupac because we have no idea what he's done, he killed a child[144]". Luani's probing was a platform from which to condemn violence without condoning offender stigma, thereby relating to participants non-judgementally.

Dialogue emerged throughout the co-created spaces of the programme in multiple forms. Central to artists' dialogic relating with participants was a sympathetic feedback; as well as encouragement and acceptance of counter-narratives. For example, the educator Elena used the participants' notebooks as an opportunity for dwelling in between. This meant being present with participants' voiced needs and expressed fears as opposed to their work. Specifically, Elena responded to participants' poetic letters written for their mothers, modelled after a discussion of Tupac's song, "Dear Mama". Similarly, Luani saw the river journey interview as driving a reflective practice beyond the programme facilitation: *"Who knows the things that I'm not saying now would later end up meaning to me when I go back to my room".* This means the programme affected the dynamics of prison life by transposing day-to-day experience.

The programme elicited third-spaces where racial and sexual identity discrimination surfaced even as artists modelled alternatives to social injustices in this context. For example, following the introduction of spoken word poetry through the hip hop aesthetic

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[142] Workshop 4

[143] Similarly, educators invited interested prisoners to join several workshops. They also performed a break dance routine at the final performance.

[144] Workshop 1

in the US, Luani's racist comments about Tupac provoked engagement with race and racism. The programme presented the wider history and presence of performance poetry. For example, we traced the roots of performance poetry to the oral poetic practice of African griots; also guest hip hop artists from the band "Divizija" spurred a discussion on the centrality of black culture in how we interact with hip hop culture and music.

**Box 6.16 Artographic Reflection on Power Spaces, Gender and Insider-Outsider Roles**

*The gendered navigation of the prison context was also manifested in how the participants talked about the prison environment with the educators and me. The gender aspect was ingrained in the perception of female gender as more fragile and fine, hence rough stories were I felt avoided on the side of the youth. This is perhaps closely related not only to gender, but also to the outsider role of the researcher to the everyday dynamics and residential spaces of the prison. After I brought a book called "A guide for beginners at prison" written by ex-offenders in Serbia, published by a Serbian Arts Organisation called "ApsArt", the power dynamics shifted significantly toward me gaining a sort of an acceptance in the insider world of the prison. For example, Deki as well as Koni said to me that the book captures really well how the Macedonian prison functions as well. They pointed out similarities with respect to how the prison residents struggling with substance abuse and doing therapy are perceived in the prison hierarchy. Moreover, Luani, commented that while Koni really liked the book and wished to keep it for himself as a beginner to prison, he felt disillusioned reading it. He explained that he knew prison life and wanted to write about it himself but was disappointed to see others have written about it. There was a shift in the conversation and the topics available to the researcher with the shared knowledge of this book. For example, Luani identified one of the prison residents as Santa Clause, a term from the book, he explained used for "people who have been in prison for such a long time that no one wants to fuck them". Moreover, I felt that Koni's enquiry if I had read the book before sharing it with them could've been a sign of feeling exposed. However, from the general feedback as well as his desire to keep the book, I also think that the book provided a sense of shared knowledge about the deprivation of prison enabling conversations to rise above the niceties of outsider hood status of the researcher or the gendered perception that the female educators may not be able to handle the truths about the pains of prison life. In hindsight, I was able to reflect on my vulnerability as a poet new to prison research, and that the prison psychologist role as gatekeepers sensitively signposted the trauma that they witnessed in prison throughout the years. The shared art created some bridge to be privy to trauma, but it also indicated the need for dynamic ethical decisions for emotional safeguarding.*

*Circle of Distance, December, 27th, 2016*

The programme spaces rendered visible that racial discrimination towards Romani people and race discourse in Macedonia was largely non-existent. Skin colour and race have been predominantly marginalised in the discussion of discrimination against Romani people in Macedonian society subsumed under the category of ethnicity and class. The participants saw the programme spaces to voice their stance, for example Deki,

who is Romani said "skin colour doesn't matter, we are all human", or, MCB's resisting comments like "someone tans to get my skin colour".

In addition, the space to discuss race and racism, saw participants speaking back and disrupting racist comments as the programme developed. For example, Koni condemned Luani's racial profiling of black performers from performance videos of the American poetry slam competition of Brave New Voices. Luani comments of criminalising race were a part of his affinity to provoke the group's responses: "I have worked with them, African American men they steal, I know". When prompted on his generalisation, a discussion of the differences within an ethnic group ensued, with particular example of Albanian men. However, the programme as much as it created a space for speaking back and confronting racism, it also raised critical questions about the challenges of addressing the same – these remain imperative conundrums for the future of programmes. As Ahmed explains, the act of naming racist behaviour is not sufficient to disrupt it, in fact it becomes complicit in its non-performativity. This means, that programmes and artographers have the task of devising ways and attuning their practices to multiple forms of discrimination and violence permeating the spaces of the programme.

One central conundrum that arose in the artographic practice was how to maintain relationships and spaces safe and robust enough that would enable troubling discrimination. For example, the socially scripted masculinities the participants aspired to were sustaining a homophobia that was largely unaddressed in the Macedonian prison classroom. After the discussion of a poem by Dean Atta, Koni had been looking at his book in English, "I Am Nobody's Nigger," which I had brought into the classroom. While Dean Atta's work was introduced for the merit of its creativity, Koni had read in the author's biography that he is gay. During the break, Koni approached me and started a conversation about homosexuality and his belief it goes counter to his religious practices.

The conversation in which I offered different beliefs and aspects to sexuality risked the trust and respect of Koni. My acceptance of homosexuality as just another form of sexuality in addition to heterosexuality was aimed at modelling a day to day experience of humanity. However, Koni interpreted my perspective as "Westernisation" of my beliefs. Nevertheless, the organic and un-assuming space in which the conversation took

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place, offered a counter-narrative while upholding the dignity of participant and educator.

As elaborated above, co-created spaces took shape with organic movement across the artistic practice as pedagogy. Emergent relationships between artists and participants acquired a dynamic flow, between embodying artistic creativity and moving into dialogic relating. This meant attuning and attending to tensions without judging. For example, participants saw the main Rehearsal 6 as an uncensored opportunity to perform scripted masculinities alongside guest artists and prison staff as audience. Luani performed a set of verses in Albanian expressing hostile rivalry towards a rap band's aesthetic. Artists/ educators saw the rehearsal as providing a chance to stand back, while subsequent workshops provided opportunities for reflection, occasions on which to challenge problematic performance.

Thus participants gradually observed the possibilities of their artistic voices. For example, the educator Elena critiqued MCB's verses as problematic in their portrayal of women: "leave her alone/she's been all around the globe". Her performance of poetry, troubling sexism, spurred a dialogue with the group.  MCB drew parallels with ethnic discrimination against Romani in writing. Spear reflected on his uncharacteristic rap song with sexist content as wanting to impress the group. Attentive listening meant giving place for toxic masculinity and the cult of crime to be expressed; and addressed dialogically through the movement between the arts' practice and pedagogy. The movement revitalised the prison setting and promoted humanising connections.

### 6.2.4 Summary of Finding

Luani's narratives of survival and trauma were explored in the context of an abusive relationship with his father.  Staying artographically with Luani's criminal self-empowerment revealed his perception of crime as a complex preoccupation with violence which was largely caught up in social stigma of the 'incorrigible criminal'. This means, Luani's own sense of criminality, being a large part of his way of being, leaves no room for Luani to explore his own vulnerabilities.

**Table 6.4 Finding Overview of Programme's Pedagogic Site**

| Themes and Finding | |
|---|---|
| Themes | *Survival of abusive relationship*<br>     minimising parental neglect<br>     redeeming father's betrayal, abandonment<br>*Violent drive*<br>     thrill in crime<br>     homicidal allusions<br>*Emergent pedagogy*<br>     third spaces<br>     empathetic and non-judgmental relating with artographers |
| Overarching themes | • survival and traumatic narrative<br>• criminal empowerment<br>• artographic relationships |
| Finding | The **emergent pedagogic site** enabled Luani **alternative way of being** to a history of abuse and social exclusion |

Presented in this section, as an alternative to Luani's history of trauma, stood the humanising relationships Luani formed with artists and educators within the emergent co-created pedagogic spaces of the programme.

## 6.3 Performance Community: Validating Artistic Way of Being

Like Luani's painting and poetry discussed thus far, added depth to his self-narrative. The present section elaborates the role of the programme in eliciting Luani's unspoken story of his father's role in his criminal path, as well as Luani's sense of criminal immutability[145]. Luani harnessed the programme spaces to narrate and perform his life which was validated as part of the artistic prison community.
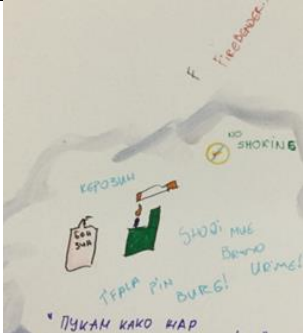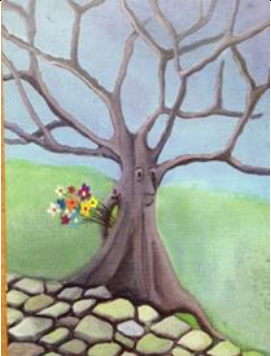
### 6.3.1 Unspoken Story of Father: "Father made me"

Coming of age, Luani began to take pride in a problematic and criminal lifestyle he saw as inherited from his father. The following account shows the intersection of Luani's criminal affinity with a self-interest and male domination in his relationships. This was prominent in his self-empowerment through male bonds implicated in family crime. While Luani wished not to dwell on the effect of power imbalance and feelings of hurt in

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[145] See the relevant visual river journey metaphors explained in Table 6.6

relationship with his father, he also indicated he plans to explore these aspects in his music and poetry. The crux of Luani's relations with his father emerged through his account of his imprisonment, which I saw as unfolding some threads of the unspoken part of Luani's life story.

**Table 6.5 Validating Artistic Ways of Being: River Journey Visual Metaphors**

| Metaphor for unspoken story 'Master(ing)-mind' | Metaphor for criminality 'Bursting Embers' | Metaphor for future 'Pleasant Surprise' |
|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |
| The *master(ing)-mind* metaphor stands for Luani's mastery of crime. Following in his father's footsteps he espouses a self-interested lifestyle. | The metaphor *bursting embers* stands both for Luani's **artistic** vigour and desire for fame and perceived criminal immutability. | Represented by the bouquet, the *pleasant surprise* refers to the bare tree branches representing the "withering of [Luani's family] due to imprisonment". When released Luani wishes to be reunited with his family and gain artistic fame. |

Luani's male bonding with his father arises through male entitlement which precludes actual intimacy. Rituals of male entitlement within the family arise from patriarchal, gendered upbringing. For instance, Luani takes pride in saying: "My father gave me a Fiat 600[146] [...] to be in the car by myself first". Similarly, doing work at home under his father's tutelage is a source of both perceived intimacy and self-mastery. The underlying gendered thinking logic of Luani's idealised communion is deep-seated, as the following excerpt shows:

> Luani:       Yes **naturally, who is not going to listen to their father**, *wait a minute, I am not sure if girls love their father, but boys love him a lot* **I myself in some way love my father more than my mother**; *mother is better she opens more [is more loving/giving] I love her too you know, but sometimes* **I get this feeling to love father more even though mother is all**. *Yes, and so,* **for some reason I'm compelled to love father more**.

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[146] An old car make which was common in Yugoslavia, now often considered an emblem of a past culture and out of fashion.

(Interview 2)

The formative lesson that Luani has learned from his father is mastery of self-interested lifestyle.

> Luani:      *The more I know, the better, **says father**. He [father] says – even if the language of Gypsies, **even if it's Gypsies's language, learn it** if you can, **whatever you can learn, do it** – [father] says – don't think twice, **what you fear** doing yourself **get someone else to do it first**[147].*
> (Interview 2)

The use of imperatives like 'do it', 'don't think twice', indicates an authority and urgency in Luani's father's instructions. Luani's unquestioned espousal of his father's lessons goes hand in hand with his readiness to promote personal gain at the expense of others.

This becomes more evident as Luani explains he has grown accustomed to using other people as a means to an end, e.g. in extracting information or obtaining knowledge:

> Luani:      *you should **steal** – **father told me** – when there is **something good, steal that away** when someone has **a good mind** [wisdom] **steal** that **steal as much as you can.***
> Afrodita:      *so how do you steal it?*
> Luani:      *for example, **I throw some words** in to **someone else** and **they tell me what's required** like x, y, z, and **I will say** to them **look at this person**, and **they will respond** to that. If they say **something good** that I don't know I **will steal** it, if they say **something I know, goodbye**.*
> (Interview 2)

Luani's use of the verb "to steal" means to obtain personal gain, often covertly which, as it turns into a self-interested or criminal lifestyle discussed thus far throughout the portrait.

However, "stealing" in Luani's account also meant self-development. Perhaps framing this 'male criminal' vocabulary was for Luani more acceptable to be able to speak of

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[147] Luani often uses direct speech to retell a past exchange, likely because narrating in the present tense is an efficient way of conveying his intended meaning in Macedonian as his additional language.

artistic than fully embrace creative vocabulary[148]. For instance, Luani says he is interested in the creative workshops in order to learn and perfect his artistry and song writing:

> Luani:   For example, here **you write some songs** this and that you tell us **how to tie it** together *[how to write rhythmically and to rhyme]* and **I steal that** *I* **put it in my brain** *[I remember it] for example* **when I go out I will make use of it for myself that will be good for me it won't be bad if I want to** *if not that's another story.*

(Interview 2)

## Box 6.17 Artographic Reflection: Luani's Unspoken Criminal Influence

*While Luani's predominantly positive view of his father as his life teacher can be quickly qualified as reductive, or unrealistic, conversations with Luani showed me that this was not entirely true for him. I saw how in our conversations he would probe into evaluating aspects of his life which he appeared more confident embodying artistically. For example, as Luani was mostly positively attached to his father in his account, I commented "so your father, he seems like a very important person in your life?". I was surprised that Luani succinctly replied "he was, but not anymore". There seemed to be no reproach in his tone as he explained "now I am grown up so I don't need him anymore". As Luani saw I was still confused by his lack of attachment to his father in the present, he further added "he gave me what he had when I needed it now I will move on my own". The more time I spent with Luani in individual interviews, he began to indicate subdued reproach towards his father, but he was only keen to voice this in his songs "there are things that I didn't say to father when I was supposed to, but the time will come I will sing it to him and he has a good mind, he will understand [the meaning]". I sensed that there was a latent unspoken story behind Luani's reluctance to voice the things he wanted to, but couldn't when he was younger because of his father's authority. Luani guided me to locate these unspoken moments of his life directly in describing instances of self-censorship as an intrinsic aspect of his family.*

*Interview 2, December 6th, 2016*

Critical to Luani's self-interested lifestyle is that he understands that it is both a choice and harmful. Nonetheless he has adopted an instrumental approach to his interpersonal relations because his lifestyle is the vehicle of his self-empowerment. Self-interested lifestyle thus manifests as multiple forms of agency that not only propel morally wrong

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[148] For Luani's take on the creative process, see 6.1.3.

behaviour but also enable Luani to uphold a sense of a culturally scripted masculinity. For example, he says "I'm sorry I am a Shiptar[149]". When prompted to explain what that means, he continues:

> Luani: *I'm **taught by my father** I'm **not taught** by the **school** or by my **mother** […] this means **we [Albanians]** are **taught by the father**, for example **if the father says** you will **be a killer, you will be a killer, mother has no say** in it.*
>
> (Interview 2)

It is Luani's aspiration to live up to the ethnic masculine ideal of being an Albanian son that is under threat if he rejects his father's authority. Hence ethnicity and male domination are interwoven in Luani's evolving criminal sense of self.[150]

Luani's male and criminal bonding with his father as well as men in general offers insight into his struggle to uphold an ethnic gender ideal. Another facet of ethnic masculinity that evades Luani is the expectation of religious practice. While Luani stated his attempts to develop a religious practice, he was also acutely aware of the lack of foundation for it in his life as he said: "I pray, I fast for Ramadan but I have slipped from the bath tub and hit my head"[151]. Luani's account revealed an inability to accept the distance between his lack of genuine faith and the desire to live up to the ideal of religious piety. The ramification of Luani's inner conflict concerning religion is implicated in his affinity for male domination.

Overall, I observed a gendered logic in three main areas of Luani's narrative: seeking power and status by association; enacting male domination and control; and avoiding vulnerability. The maleness manifested in his relations with his father extends to other male family members like Luani's uncle. In the notion of power drawn from maleness Luani takes pride in both his father's and uncle's embodying male domination.

> Luani: *Well for example **anyone I talk** to about **my parents** I can't tell you much in that sense but for example I tell them I have a **photo** because **my mother** is **photographed with Bill Clinton** my **father** is **photographed** when he*

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[149] A derogatory term used by ethnic Macedonians to refer to ethnic Albanians. Luani sometimes uses the term with a dose of irony, which can be also seen as his way of resistance to being labelled.
[150] See 6.1.2.
[151] Interview 3

> *was in Macedonia they are **sitting** at the **same table** do you see there are many such examples who knows in those times **father** they **had a lot [money/power].***

Luani's father's reputation instils fear as Luani confirms: *"father is something amazing he watches your back with just the name"*. From this account it was evident that Luani draws power from the name of his family to create a sense of status based also on strongly embedded patriarchal values shaping his 'tough' masculinity.

As part of aspiring to male power Luani looks up to violence in his father's attitude towards the police:

> Luani:      *yes all the time when the police detain me they talk to me about my father each time they see me*
> Afrodita:   *they want to put him in prison?*
> Luani:      *a lot because **father beats them** when he gets down to it he takes **police officers** out of their cars and then **slaps them** but not Macedonian ones. **Albanian police officers***
> Afrodita:   *ok and is he not detained for it?*
> Luani:      *well **his brother is a minister** what can they do he **goes to prison just for 2 hours**.*
> (Interview 2)

The patriarchal gendered logic of this imbalanced partnership is manifested through examples such as Luani's policing his sisters or secretly running criminal errands for his father. This translates to his instrumental attitude in his romantic relationships which are wrought with gender violence.

Luani's view of his relationship with his father is disrupted by Luani's first long-term imprisonment[152], for which he was serving time when I met his as part of the present study. Luani claimed he was forced to plead guilty to a charge for a crime connected to a forced arranged marriage within his extended family. Luani claimed that he wasn't involved in violence concerning an arranged marriage of his uncle's son with the woman, but he decided to plead guilty because his family hierarchy dictated that the younger take on the crimes of the older:

> Luani:      *the **most important thing now** is to **serve the time for my uncle's son** for what he did because **he has a wife now** you know, **it's shameful, father***

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152 Luani stated he had been served time both in a correctional institution and prison for short sentences.

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> **went and took the daughter [a woman]**, **father stole her**, they went **with a car and took her**
>
> Afrodita: **your uncle's son stole?**
>
> Luani: **no, no, they took the woman** you see and then **her family is very dangerous** and then my **father gave his word**, you know what **giving your word is**, for example if I take you, someone else says to your dad **whatever happens it's my responsibility.**
>
> Afrodita: wait a minute, your uncle, **they abducted a woman?**
>
> Luani: **yes.**

(Interview 3)

According to Luani, his father attempted to alleviate the legal consequences of the kidnapping of the woman by negotiating an arranged marriage with the woman's father[153]. The deal involved Luani's father's guaranteeing the woman's safety to her family:

> Luani: ...and **my uncle's son put her [the kidnapped woman] at home** and **told her – you will marry me, whether you want it or not –** and then **to avoid the police** and all that, **father talked to her father** that they will **marry** and **all will be good** and he [father] was **in prison for a couple of months** and **I was abroad** in 2015 and **they called me, the police,** you know, they [the police] say – **he says it was you** – I told this to father and [...] **father had a thought** afterwards I don't know **and said to me – yes, say it was you.**
>
> Afrodita: so **your father said to say it was you** [who did the crime]?
>
> Luani: **yes, yes.**

Echoing his father's instructions, Luani said that took responsibility for the crime in order to protect his cousin's reputation as a married man with children, while he himself would have an opportunity to rebuild his life upon release.

What Luani saw as the need to fit within the family crime hierarchy, was also implicated in his desire to live up to the ethnic masculine ideal as he explained "I get this strong feeling when I think of father and so I've listened to him more [than mother] and this is

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[153] As part of the ethical informed consent, I made clear to Luani at the start of the programme, and reminded Luani throughout our conversations that should he wish to talk to me of any undisclosed criminal activity, he must know that I have a legal responsibility to disclose such information to the prison authorities. Luani said that the forced arranged marriage was crime he was convicted for. When I enquired about Luani's conviction in conversation with the prison governor, I also shared his view of the crime with Luani's permission (December, 2016). The prison did not disclose the paperwork concerning Luani's conviction history and appeared to discard the credibility of Luani's account. The prison governor confirmed that Luani was sentenced to 3 and a half years imprisonment, and had not met requirements for an early release.

why I am here [in prison]". Given that Luani's saw the need to adhere to the father's influence within the family, in this instance he identified his relationship with his father as key to his criminal path. This proves a major tension in Luani's narrative, as he began to acknowledge inner conflict about his upbringing.

**Box 6.18 Artographic Reflection on Luani's View of Family Interplay with Organised Crime**

*Observing that Luani's account of family power dynamics was male dominated and power driven by age hierarchy I began to observe that 'us' in Luani's narrative referred not only to 'Albanian' but also to 'criminal' lifestyle. For example Luani said to me 'the younger do things for the older, if I steal something and the police finds out, someone younger will go to prison for me'. This criminal age hierarchy sounded baffling to me, but I wanted Luani to feel comfortable that I will not judge his account so I explained to him I was very open and curious to learn from him. This prompted Luani to say 'there is something that you don't understand in what I told you, this is how things are with us, it's how the system works'. In my analysis of Luani's account I identified that for Luani, the 'family system' was deeply entrenched in the power dynamics of organised crime.*

*Interview, November 9th, 2016*

As outlined thus far, imprisonment triggers Luani's long-term suppression of difficult emotions as explored in his narrative of survival and trauma. Recognition of his father's criminal influence, complicates Luani's life story during a time of adolescence when a sense of self is most prominently formed. Luani's channelling of the unspoken part of his autobiography, through his poetry, was an avenue to offer alternative ways of being for Luani to be able to speak back to his father, even if this form of agency was part of his criminal empowerment.

*6.3.2 Luani's Immutability Script: "My heart is closed, I can't change"*

Luani's explained his understanding of his criminal behaviour in relation to a sense of helplessness in his relationship with his father traced back to his childhood:

Luani:            the **first day** I came here **[to prison]** and entered the room **I began bossing them [prisoners] around** […] I am too well **trained to steal** from a **very young age**, to **fight**, to **run away**, to **kick police officers' handcuffs**, I am **capable of everything**, I am, father you see **[father] made me**, [father]

> *wants it that way, my **father is crazy**, **I can't say** to [father] "hey **don't do this to me**", **I was a kid** and **[father] made me**…*
> (Interview 2)

Luani believes that criminal proclivities inculcated in childhood have precluded the possibility of his change. While learned childhood helplessness may sustain Luani's criminal lifestyle, it also enables him to relinquish responsibility for his life in adolescence. Not only is Luani unable to envision rebuilding his life, but his resignation rests on a complex set of beliefs in an inherent immutability of his sense of self:

> *Luani:*      *…so **I am like that, I can't change**, so **my heart is closed, nobody can change it** **they can only give me something** for me **to steal** that away, **nobody can change it***
>
> *Afrodita:*      *no?*
>
> *Luani:*      ***I feel like this all the time** do you get it.*
>
> *Afrodita:*      *what **you told me** about going **back into your room** and **reflecting, that doesn't change**?*
>
> *Luani:*      *well that means **it changes for love and for music** but **to change the real me**— see **this pencil** there is **something written on it** [pencil's patterns] you **can write on it** but to change it this "lapsi" [Albanian for "pencil"] how do you call it…right, pencil. **Can this [pencil] be a pen?** […] **You can't change anything about me, no way.***
>
> (Interview 2)

Luani's belief that his criminal character is immutable is evidenced in his pen-pencil analogy. Luani's analogy is intended to indicate the permanence of his criminal disposition, the "real me", rather than learned behaviour. Significantly, Luani distinguishes between two types of change: day-to-day and life-turning, affecting the "real me". It is the former he engages in artistic and reflective practice, and the latter that he sees as an impossibility.

Luani linked his belief in criminal immutability to his lack of belief that society would be able to accept him as fully reformed. He saw criminal history as a mark on his character which he found hard to imagine would be socially as well as religiously possible to redeem which Luani shared with the programme community in his poetry performance[154]. The programme community, offered a space for Luani to express his view of crime in social context, prompted by the guest educator performances.

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[154] See 6.3.3

Specifically, workshop 5 of the programme elicited young offenders' responses on their experience of marginalisation with the educational and prison system. Participants' responses pointed to the wider national problem of the lack of integration of ethnic minorities as well as young people with poor social and socio-economic capital before contact with the criminal justice system. This was an instance when participants' linked social exclusion to their lack of hope to rebuild their lives after prison.

**Box 6.19 Artographic Reflection on Opportunities for Social Inclusion**

*Performing poet Igor Trpche's shared his poem "I am Canned", which was an extended metaphor of feeling limited to realise his full potential in the Macedonian national context that offers scarce social, education, cultural, artistic and personal development. These prompted participants to voice their own disillusionment with the lack of opportunities that some of them had encountered before prison. Some pointed out the school inequalities rooted in privilege that enabled favouritism and social class to dictate success. Luani pointed out that even though he has ideas for building a small-scale legal business of entertainment to earn money (like opening a snooker room), his aspiration to make music would require access to expensive equipment which can be a temptation to steal as he is used to, and if opportunities to work and develop artistically on the outside are scarce. Low employment rates in Macedonia has been linked to the trend of young people 'brain drain' abroad covered in a study on the entrepreneurial opportunities for young people in Macedonia as a solution to integrate young people in the work force through business. This however is still an underdeveloped field, even in cities with great economic potential (Starova, 2014). In chapter 2, I reviewed that the prison system in Macedonia did not offer consistent and robust pathways for education and rehabilitation of young offenders while in prison, nor was there a sound integration plan upon release. This further diminishes the opportunity for these young people to become integrated and included in social life and the work force. While the programme cannot impact on the wider structural inequalities, the finding of the present study points to the need to include the arts as legitimate part of existing Macedonian prison resocialisation agenda, which like cultural and educational provision, can indirectly be harnessed to support prisoners' rehabilitation.*

*Workshop 5, December 1st, 2016*

At the final stage of the programme, following the performance event, Luani's reflection of his future expectations showed a mix of overzealous hope to reunite with his family in

spite of his family's imprisonment. The programme's input, however, ability to write poetry from life experience, he felt was something to move forward with in his life after prison.

Nevertheless, Luani's acknowledgment of change across areas of his life, did not affect his view of criminal immutability as he explained:

> Luani:  ...ok some **things change** yes you can change for example **you can change all but before you go to bed** when **you wake up you have it in you what you've had ever since you were a kid.**
> (Interview 2)

The change of the "real me" can be interpreted as the change of what Luani perceives as *"what you've had ever since you were a kid".* This means Luani's ingrained immutability emerges as a given – as an ontological sense of self[155]. It is not that Luani's does not acknowledge the possibilities of his self-narrative as evidenced in his poetic voice and artistic responses thus far. It is that there is a need for Luani to further engage with how his artistic way of being and probed narrative possibilities of how his unspoken stories could unite together as a whole. While the scope of the present study did not examine this dimension, it is necessary to further investigate how Luani may consciously explore the meanings in his artistic responses and thus inform a complex view of his life.

*6.3.3 Validating Vulnerable Artistic Rituals: 'Our lives are more than just 'nothing''*

The movement between arts practice and pedagogy laid the foundations for a potential exploration of a vulnerable aesthetic in performance. As part of the emergent arts practice, creative play enabled Luani to voice and stay with the uncertainties of the unacknowledged aspects of his relationship with his father. In so doing Luani sought to retrieve a subjective truth about his lived experience, otherwise narrated self-deceptively. Luani struggled to resolve his inner conflict as he struggled to devise possibilities to be vulnerable in the context of his life.

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[155] See 9.1

The vulnerable aesthetic space is thus as much a space to inquire into the prospect of practising vulnerability through artistic performance as it is a space to be vulnerable. It is between Luani's emergent poetic voice and the search for vulnerability that the potential for revitalising his sense of self can be revealed (see discussion in chapter 8, section 8.3.2). This means that between Luani's resisting voice and his performed criminal self-empowerment there is a self that seeks affirmation of his humanity *'our lives are more than just 'nothing''.*

Luani's self-narrative revealed a particular struggle with practising vulnerability as it clashed with his learned criminal self-empowerment and increasing desire to live up to a culturally scripted masculinity. Observing participants' performance, and response to the programmes' artographic facilitation raised questions about Luani's ways of relating to artists and educators. Luani's awareness and management of the persona he presented made it difficult to trace instances of vulnerability.

**Box 6.20 Excerpt from Luani's Self-Authored Poem "Luani's History"**

*I burn like embers no matter where I am*
*I fight like a lion without any fear*
*Half of my back can hold two wings*
*I lie in bed and do not care for anything*
*Turn up the volume I wish to calm down*
*If someone is disturbed send my regards*
*My group has been fighting all their lives*
*Our lives are more than just 'nothing'*
*I'm used to being locked up*
*I fight all my life I've been taught not to give up*

Even though he exhibited emotional risk-taking, it seemed it was rooted in his desire to uphold a sense of a powerful self-image. For example, in a discussion towards the end of the programme Luani commented, *"I don't know how you see me here locked up"* in order to emphasise that even if inside prison he still feels there is power in his association with powerful connections outside. I took this comment as a prompt to reflect on Luani's sense of marginalisation as an imprisoned young man that I myself may have not appraised fully in the context of his power among prison residents. I was one instance, that in retrospect

made me recognise the need for reflexive consideration of both my own and participants' sensitivity explored in box 6.21.

**Box 6.21 Artographic Reflections on Vulnerability in Research**

*In a follow up visit after the performance, I knew that two of the participants had their holiday permit granted and away at home. But, I expected to see Luani hanging around in the yard as usual. Instead, I saw prison residents who were serving a training order and had not been taking part in the programme.*

Sensitive passage of data removed for confidentiality reasons. The passage contained third party identifying sensitive data.

*I would often revisit these encounters that have made me wonder how being a visiting poet and educator is a double-edged sword: I don't get to see the full picture. I don't get to see the scope of victimisation and bullying in prison. I had asked myself while in the field: Why was I not disturbed, and, moved by it? Are my emotions so suppressed? Do I lack empathy for Mane? Has the prison discourse became a default: the kids so comfortably othered as 'them', the 'DTOs', the 'junkies'? Is it easier because we haven't formed relationships? Why can't the programme include all voices? Prison hierarchy? In this context, it was difficult to be realistic and accept the programme is not tailored to work with offenders who have complex mental health needs, or are participating in an active substance misuse treatment. Yet, in spite of this I could sense that some of the young men in the prison are at the bottom of prison hierarchy which must have exacerbated their vulnerability. I also wasn't fully recognising how bearing witness to the vulnerability of prison residents, was affecting my own vulnerability as a researcher. In hindsight, I couldn't help but think that my lack of emotional engagement with these prison realities was a way of coping – this showed me the need for greater self-protection of my wellbeing a sensitive researcher, which was a key responsibility in being able to observe the need for safeguarding of vulnerable participants as well.*

*January, 17th, 2017*

At the same time the artists'/educators' reinforcement of a different form of power Luani devised in his artistic practice stood as an alternative to criminal and masculine

invulnerability. Perhaps Luani's search for vulnerability is to be found in the performance and discussion imbued with deceptive relating and not in spite of it. That Luani's self-narrative maintained a sense of ambivalence bears witness to his lived experience. For example, Luani voiced that his learned impulse to steal something valuable if opportunity presented itself, clashed with his emergent plans to stay away from prison in future.[156] The performance unfolded Luani's confused sense of self, reinforced through the refuge sought in problematic lifestyle. The performance shaped the energy in the room and affected audience interaction. Luani's line "Is there a way out", provoked a response from participants in the back rows of the audience. The line provoked an improvisatory call and response in recognition of shared lived experience. Luani reflects on the audience interaction as a mutual process: *"The prison governor and others in the audience act as a light bulb that wants to light up but not fully, like plugged into an outlet; the light depends on me[157]"*. The performance's vulnerable aesthetic space can thus be conceived as a shared intensity of lives validated as part of an artographic community.

The artographic community bore witness to Luani's struggle to make sense of his lived experiences. Performance with a live audience opened the possibility for an immediate moment-to-moment presence with Luani's search for validation. The sense of affirmation of the shared struggles became evident in participants' performances in the evolving culture of finger-snapping, and call-and-response during open mics. For instance, the group showed solidarity with Kasper's poetic expression of the pains of imprisonment "I'm wearing clothes that I do not wish to wear/I am a chair that sits tight/ no matter where you place it".

Luani's own search for self-affirmation is, however, implicitly woven in his artistic practice, rather than rendered visible in the context of his overarching life story. Connecting the poetic meanings generated in Luani's poetry to his self-narrative can offer narrative processing of implicit insights. Arguably, poetic meaning-making rendered conscious can unify divided truths of Luani's life he narrated and shared throughout the programme.[158]

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[156] Interview 5, January 17th, 2017
[157] (Interview 4)
[158] See Chapter 8

Luani's performance of the struggle to redeem himself can be interpreted as a way of performing his immutability script[159]. Understanding the immutability script as central to Luani's sense of self is not as much about Luani's invulnerability as it is about his struggle to conceive it would be possible to engage his vulnerability. Luani has voiced his felt difficulty in getting in touch with his emotions and internality in poetry excerpt 6. It can be argued that Luani's search for redemption in his poetry does not do what it says it does: genuinely seek forgiveness.

However, Luani's performance of a failed redemption is undergirded by his lack of belief in his ability to change. Hence, in light of Luani's life story, to see his poetry as performing immutability might be more performative than it is to argue his poetry elides subjective truth. In this sense, poetic performance of immutability, while not self-restorative itself becomes a redemptive ritual.

**Box 6.22 Excerpt from Luani's Self-Authored Poem "Luani's History"**

> *I pray to God to forgive me*
> *I dream I'm inside fire*
> *The tears won't come out*
> *God, wake me up from this devilish dream*
> *They hate me, but I love you.*

For Luani the search for freedom expressed in the final verses was a search for freedom from the grips of addiction and its ramifications. Luani explained that being high is "like hell, like the devil is guiding you and you have no control"[160]. One can argue where Luani's performance resonates with his overall life story is in the expressed futility of redemptive rituals like praying, crying, and connecting. Luani's redemptive rituals grapple with helplessness and unacknowledged trauma in his self-narrative.

Luani:       You **try to heal the wrong** that you have done but **a trace remains** now I can **go to the mosque to pray** but the **others will see** me and will say "oh, **this one did so much wrong** in the past, I don't know how he **dares to**

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[159] See 6.3.2

[160] Luani's line "God wake me up from a devilish dream" was originally written as "God wake me up in a devilish dream", a critical change he explained was a mistake due to language barriers.

(Interview 5)

Luani's poetry performance troubles the modelled invulnerability in Luani's idealised relationship with his father. In Luani's endeavour to perform "real life" he complicates his narrated relationship with his father, speaking unspoken emotions. With the pressure to uphold a masculine ideal and evade the pains of an underlying helplessness, Luani seeks refuge in an invulnerable self-empowerment. Luani does sees the poem as dramatic, offering occasion on which "to act", which can be interpreted as an opportunity to engage in perspective-taking, to perform things he scarcely allows himself to "enact" in real life.
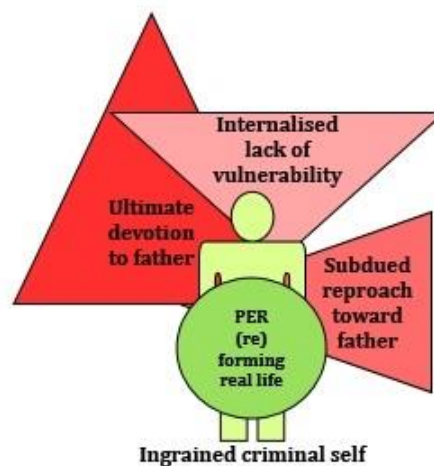


**Figure 6.5 Connecting Luani's Self-Narrative with Performance: Validating Rituals**

The complexity of Luani's life story unfolded in poems and self-narrative in voiced tensions and disparities. Luani was grappling with a desire for and satisfaction in wrongdoing and taking drugs; recognition of the perils of a resulting loss of ownership of one's self; belief in an inability to repair one's sense of self; and awareness of the risks of drug addiction. Luani included the risk of death by overdose as a possible obstacle to rebuilding his life. The thread running through Luani's reflections on the future was narrative self-deception. While Luani continued to compartmentalise several subjective truths, the programme offered an opportunity for him to voice unspoken situated stories of his life story. Exploring unspoken stories meant having the courage to confront and share difficult life experiences with the group; and, perform redemptive rituals even as rebuilding life was difficult to envision. Overall, the programme enabled Luani to begin to

unfold the immutability script of his life story; and venture into devising new types of agencies and communions presenting the potential for restoring a sense of self.

*6.3.4 Summary of Finding*

Luani's life story gained complexity as he began to voice unspoken aspects of his life story elicited through the arts-based performance site of the programme. Luani's confused sense of self continues to be an obstacle to unify unspoken parts of his life story, crucial for challenging his sense of ingrained criminality. Luani's perceived immutable criminality was central to his way of being, even as Luani saw the programme as a site where he could share his criminal narrative and begin to explore the difficulty in his view to be personally and socially redeemed.

**Table 6.6 Finding Overview of Programme's Performance Community**

| Themes and Finding | |
|---|---|
| Themes | *Unspoken stories of father's criminal influence*<br>       criminal (dis)empowerment<br>       male domination |
| | Perceived inability to change<br>       criminal grooming from childhood<br>       'artistic change' perceived as separate from criminality |
| | *Performance*<br>       audience/ communal affirmation<br>       poetry as performing redemptive rituals |
| Overarching themes | • bearing witness to narrative of trauma and crime<br>• unfolding narrative of criminal immutability<br>• potential for practising vulnerability |
| Finding | **The programme's performance community** of artists, educators, and the prison staff **validated Luani's artistic way of being** |

This means that to read from Luani's immutability script is to thread the impossibilities he felt in reconnecting with a vulnerable past even as Luani recognised the validation of his artistic way of being was by the artographic community. Perhaps this communal validation can be a springboard from which prison spaces can build avenues for young offenders to begin to practice vulnerability, exploring how alternative ways of being through art may act as a blueprint for imagining a crime-free life.

## 6.4 Summary of Luani's Portrait

The programme's movement across arts practice as emergent pedagogy as well as performance community offered complexity to Luani's way of being by eliciting unspoken stories of Luani's self-narrative. Through speaking back to his father's criminal influence in his poetry, Luani exerted a sense of agency over his life in his distinct artistic practices. Luani's survival of childhood with criminal empowerment emerging in adolescence, was performed alongside a search for personal and social redemption in poetry performance. Luani explored rich life experiences through the programme sites in non-judgmental spaces and humanising connections with artists.

Poetic creativity cultivates complexity facilitating a dance around narrative tensions with associative play and potential for unfolding tensions in Luani's survival agency necessary to navigate adverse circumstance from childhood. It is the poetic creativity bolstered by the pedagogic co-created spaces of the programme that offered Luani an opportunity to begin to voice aspects of his life story he saw as difficult to reconcile without keeping them separate. However, the scope of the present study and programme did not go further into examining the potential of Luani's artistic way – for instance what Luani's understanding of the voiced unspoken and consciously disconnected parts of his life can reveal for how he continues to unfold his perceived criminal immutability. A central way of being in the world for Luani. Nevertheless, his artistic way of being through the programme offered alternatives to past trauma and social exclusion which extended Luani's potential way of being.

### *Postlude: An Assemblage of Luani's Artistic Being through the Programme*

The found assemblage layers Luani's artistic way of being through the programme with visual metaphors to capture the three areas of the findings, agency through poetic voice (blue), alternative being (yellow) to narrative of trauma (khaki).[161]

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[161] See figure 6.6

**Figure 6.6 Researcher-Made Assemblage in Response to Luani's Artistic Way of Being through the Program**

# CHAPTER 7: JESS'S ARTOGRAPHIC PORTRAIT – 'THE PROGRAMME IS LIKE A SCHOOL FOR ME'

The narrative account of Jess' life story presents the evidence of his artistic responses to the programme, the life story exploration the programme elicited as well as the personal meanings in Jess' responses. Jess portrait, like Luani's, is organised around the three core findings of the programme's artistic[162], pedagogic[163] and performance community[164] sites, and the possibilities they extended for Jess' own distinct forms of self-empowerment through poetic voice, alternative way of being through the programme's third spaces, and the validation of his artistic way of being. The portrait also presents Jess' own selection of visual metaphors to illustrate his account of significant life experiences as well as his poetic practice.

Specifically, the programme elicited Jess' experience of imprisonment densely, with a less concentrated account of family relations and childhood which he felt was full of sadness. Jess' programme responses included accounts of criminal action and relationships, which he largely explored through his poetic voice. Jess' portrait also evokes his attunement to Macedonian social reality rap, capturing his voice, and sensing into a place-based masculinity through a poetic inquiry into our emergent relationship as artists/educators. In the included poetic enquiry, I invited a dialogue with Jess' own poetry and narrative, to open up his experience within the programme through my lens. This was based on our relationship as artographers, which was a site to discuss multiple beliefs about rap music, popular culture, and inner city life in Macedonia[165]. The programme enabled Jess to reflect on whose voices are appreciated within rap and hip hop culture within the public domain, and hear educators expressed value of his own musical choices. Implicated in this, Jess came to see the programme as legitimate form schooling.[166]

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[162] See 7.1
[163] See 7.2
[164] See 7.3
[165] See 7.1.2
[166] See 7.3.3

## Prelude: Meeting Jess, 'A Neighbourhood Kid, the Real Man'

The prelude foregrounds three key aspects of Jess' sense of self emerging through our first interaction. Firstly, Jess' approached me in a friendly conversational manner, inspiring a sense of familiarity. Immediately, he expressed 'fairness' as a core value in his relations, which became the main themes of his poetry throughout the programme. In this context, I discovered that Jess' aspiration to build fair and honest relations was continuously hindered by a culture I felt at the same time idealises and punishes fairness.

**Box 7.1 Artographic Reflection – First Encounter with Jess**

*Cluttered with unused storage cabinets and desks, the classroom was now filled with noise and chatter. Informal chats were slowly pulling the threads of unfamiliarity, as the group dispersed around in the classroom for a break after an introductory session examining trust building. Jess approached me to share his interest in the programme in relation to rap. He spoke in a Macedonian dialect with an assured posture, which made me think of the attitudes I've seen among the underground youth cultures of this Macedonian city. Having lived for seven years in the city, I picked up on the accentuated verbal nouns in his sentences, often used instead of verbs in the city's vernacular. I thought Jess had an attitude that spelled out 'I have lived through things, I know stuff', as he quoted "Life is a false mirror and when it breaks you will leave this fake world". From day one, it was easy to establish a rapport with Jess. However, it was also immediately clear that what appeared as assuredness was also mixed with hurt: "I don't trust Afrodita, since then I can't trust", said Jess explaining the events that led to his imprisonment. The police discovered his drugs because a friend "backstabbed" him. Jess' leaned toward me and confided: "but you know what Afrodita, I'm writing the names down in a black book". Noticing my slight confusion, which was more a mix of fear and concern I couldn't contain, he clarified, "it's in my head, a book of revenge".*

*Introductory Workshop, July, 2016*

I was reminded of the rap motif "don't you take my kindness for weakness[167]", which often stands for the lack of appreciation of acts of kindness, or being fair, in a power driven culture, often male dominated. This appeared to be a recurring motif in Jess' description of his relations within the drug-dealing culture. I was also able to contextualise Jess concern with fairness, he articulated as 'being real', as something that

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[167] The line is taken from the rap song "Kindness for Weakness" Dilated Peoples with Talib Kweli, which was one of the rap references that Macedonian guest rap artists considered as capturing the idea that fairness, or loyalty can often be perceived as 'soft' in male circles, while 'being real' remains a key value in hip hop culture.

emerged as an unattainable ideal within his way of being in relation to male friends. I came to see this as an aspiration towards a "masculinity of realness".[168] Masculinity of realness emerged as an ideal shaped through a sentimental connectedness to an urban inner city culture, and male bonds within a drug-dealing community.

**Box 7.2 Poetic Inquiry – Reassembling First Encounter with Jess**

*[a without-ness]*

*there's something to a pressed lip*
*to how a person contains words*
*inside their cheekbones*
*without gnashing their teeth*
*or creasing the forehead*
*without tilting the head*
*without curling fingers up into fists*
*without sounding without tears*
*one holds across the body a betrayal of trust*
*one holds in the body 'a without'*
*and through it one lives the loss.*
*Jess leans in to utter a word that spells:*
*r-e-v-e-n-g-e*
*strangely it doesn't feel that way,*
*revenge feels more like a body of grief*
*a body where language lives*
*without its origins, where a 'without'*
*is the grammatical root of 'revenge'*
*one should think that it would be easy*
*to spell 'revenge' as 'without-revenge'*
*but a body sees itself through*
*a dissipating silence a withouthness*
*takes up space without any predilection –*
*"I am writing a book of revenge"*
*a book of revenge as a mental image*
*as an immaterial object held in the head*
*more paper-weight than paper folding tight*
*as if for dear life not to unfold*
*the without that cannot be spoken about.*

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Jess' embodiment of such masculinity of realness involved a struggle to contain a sense of underlying woundedness. Jess' composed yet tensed up body language appeared troubled by the betrayal of his friends. As Jess explained the lead up to his imprisonment for drug possession, he said his friend "was supposed to be the real one, but it was the real one that set me up". Thirdly, Jess' struggle with betrayal manifested in bitterness. Jess confided he "was writing a book of revenge" the first time we met in the summer of 2016. Jess' condoning of violence in response to hurt emerged as a formative aspect of his life story.[169]

The themes accessed through the poetic inquiry in response to the first encounter with Jess, brought to the fore emergent narrative and thematic themes of Jess' own narrative account. The themes signposted in the poem are: embodied and trauma, as well as revenge. Trauma in the poem emerged through attunement to how the body navigates space, as if "being without" something. Analysing the meaning of the emergent metaphor of "without-ness", showed me that I had sensed Jess' struggle to hold on to something that he must have felt was painfully lacking. I felt it was the still fresh memory of the loss of human dignity throughout the process of imprisonment, which became evident in his account of police brutality[170].

In addition, the poem helped me acknowledge my difficulty to relate to Jess' desire for revenge. It tapped into my limited understanding of the tenacity and devastating effects of trauma. I had grown to think trauma was not a 'dirty' word the way 'brutality' was, as if the aftermath of violence could be a cleaner version of its immediate effects. Most of all, I was able to situate Jess' encounter with the programme as opening up themes of re-victimisation inflicted by imprisonment. While condemning violence towards others, I was able to shift from being disconcerted by Jess' desire for revenge, to listening attentively to what that desire meant to him[171].

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[169] See 7.2.2
[170] See 7.3.1
[171] See 7.2.2 and 7.3.2

**7.1 Artistic Practice: Narrative of Survival, Crime and Creative Agency**

Jess was born in an ethnically Albanian family in a Macedonian city. He stressed that his mother is significantly younger than his father, around 20 years, an age gap Jess found unconventional compared to other families. Jess is the older of two male siblings, also surviving one of his brothers who died in Jess' childhood. Jess went to an ethnically Macedonian school which for him played a role of pushing his ethnicity into the background of his narrated sense of self. Instead, the inner city culture featured prominently in his self-presentation and account.

The present section elaborates formative autobiographical memories of loss in Jess' childhood, as well as the sense of transient childhood, which sees Jess device spatiotemporal agency to survive adverse circumstances[172]. The abrupt transience of childhood commences with the gradual onset of a criminal lifestyle discussed as criminal empowerment through substance abuse and becoming a part of a drug dealing culture.[173] Jess' criminal empowerment reveals Jess' self-assured positioning within a drug-dealing culture. Moreover, Jess' account of his drug-dealing business is built on a complex sets of place-based power, like status within the neighbourhood, ownership of public areas, and the aim to be skilful at evading authorities. The section concludes with Jess' creative process which enabled him to develop a poetic voice as a powerful site to express unspoken traumatic aspects of his life and device an alternative way of resisting social stigma.[174]

*7.1.1 Spatiotemporal Embodiment: "I feared I would die too"*

Jess reminisced on his childhood with the line "it's all sad". The brief recollection of his brother's death was an instance of Jess' devised agency to navigate loss. Jess' older brother was in his early twenties when he died in a motorbike accident. Jess explained that he had to break the code of his culture in order to see his brother's funeral. While

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[172] See 7.1.1
[173] See 7.1.2
[174] See 7.1.3

rule breaking can be seen as problem behaviour, for Jess it was an empowering act amidst a cultural censorship within his family:

> Jess:     *My older **brother died** when **I was 7**... I loved him a lot I still keep his photo. **I was little**, I **remember the funeral**, we **Albanians don't allow** women and **children at funerals**, but **I snuck into the van** in which they were going and **I saw the funeral**...I was moved by it. **I didn't understand death**. I would sit in my room lie in bed and worry...**I had fears I would die too**. I would **ask my Mum** if I'm here if I'm alive I would look at my hands; **I didn't understand it then**.*
>
> (Interview 3[175])

Particularly reference to Albanian ethnicity while implicated in Jess's sense of (dis)-empowerment, it is fleeting in Jess's account here as it is across his life story. In the example quote, Jess remembers his brother fondly. In most of his accounts, events take place without articulation of attitudes, or affect. There is no evidence of meaning-making in the recollected memory.

Jess' use of time and space to take control of bearing witness to loss is exemplified in his memory of secrecy surrounding his brother's funeral. I felt that Jess's recollection of experiencing fear of dying following the loss of his brother, was also a way of trying to device a sense of agency. My awareness of children's ability to intuit and feel the complexity of events even when they are not given sufficient information, made me consider how devastating bereavement must have been for Jess even as his account doesn't dwell on this. Also, given the sensitivity of the memory, I felt that the programme wasn't the space for Jess to elicit and explore this traumatic part of his life.

That said, I felt that Jess' account of growing up entailed an unspoken aspect to Jess' emotional world possibly because the family context appeared not to be a site where difficult experiences could be explored in-depth. Particularly, based on Jess' narrative it appears that in spite of Jess reaching out to his mother for answers, his account doesn't offer sufficient information to understand the nature of their relationship, even as it

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[175] Interview 3 with Jess was not audio-recorded in light of trust anxiety and intention to create a safe space for our discussion. I wrote down reflections of the interview at the time, which made up Interview 3 data set. Hence, Interview 3 data as evidence is here either presented as field notes, or transposed within the narrative account and description of Jess' memories.

signposts the presence of his mother at this sensitive period of his life. However, for Jess his mother's support was disrupted by his parents' separation.

I sensed a sense of self-blame in Jess' reminiscence of his parent's temporary separation when he was young, for which he also observed: *"It was my fault that they wanted to get a divorce".* Jess explained that his parents had sent his aunt to look after him after having had an argument. I felt that Jess' way of navigating what seems an unstable home, as well as a loss, was to survive the hardship resiliently through manipulating space and time as a means of moving forward. That said, as I sat silently across Jess in the classroom, trying to listen empathetically to what was for him difficult to voice, I could imagine how unspoken stories of trauma are a necessary part of survival.

From my personal experience, I was well aware that mental health support in Macedonia was largely out of reach for marginalised communities, and wrought with stigma. However, during the programme I felt that Jess' psychologist Leni was engaged, as Jess told me of working through therapeutic sessions with her.   I hoped that Jess' opportunity to spend a year in the prison working closely with his psychologist Leni, could begin to provide support for his past trauma. In my conversation with Leni, she stressed the importance of the emergent trust in their relationship. She was hopeful about Jess' ability to grow to see that his criminal lifestyle was not only a way in his view to gain power, but also a source of disappointment. This part of Jess' life was something Jess and I explored throughout the programme as a result of his own artistic responses. However, I could understand why Leni stressed that if she had at least two more years to work therapeutically with Jess, she would be more confident to comment of the prospect of Jess' attitude to life after prison. Especially as Jess expressed reluctance in sustaining a crime-free life after prison.

In summary, the programme was a site where Jess could voice some traumatic threads of his life story which were a part of his creative survival in childhood. Given the complexity of hardship in Jess' life, his artistic responses indicated unspoken parts of his life. Instead, Jess' recent traumatic experience through criminal lifestyle emerged as the focus of his poetic practice.

*7.1.2 Criminal Empowerment through Drug-Dealing 'A masterful type of man'*

Jess saw crime as a way to feel of value. Perfecting the business skills of drug-dealing was self-empowering process. Based on Jess' description of the type of skills required for drug-dealing, the kernel of the business appears to be excelling at swiftly and dexterously extorting money. Jess' description of an ability to inhabit time-space invisibly invokes a sense of timelessness and omniscient presence in the neighbourhood:

> *Jess:*        ***very easy skills*** *Afrodita. You just need to observe what people do to know how stuff works, they call you for a deal of 100 grams of weed [...] the last event before I ended up in prison,* ***I duped someone out of 17.000 denars in 15 minutes*** *I just* ***took the money*** *in one hallway, then went into another and broke the sim card [...] because* ***the older ones****, I know that the whole of* ***the hood steals****, does stuff of this sort****, deals, all of them I know*** *what all of them do of that sort of things but nonetheless still* ***there was no talk about me dealing*** *or anything but* ***I still did things quickly****. I obtain money* ***quickly immediately*** *for example, that was even written* ***in my sentence*** *Jess J.* ***it said*** *something like* ***'a masterful type of man*** *who immediately* ***knows how to obtain money quickly'*** *for example.*
>
> *(Interview 2)*
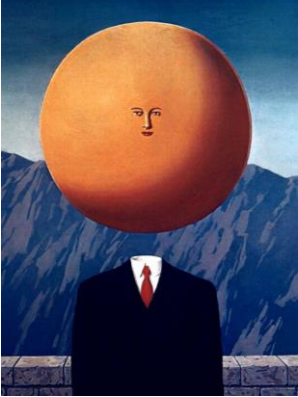
Also, drug-dealing felt empowering for Jess because of the awe it inspired in others, particularly the older generation of drug dealers. Jess described devising a non-verbal manifestation of power to avoid being apprehended. As Jess quote suggests, he drew power from the awe-inspiring status of sustaining a covert business, without having to navigate the notoriety and stigma of drug-lordship that became a concern after his imprisonment. In addition, even though Jess openly discusses substance abuse, he eschews the label of "drug addict" and frames drugs as woven into the fabric of his lifestyle. The following excerpt particularly accentuates Jess' pride in being capable to climb the ladder of drug lordship, and the status it afforded him:

> *Jess:*        ***it doesn't mean*** *for example* ***if you smoke, do coke, speed, amphetamine****, ecstasies, week* ***that's routine****, I've done that for example outside and many* ***envious souls*** *see that and would* ***wonder*** *for example when* ***the older ones*** *get together – how is it that* ***a 16-year-old rascal makes such amounts of money*** *and* ***he's not around in the hood****, you* ***can't see him*** *and he makes* ***so much money*** *and* ***can stay on top of things****. How things happen for example* ***he roams around*** *the hood and stuff like that –*
>
> (Interview 2)

At the heart of Jess' drug-dealing self-empowerment is his attachment to his neighbourhood. His close relationship with the park behind his building is an assertion of invulnerability in relation to ownership of space.

**Table 7.1 Survival and Criminal Agency: River Journey Visual Metaphors**

| Metaphor for crime relations 'Spying Eye' | Metaphor for romantic intimacy 'Fleeing from the Devil' |
|---|---|
|  |  |
| The spying eye[176] metaphor stands for Jess' ideal of excelling within a **drug-dealing** community that promotes a conflicting and unattainable **criminal lifestyle** embedded in the **power** status of 'elder' drug-lords. Intersecting with a masculinity of 'realness', Jess' hurt and **criminal empowerment[177]** revealed deep-seated glorification of crime, and a perceived sense of **criminal immutability.** [178] | The metaphor of fleeing from the devil stands for intimacy based on spatiotemporal agency to sustain **forbidden relationship** with a girl whose father disapproved of Jess' religion and criminal activities. Jess' romantic relationship reveals another layer of **interpersonal betrayal** both by his girlfriend and a friend, which becomes a part of his affinity for **male domination[179]**. |
| **Metaphor for grieving 'It's all Sad'** | |
| Jess' description of his childhood "it's all sad" functions as a metaphor of the devastation of early exposure to adversity. Jess' **embodiment of spatiotemporal agency** to navigate childhood bereavement is explored with his narrative of nostalgia for the sense of honesty in childhood friendships.[180] | |

Jess explains he used to regard the park as his own property. He had the power to control movement in public spaces, and designate areas of ownership often based on male bonds. Particularly, his crew's territory was forbidden to "outsiders". Jess' ownership of space can also be interpreted as a form of male entitlement arising in inner-city youth cultures

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[176] The Magritte painting "The Mystery of the Ordinary", was selected by Jess as a prompt for his poem also entitled "The Spying Eye" in 7.1.3

[177] See 7.1.2

[178] See 7.3.2

[179] See 7.1.2 and 7.3.2

[180] See 7.1.1

in this city. While Jess's reminiscence of his entitlement shows a sense of regard for the public, in light of his emergent narrative, part of Jess' awareness is related also to his desire to retrieve a sense of anonymity from the association with crime:

> Jess: there are kids with their parents all that **I didn't realise all that** I would say go smoke in front of my building as there's a huge park in front of my building and there's plenty of high school kids and college ones or you've got couples for example on benches the parks' pretty wide and all that time I thought **if like if my terrace overlooks the park then it must be that all of it, the whole park, is mine** as if my dad made it, **I would think 'hey it's all mine'** and it was there where all the fights and stuff like that would take place, **we** would fight in front of the building and **wouldn't allow anyone else to come near the bench** where **we** would sit, but I don't do that anymore. Also now I have noticed that when I go home on weekends, the **neighbours** have **begun to look** at **me** a bit **badly**.

On the one hand, while entitled, Jess' ownership of space afforded him a respectability within the drug-dealing community. From a position of power, it was easy for Jess to pursue an ideal of honourable and kind-hearted bonding with friends, which often involved substance abuse. On the other, Jess' disempowerment in prison, creates the conflict of seeing to maintain an image of honour that now clashes with notoriety of drug-dealing. Furthermore, Jess' ideal of maleness is destabilised by the cultures treatment of kindness for weakness, which at first glance appears to evade notions of tough masculinity. However, as Jess' account shows, a masculinity of realness is ultimately devastating as it precludes the avenues for vulnerability which falsely espouses. The following expert, captures Jess' struggle and pursuit of such masculinity:

> Jess: people who are **hypocritical** they **make up stuff** and **wear masks** these are **junkie conversations** Afrodita **I** can **see through them** pretty well. For example, there was **this friend** I had […] he comes and **tricks you** with other of **his stories** like 'hey bro did you know what they did…and have you got some spliff and all' something like that all in the hood that way I know them
>
> Afrodita: so you're trying to say that he would chat you up only to get some weed from you?
>
> Jess: **he only wants some spliff** but at first he comes to you and starts up a conversation and then he mentions have you got some spliff and for example **of course he knows you have** some and **you can't say you don't have any** so **he plays you** I don't know and I'm that way **I would never turn down** people for a spliff but I don't want even when they ask me I don't want to go with them for example I first ask who the crowd is always as I don't like smoking with him.
>
> (Interview 2)

**Box 7.3 River Journey Visual Metaphor – 'Fleeing from the Devil'**

> *Jess relationship with a Serbian girl, referred to here as Ania, was introduced as an important aspect in his life from the start of the programme. Jess selected the Dixit card in Table 7.2 to share the forbidden love story between Ania and himself. The Dixit card depicts a boy and a girl in tattered clothes holding hands and running away from a beast shown as a shadow on the wall behind them. Jess explained that because of religious differences as well as his criminal involvement, Ania's father forbade her to date Jess.*
>
> Interview 2, *November, 18th, 2016*

Jess' struggle to uphold a masculinity within a drug-dealing world, is further exacerbated from prison. For example, Jess side-tracked his girlfriend Ania together with a male friend during a weekend release from prison. They followed her to designated place with a jeep to police her behaviour because Jess suspected she had been cheating on him. Jess' relating to Ania is an example of toxic masculinity reinforced by the desire to preserve the power of the scripted drug-lord maleness that evades him, as seen in the excerpt below:

> Afrodita:    *you saw her when you went out on the weekend?*
> Jess:    *yes yes but **this time** around **I will be in control of her**, so now you see **she toyed with me, now I will toy with her**. I have a girlfriend, I've been going out with for two months now and with that girl we had something two and a half years ago, and then I got lost and started going out with her [Ania] and now **I got back with the other girl.***
> (Interview 2)

In summary, Jess' views his criminal lifestyle as a source of personal power, which drives his desire to succeed within the perceived values and rules of a drug-dealing cultures. He described his relations with his friends as well as romantic ones through this criminal drive for power which was also wrought with a sense of betrayal and hurt. Jess' lifestyle was dominated by the presence of disloyal and older male drug-dealers which he saw as friends and strived to model in his own criminal way of being as a young men.

*7.1.3 Poetic Voice as Self-Empowerment: 'See me as no one'*

Jess' poetic practice developed from an emulation of alternative Macedonian rap artists, towards a self-expression in a conversational narrative sensibility. Jess' self-expression was marked by a desire to preserve a sense of wholeness, which while probing into suppressed emotions, also reflected his narrated escapism from them.[181] Jess' initial poetry predominantly explored the diminished trust following the betrayal from the "real" friend within the drug-dealing community. His poem "The Spying Eye", in response to Magritte's painting[182], enabled an outlet for Jess to being to explore the sense of helplessness implicated in his betrayal

**Box 7.4 Jess' Self-Authored Poem "The Spying Eye"**

> *The spying eye in a smart suit*
> *watches me through the peephole*
> *through the peephole a spying eye*
> *watches me – a human eye: blue iris,*
> *black pupil, a risky gaze follows me*
> *anywhere the road takes me*
> *across the hood any street*
> *it just lurks around waiting*
> *for me to slip to make the wrong move*
> *walking on a wire is always risky –*
> *beware a secret is not to be shared*
> *with someone you think is a friend.*

Jess' position of helplessness in response to the environment and distrustful people, features in his poem "The Spying Eye" where the eye is overpowering. Both poems echo lines from rap songs, but unfold in a simple aesthetic, circling the edges of Jess' betrayal and disempowerment.

Where Jess' voice peaks, is his poetic account of the lead up to the arrest, which he performed at the final phase of the programme. Jess' voice in the poem "That Whole Day",

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[181] See Interlude
[182] See Table 7.1

is grounded in the narrative thread of the events from partying until the early morning to anticipating the police search of his home.

**Box 7.5 Jess' Self-Authored Poem "That Whole Day"**

*That whole day I was at home.*
*But when you've got half a kilo weed*
*lying around, you cannot sit still.*
*Your head keeps spinning,*
*a joint doesn't work on its own.*
*So I called up a few friends not to be alone.*
*That whole day, weed kept burning –*
*spliff after spliff, night fell deep.*
*I was chilling with two of my kids,*
*riding in the jeep – that vehicle*
*got really run down – we were laughing out loud*
*but the feeling was like a last breath.*
*I only got home at 5 am, at 5.10*
*just as I went to bed, I heard*
*police vans outside and got up to check*
*through the peephole – I unlocked the door*
*there was no one on our floor –*
*just a pitch-black darkness in the cold hallway.*
*The next day, in broad daylight*
*some awful and pretty nasty things took place*
*in which I was arrested – all neighbours saw*
*the way I was treated. If I have to choose a shade*
*to describe it, it would be grey,*
*dangerous gangs, bad influence,*
*if you wanna stay true, you'll be screwed*
*– instead of a tough man, a drug lord,*
*or a junkie, see me as no one.*
*At 12 noon as I was floored*
*Mum was standing by the window*
*on the first floor, months from then she said*
*"I wanted to jump straight down*
*and put my arms around you"—*

The poem "That Whole Day" sees Jess integrate his conversational tone and rap influence of portrayal of plain reality with flow. There is a play implicit to the poems' pace which foregrounds the *"ugly and pretty nasty things"* which stands for police brutality. Jess poem also displays a conscious use of narrative which is put in function to voice the difficult

experience of the arrest. The tracing of the events in the poem shows greater clarity than Jess' narration of it. In fact, Jess narrative largely focused on the betrayal, and elided the trauma. Here, Jess creates a foothold to stand on and stand up to a system that re-victimised him in the process of imprisonment. Moreover, Jess captures the impossibility of a drug-dealing masculinity of realness in the lines *"if you wanna stay true, you'll be screwed".*

The poem's moving resolution resides between the time elision of Jess' arrest, and his learning later of his mother's thoughts. What the lines of Jess' mother's thoughts provide at the end of the poem is a bridge across Jess' anxiety of public disavowal, and, exacerbated need to reach to his humanity. Jess' poetic moves in "That Whole Day", exemplify how his artistic practice enabled him to cipher an alternative side to his life narrative, and move towards resisting disempowerment. Jess' performance of the poem validated his mother's support, and reflected back a sense of dignity through the open mic's rituals of recognition[183].

In summary, Jess' poetic practice offered a sense of continuity to and agency over a major tension in Jess's narrative – the desire to be respected and connect – while at the same time voice his resistance to his experience of lack of reciprocity in a hierarchical drug dealing culture and abuse in contact with the criminal justice system.

*7.1.4 Summary of Finding*

Jess' reflection of his past involved discussing the loss of his brother at the age of seven, within an unstable family home. The survival of childhood bears witness to Jess' resilience in devising multiple forms of spatiotemporal embodiment to cope with adversity. Jess also manifested affinity for spatiotemporal embodiment in his criminal lifestyle during adolescence which was a bridge across childhood friendships and seeking power as well as intimacy within the drug-dealing culture. Jess saw the artistic practice of the programme as a site to explore his disappointment with older male friends from

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[183] Participants picked up on the finger snapping and constructive/caring feedback modelled by artists/educators.

his drug-dealing circle, and developed a poetic voice as a form of resistance to trauma and social stigma.

**Table 7.2 Finding Overview of Programme's Artistic Site**

| Themes and Findings Overview | |
| --- | --- |
| Themes | *Spatiotemporal embodiment of survival*<br>　　　secretive cultural 'rule-breaking'<br>　　　personal fear of death |
| | *Criminal lifestyle*<br>　　　drug-dealing<br>　　　substance abuse<br>　　　masculinity of 'realness' |
| | *Creative process*<br>　　　confessional narrative style<br>　　　rap aesthetic<br>　　　poetic play to re-imagine life with subjective 'truth'<br>　　　courage to voice difficult emotions in poetry |
| Overarching themes | • survival agency<br>• criminal empowerment<br>• creative agency |
| Finding | The programme's **artistic site** enabled Jess' **self-empowerment** through **poetic voice** as a form of **agency** |

Jess' account of child confusion over the nature of loss and death was implicated in a culture that he saw as male dominated (men are entitled to attend the funeral as opposed to children and women). I believe this could also be taken as an example of a lack of symmetry of power between children and adults in Macedonian culture. This was further explored within the pervasive instances of adult disengagement from young people's affinity to crime in Jess' personal experience. Jess appeared more eager to voice a sense of power derived from his knowledge of such unquestioned criminal lifestyle, than condemning adult disengagement.

Finally, when a betrayal from within the criminal culture contributed to Jess' imprisonment he saw as a source of disempowerment, he began to reflect on the problematic relations with his friends. The account here showed that the programme was also a site for Jess to channel his poetic resistance as a revitalised sense of agency.

***Interlude: 'In and out of prison, as if out of thin air'***

Jess saw the programme as a site to explore his first term of imprisonment, and a set of traumatic events along the way.[184] Jess moved through expressing low self-regard like *"school is not for me",* to turning to poetry to alleviate a loss of dignity he felt through social stigma and betrayal. Jess self-portrait poem as an orange indicated his attempt to empower himself amidst difficult experience and unspoken emotions.

**Box 7.6 Jess' Self-Authored Poem "Self-Portrait as an Orange"**

*I am an orange unpeeled ripe*
*They want to sell me out*
*But they do not have the heart*
*As they see me shine bright*
*Like a neon light I sit tight*
*Among the other oranges*
*In the basket waiting*
*to be picked up from this place*
*and see the light of day*
*to feel what freedom is again*
*waiting for the empty bus to my city*
*I can see the trees a blur of green*
*I am not afraid of apples lurking within*
*Or that someone could sink their teeth in*
*these peels to eat me up, this colour is*
*relentless surrounds me all around an*
*orange nowhere else to be found.*

Jess' development of the orange metaphor as resistance seems to arise amidst the complexity of trauma that was not possible to engage artistically. The orange self-portrait while foregrounding Jess' struggle to engage his vulnerability, can also be interpreted as a necessary bridge across Jess' disruptive lived experiences and the courage to venture into explore aspects of his life of his own choice in a more nuanced manner.[185]

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[184] See 7.3.1
[185] See 7.1.3

## 7.2 Emergent Pedagogic Site: Traumatic and Alternative Narratives

The present section expands on Jess' survival of adversity into relations with friends that for Jess become a source of trauma[186]. In addition, Jess' account of abusive relations in the context of crime, unfold his affinity to derive thrill in crime given that he perceives it as a source of power and status. The theme of thrill in crime is considered further in the context of Jess' regard of cultural crime stories specific to the post-war Balkan context[187]. The section concludes with tracing Jess' response to the programme as a pedagogic site through emergent relations with artographers[188].

### 7.2.1 Abusive Relationship with Friends: "The real one set me up"

Jess' account of his coming of age revealed a sense of transient innocence. Honest friendships seem to fade away as Jess repositioned himself from the school playground to the drug dealing neighbourhood. Jess took pride in knowing what happens in the neighbourhood behind the scenes. This sense of rapid transition into criminal lifestyle pervades Jess' narration. One example when Jess found himself in a position to learn how criminal activity affects his way of relating was when he punched a younger boy Jo, a peer of Jess' brother. After smoking weed together on the rooftop of a neighbourhood building, on their way home Jess found Jo difficult. Jess felt he couldn't reason with Jo, so he hit him in the face and abandoned him on the street. In the following section Jess contrasts his history of friendship with Jo in school which captures fair relations. Jess account reveal his hope that the initial movements of fairness to their use of drugs could sustain their friendship in criminal lifestyle, but the incident on the rooftop seems to unsettle Jess' hopes:

> Jess:  as **every single kid** in the hood **smokes weed** *from 13 or 14 years and for example [...]* **Jo he's from [my brother's] generation** *he's some* **13 years old** *we would* **share Choco biscuits in first grade** *to think of it now,* **one day I would buy a Choco biscuit** *and it has two bars and* **we would share** *it in half and the day after* **he would buy**

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[186] See 7.2.1
[187] See 7.2.2
[188] See 7.2.3

> ***one and we would share it in half again***, *and we used to do this **all
> the time**, It's how **we grew up together** Afrodita up until seventh
> grade and after that we began **the same thing but with joints** in
> eight grade we began doing stuff like that like joints if I have one I ask
> him over if he has one he asks me over **we would do this between us**
> so that the grown-ups don't find out, and in the end **when the grown-
> ups found out nothing happened** no one did anything, **no one took
> any measures** and all.*

(Interview 2)

Jess' account of drugs corrupting childhood friendships is rooted in sense of self-assuredness arising from being privy to the culture of his neighbourhood. This knowledge, a source of power for Jess, is afforded through his criminal agency. Even though Jess' account appears not to express an explicit opinion, Jess's juxtaposition of the two realities of innocence and corruption could also have the implicit function of grieving a culture of scarcity, where wrongdoing is left to thrive, and loss of innocence becomes the norm.

Jess' account of the pole in this excerpt can be taken as a symbol of a communal corruption of innocence in a neighbourhood that sees crime as an intergenerational rite of passage into early adolescence. But the fact that he is a part of the cycle, as Jess explained, makes me see why Jess would desire the status of 'the older drug lord':

> *Jess:*      *we've **played hide and seek** as well, there was this **pole and on it we
> played hide and seek** we **were just kids**, we've played hide and seek
> over there as kids I have a friend who's my peer **one of those people
> who had no idea** at the time **what things I had been doing** and now
> they do all of those stuff too for example **he smashed the pole with a
> car** and **the pole fell and the car got halved in two** and **the kid is
> only 18***

(Interview 2)

An instance of Jess' aim to evade authorities skilfully is his description of being stopped and searched by the special police units while smoking marihuana. Jess stressed he had something like a *"mysterious ability not to get caught".* For example, Jess explained his ability to evade authorities through describing a stop and search at a bus stop with a friend, which while it was very close for him to be caught red-handed, the police "searched everywhere but not in [his] back pocket" where he kept marihuana. Prompted

by Jess' account of his long evening in the city spent with friends and smoking marihuana, my poetic enquiry aimed to recreate and evoke what this atmosphere may have felt like for Jess. While my enquiry is from a point of view of my own understanding of his account, in the poem I assume the voice of an imagined poetic personal, which I see as Jess' younger sister who has little knowledge of the criminal lifestyle of drug-dealing. The excerpt of the poem enabled me to imagine how someone in Jess' place during the rooftop incident would come to punch the younger kid Jo, as voiced in Jess own words included in the poetic enquiry[189].

**Box 7.7 Poetic Inquiry: Dialoguing Jess' Transition from Childhood to Crime**

*12 am – you know, I know what you'd say Jess—*
    *it takes a jeep and a young man to get lost*
    *in this broad forged city*
*and, I want to believe you, heartless & stealthy*
*there are nights that forbid graffiti*
*I would've never thought can be a life chance.*
*For what is the distance you can walk*
*without bending over as if pain*
*can be contained at the small of your back*
*each cloud crack within earshot,*
*ear cartilage light to the touch*
*of rolled up paper strips,*
*fingers yield to clutch a hand,*
*your head rests, napping in a girl's lap.*

                    *\**
*1am – three boys, a rooftop,*
*eyes rolling, breeze running*
*through an old swimming pool:*

        **Jess**
         *sis you know that boy from down the block*
        *the one that talked a lot in school,*
        *we used to share Choco biscuits*
        *on the steps in elementary—*
        *now we share weed,*
        *he got so high tonight, it was his first time*
        *got ferociously clingy,*
        *I had to hit him so he doesn't follow me*
        *bust his jaw in front of our door—*

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[189] See Box 7.7

Examples[190] of early contact with the police foregrounded Jess' lead up to the arrest. Jess was on a summer holiday with his girlfriend and his friend Dee, when his first detention took place. Jess reminiscence of male bonds with Dee at the holiday involved both doing drugs and stealing a motorbike and speeding. What was narrated as male criminal bond with Dee, was disrupted by Jess mistrust later in the year when his faced the prospect of a prison sentence. Particularly, assuming Dee reported him to the authorities, Jess gave a statement incriminating Dee as a form of retaliation. Jess betraying his friend Dee exemplifies the precarious nature of male bonding in drug-dealing relations. The unstable forms of relating in the context of crime, proves devastating for Jess' openness to trust.

*7.2.2 Thrill in Crime: "Writing a book of revenge"*

The lavish enjoyment of substance abuse, and excelling at a drug-dealing agency goes hand in hand with the pursuit of power. The following except reveals Jess' substance abuse apart from satisfaction, it also affords a power over others adopted through performing invulnerability:

> *Afrodita:*      *so when you get high what does that do for you?*
> *Jess:*      *I just have a regular conversation like when I'm not high just because I'm high it doesn't mean I have to yell like a fool*
> *Afrodita:*      *right,* ***so why do you get high****, what does that give you? [silence] What happens for you if it's not for laughs and things like that? [silence] What sort of trip do you have?*
> *Jess:*      ***What sort of trip?***
> *Afrodita:*      *yes*
> *Jess:*      ***I just kill the haters***
> *Afrodita:*      *what haters?*
> *Jess:*      ***with my trip*** *Afrodita*
> *Afrodita:*      *what do you mean?*
> *Jess:*      ***with that trip I just kill the haters****. **No matter how much joint I smoke I can't get high.** But **they see** that and **they know** it and **I don't want to show it [being high]***
>
> (Interview 2)

Jess's hurt seemed to create a sense of subdued anger in him. Jess discussed how hurting other back emotionally can be a way of feeling in control not only over his life, but the life

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[190] Interview 3 excerpt account

of his close ones[191]. In the following excerpt, Jess reflected on one of the friends he believes was complicit in Jess being turned into the authorities. Jess' description of his understanding of how criminal retaliation works was embedded in a cult of crime. Particularly, he situated his reference to the "people that do it" in relation to Serbian mafia[192] based on his understanding of it through popular culture. Specifically, Jess was referring to the documentary film "See you at the Obituary", which seemed to be glorified in criminal circles, given that it traced the criminal underworld activities in Serbia in the early 1990s. The symbols of crime such as this film circulate in Macedonian popular culture, and creative industry, which provides a context for Jess' views:

> Data removed for confidentiality reasons. The excerpt contained sensitive information about Jess' life removed to protect Jess' privacy.

Jess' expressed a criminal glorification of rap artists and criminality, in a comment made in response to the guest rap band Shutka Roma Rap's disavowal of smoking marihuana at Rehearsal 3. Jess stressed that rappers he listens to are a part of the world of drug dealing and addiction, with his favourite rap artist[193] being "a heroin addict". What seemed to escape Jess, as I pointed out to him, is that the rap artist in question had made strides in rehabilitation from addiction towards rebuilding his life. The criminal glorification was a key part of Jess' explicit engagement with rap, which he was initially not as willing to articulate. As our conversation[194] revealed, Jess viewed rap artists abuse of drugs and artistic status as empowering. That empowerment was personal, given that Jess also had a view of rap artists as "customers" based on his real-life understanding of rap concerts as drug-dealing sites.

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[191] Jess' narrative account was privy to his prison psychologist.
[192] Zemun Clan.
[193] Name deliberately omitted to protect the privacy of the individual.
[194] Rehearsal 3 – field notes

*7.2.3 Artographic Relating: 'Someone to listen to me'*

The movement from arts practice to pedagogy emerged through performance discussions. With Jess, key movement occurred when I performed the poem "I don't believe". The poem was a Macedonian spoken word modelling a use of repetitive phrase "I don't believe" to question beliefs and stereotypes in a poetic form. During the informal discussion of the poem, Jess' and I discussed the verses "I don't believe/ that the boy/ at the back of the classroom/ with headphones on his head, / and a serious gaze/ is dumb just because he doesn't have straight As". The line spoken to Jess in a way that prompted reflection on alternative narratives for what counts as education. The thread of rap, and poetry as a form of education, was reinforced throughout the programme. For instance, the group judged a mock poetry slam of influential spoken word videos including Saul William's "Amethyst Rock", and, Suli Breaks' "Why I Love Education but I hate School". These poems were at the heart of a discussion that gradually moved from William's electric performance of the poem from prison in the film Slam[195], through to contextualising African-American culture and racism to rap and the US. Unpacking of the poem's reference to drug dealing emerged from the discussion, into the context of Macedonia.

By the end of the programme Jess came to see the programme as a form of education even though at the start he voiced self-deprecation at not being 'good at school'. Jess also saw the interview as a unique opportunity to talk about his life in a space where educators acted as engaged listeners "I just want to talk Afrodita, to tell you how I feel for someone to hear me here no one else listens" (Interview, 2). It was a space to voice and release negative thoughts or articulate difficult emotions concerning past experiences with a potential for reflection thereafter. A glow moment in river journey interviews was Jess' recounting of the courtroom sentence, which was the first time he ventured into difficult emotions.[196]

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[195] Wiliams' poem features in the film Slam. His character, Joshua, performs the poem in the prison yard to disrupt a fight among prisoners.
[196] See 7.3.1

**Box 7.8 Artographic Reflection on the Programme and Social Ethnic Exclusion**

*My relationship with Jess made me reflect on ethnic homogenisation of marginalised students in schools. In my personal experience, it was unsatisfying as an ethnically Aromanian child to have no opportunities to continue studying Aromanian language past fourth grade, let alone think how my heritage had been completely eradicated from school or public spaces. I suspected ethnic marginalisation may have been a part of Jess' experience of the school system. Not least because of the pervasive discriminatory discourse against Albanians in Macedonia, but also because at the start of the programme Jess said he wasn't fully confident in his Albanian language skills, and then gradually progressed to responding in Albaninan when spoken to in Albanian by members of the group. This made me think how Jess' experience of studying in a predominantly Macedonian school culture, may have played a part in Jess' reluctance to speak in Albanian in a learning setting. In addition, it made me reflect how Jess' upbringing in a predominantly Macedonian neighbourhood must have shaped his own strong affiliation with the Macedonian ethnic youth culture of the city he came from, which was discernible in his taste in Macedonian social reality rap as well as dialectal expression (which was different from Luani's strong Albanian affiliation and music and rap choices in Albanian language).*

*Earlier in the year, during a beginner's Albanian language course I took, I had conversations on this matter with an Albanian schoolteacher of English in an ethnically mixed school from the same city Jess came from. As the schoolteacher was also a colleague of mine from my undergraduate studies, I felt I could have a reliably open conversation with him – especially because in my research training with Law academics in Macedonia, they lamented that in their academic work on this topic with students they had given up hope that an insightful ethnic critique could take place in a still ethnically divisive political and public climate. Yet, I was surprised to learn the teacher's first-hand experience in a mixed school that aims to model inclusive environment. The schoolteacher explained in his teaching practice he saw the segregation of ethnic Albanians and Macedonians as clear-cut given that the students were ethnically divided by school shifts which meant they didn't interact. With this in mind, I was aware that the programme could hardly unsettle the social problem of ethnic division. However, I hoped the inclusive approach the programme modelled in its arts practices, could be but an attempt to offer alternative ways to Jess' experience of formal education. Especially because Jess told me he saw the programme as form of schooling.*

*Rehearsal 5, December, 23rd, 2016*

Third spaces enabled writing practices and creating poems to develop as an organic moment to moment activity. For example, participants would sometimes choose stay in the classroom during breaks to finish writing or edit a poem. In some instances, participants felt like taking a break, or would opt out of writing altogether if for example

feeling unwell. The freedom to pace their own writing while also having input from guest performances enabled participants to feel empowered to take ownership of their work. That said, there was a set of expectations which put pressure on participants' confidence in writing decisions. For example, Jess felt that he couldn't do justice to a poem he had planned to write as a rap titled "The Drug Lord of My Neighbourhood", and he had MCB write the poem for him. The educators/ artists used this opportunity to signpost the value of taking ownership of one's own voice without judging Jess' actions.

*7.2.4 Summary of Finding*

**Table 7.3 Findings Overview for Programme's Pedagogic Site**
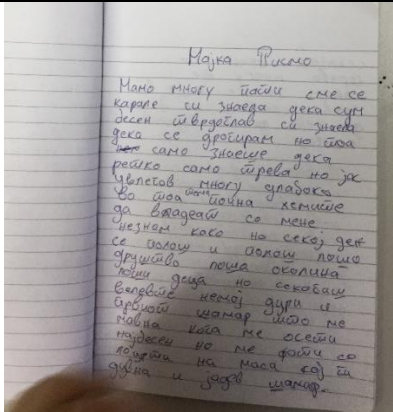
| Themes and Finding | |
| --- | --- |
| Themes | *Survival of abusive relationship*<br>　　　　inner conflict over friends' betrayal and disappointment<br>　　　　rap as life-affirming |
| | *violent drive*<br>　　　　affinity for retaliation<br>　　　　'cult' view of organised crime |
| | *Emergent pedagogy*<br>　　　　trust of drawing undrawable boundaries<br>　　　　co-creating third spaces<br>　　　　empathetic and non-judgmental relating with artographers |
| Overarching themes | • survival and traumatic narrative<br>• criminal empowerment<br>• artographic relationships |
| Finding | The **emergent pedagogic site** enabled **Jess' alternative way of being** to a history of abuse and social exclusion |

The present section presented Jess' response to the programme as a site to explore difficult relationship within drug-dealing community of friends. Moreover, Jess saw the relationship with artographers as non-judgmental space where he opened up about his thrill for crime and influences of retaliation affinity as an acceptable response to betrayal. As alternative to Jess' subdued hurt, were the artographic relations and third spaces where artists and educators attempted to uphold Jess' dignity and acknowledge his hurt. A difficulty to engage with his vulnerabilities was at the foreground of Jess' subdued anger.

## 7.3 Performance Community: Validating Artistic Way of Being

The present section begins by elaborating the events surrounding Jess' imprisonment, and its ramifications for Jess's interpersonal relations and agency. I identified these events as progressively unfolding throughout the programme through Jess' artistic responses, which were a way of beginning to voice unspoken personal stories.

**Table 7.4 Validating Artistic Ways of Being: River Journey Visual Metaphors**

| Metaphor of intimacy with mother: 'The real parent' | Metaphor for surviving police brutality 'Music Box' | Metaphor of life after prison: "Like a Dignified Man" |
|---|---|---|
| Jess poetry notebook, featured a letter to his mother together with poetry of his **mother's support through prison** is a testament to his performing of both **vulnerable rituals** and **criminal immutability**. | Jess' music box captured the present moment of his life. For Jess, the music box stands for the **survival** and **trauma** he came to associate with his own room where he was assaulted by the police, turning to healing **rap music.** | Jess metaphor of the **dignified man** was important for Jess in his transitioning **outside of prison**. But, the notion of dignified man is precariously interacting with Jess' affinity for criminal power status. |

Prison magnified the traumas of imprisonment, and the pitfalls of a culture of crime that saps vulnerability. [197] Jess left prison resolved not to return, but conflicted with his perceived criminal immutability explained in this section[198]. Jess voiced a surprise that he was graduating from the programme with a note book full of drafts writings, and poetry. Jess' resilient path through crime and imprisonment, posed a conundrum for his

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[197] See 7.3.1
[198] See 7.3.2

future upon release. Towards the completion of the programme, Jess had the opportunity to have his life story affirmed at performance rehearsals, through interaction with artists and educators.[199]

*7.3.1 Unspoken Story of Mother's Support through Imprisonment: 'I saw the real parent'*

The trauma of police brutality, was for Jess linked to the betrayal of trust by his friend. His friend informed the authorities of Jess' drug possession, which led to an investigation in Jess' home. Police investigation located possession of multiple forms of drugs and an unlicensed gun, after what Jess described as a harrowing questioning with abuse of physical force. The night before the arrest, Jess arrived home early in the morning after a night out with his friends, sensing something had gone wrong. He later discovered the person who betrayed him was a trusted friend, a drug lord from the older generation. Age hierarchy had instilled respect in Jess for the older drug lords, which exacerbated the betrayal by "the one" he considered was "real":

> *Afrodita:*  *What does this mean to you personally?*
> *Jess:*  *well because he [the older **friend**] wanted to **save his ass** instead of going to court for ten batches he would've gotten only a monetary fine he would've paid some 900 or 1000 euros he said to himself 'best not to pay 1000 euros, **I'll dupe Jess** as he has half a kilo weed at home' **he knew that** there was a bong, a gun, all of it, and at the time some other similar stuff happened.*
> (Interview 2)

The disillusionment with friendship, taps into Jess' core sense of belonging and self-empowerment, shattering Jess' ideal of intimacy rooted in male drug-dealing bonds.

Jess' father's continuous condemnation of wrongdoing, created a defiant attitude in Jess. Jess indicated his disappointment with his father's inability to handle Jess' wrongdoing fortuitously in three brief memories leading up to his arrest. Firstly, Jess dismissed his father' support during his first detention as soft, even though his father lied for him to the police. Secondly, Jess lashed out at his father after his father explicitly forbade Jess to paint a cannabis plant on the wall of his bedroom. In the heat of the moment Jess' was aiming with a fist at his father, but due to his mother's intervention, he broke a nearby

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[199] See 7.3.3

door glass. Thirdly, Jess recollection of the courtroom sentencing, is a culmination of his disavowal of his father as "weak", and looking up to his mother as the strong parent.

His mother's support throughout Jess' imprisonment authenticated her caregiver role for Jess. His father, however, upon hearing the verdict of one-year imprisonment, stormed out of the court room. Jess's interpretation of the courtroom memory concluded "my mother was seating next to me and I told them no tears she remained there without shedding a tear, it was then when I saw who the real parent was". However, it is not clear to what extent Jess' idea of emotional fortitude in a 'real parent' is implicated in shame from public emotional display.

That said, for Jess, his father's reaction in the courtroom created a rift in an already rocky relationship. In addition, even if Jess' preference for emotional containment in public is caught up in an ideal of patriarchal invulnerability, the recollection of his arrest complicates this logic. Particularly, for Jess, a graceful response to his arrest meant making space for him to hold on to a sense of dignity amidst public shaming. His mother's unwavering support then, emerged as the only available support to survive the trauma of imprisonment, as well as the realisation of criminal stigmatisation.

The following poetic searching reassembles Jess' recollection of the night before his arrest from a perspective of an imagined sister called Em. I assumed the voice of an imagined sister of Jess', a fictionalised persona I felt could capture both my care for Jess, and the sense of outsiderhood from the drug-dealing culture. The poetic searching signposted the centrality of the body in Jess' criminal activity, drug abuse, and embodiment of trauma. The poetic searching was primarily prompted by a desire to connect to Jess beyond the stigma of either offender or trauma he narrated, reconfiguring the possibilities of space for communion:

> Jess: so that was it Afrodita the **things that took place in the room** that's something like **pretty bad memory** for me, which is why when I go out I want **to move out of that apartment**. I don't wish to stay in that apartment because **I get flashbacks bad images** in front of the building.
> (Interview 2)

**Box 7.9 Poetic Inquiry: Dialoguing Jess' World of Drug-Dealing Culture**

*Solemn, with a smile on your face*
*you beguile, and, ride along*
*in your tall lean friend's jeep*
*with a cheer, your crafty hand searches*
*the back pockets of the jeans*
*filter tip on your lip – voice*
*airing through jagged teeth, cigarette lit—*
*each night as if out of smoke*
*your body glides through doors.*
*How is it a body believes*
*it is a fast-forward, down the stairs,*
*the hallway of another universe –*
*smuggled leafed goods,*
*folded letters into the ether,*
*music turned down –*
*past my bed time*
*not really doing homework*
*but waiting for you in this bedroom*
*where you drew plants on walls*
*with fluorescent-pens against dad's will*
*against all odds, hoping to see you home brother,*
*falling asleep on your folding armchair—*
*your legs outgrew it fast, feet dangle numb,*
*eyelashes flicker then fade into walls*
*like multiple clock hands,*
*sundown – you're out & about.*

Jess' life-affirming experience with listening to Macedonian social reality rap stems from a recognition of common humanity. Being assaulted in his own room was particularly devastating for Jess as he associated the space with an intimate relationship of listening to rap. Even though Jess felt that posttraumatic stress diluted his experience of the songs, his persistent immersion in listening to rap was also a cathartic experience.

Jess' connection to rap arises through a recognition that he is not alone in the mix of wrongdoing and adversity. Moreover, rap's real-life role in supporting resilience was implicitly woven in Jess' understanding of the music.

*Jess:* *if he **[rap artists]** were to come here **all souls will bow down**, you know when I **listen to his songs** they **touch my soul** not only the lyrics that can hit you straight in the heart as he tells stuff in his songs that for example **you do these things** every day, and **you get lost in his songs**, you're like **wait***

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> ***the minute I did that yesterday*** *and* ***I do it today and this person sang about it a long time ago*** *and even* ***the very rhythm you hear it moves you****, it's spine tingling.*

(Interview 2)

**Box 7.10 Poetic Inquiry: Dialoguing Jess' Rap Resilience**

> *2 am – I'm turning in bed,*
> *you are a no-show.*
> *The lines of time passing by*
> *are being drawn in chalk*
> *onto the blackboard*
> *of a sleepless night.*
>
> *                    ***
>
> *No sound, until the morning,*
> *police came and turned*
> *this place upside down.*
> *For weeks now, no one*
> *has entered your room.*
> *Not after the police searched it*
> *relentlessly in their hands*
> *your contact lens, a periscope*
> *the muted sounds from the stereo,*
> *a platinum record in your mind*
> *this room of pricy rhymes, a music box*
> *and what you said—*
>
> > ***Jess***
> > *it's ok sis, it's ok*
> > *if someone asks just say*
> > *I go in and out of prison*
> > *just like that, only for a day*
> > *in and out whenever I please*
> > *as if out of thin air—*

For example, Jess's friend who is a hip-hop artist, formed an integral part of Jess' recollection of the "inhumane" treatment within criminal circles. Jess shared his friend's rap song documenting his path to leading a crime free life. Jess' friend was motivated to rebuild his life, after surviving a severe knife injury. For Jess, his friend's story inspired respect, and was an implicit presence of the role of rap as empowering. That said, Jess' attachment to rap was also related to criminal glorification in popular culture.

*7.3.2 Jess' Immutability Script: "I can't change, I enjoy it"*

Jess' ingrained criminality emerged in a conversation of his relations with his girlfriend Ania. Particularly, he defied her attempts at influencing him to stay away from crime:

> Afrodita:      *why do you say she [Ania] was in control of you?*
> Jess:      *well not that she was but **she tried to change me**, to change me not to do some things.*
> Jess:      ***she didn't succeed in that thing to change some things***
> Afrodita:      *so you didn't like that?*
> Jess:      *no **I didn't like it because apart from God nobody can change me***
> (Interview 2)

Jess' defiance seems to arise from his belief that he has no agency in influencing his criminality. Moreover, Jess' narrative evades disclosing details concerning the change in question. The relinquishing of personal power in God's hands, in light of Jess's overall narrative appears to be rooted in a cultural discourse of religion, without commitment to the religious practice. In fact, even though Jess identified from the start as ethnically Albanian and rooted in the Islamic religion, his narrative account unlike Luani's eschews ethnic and religious focus on his sense of self. Yet, the disengagement from his background, in itself could indicate a sense of assimilation with the predominantly Macedonian community of his neighbourhood[200].

In the following quote, Jess, situates his sense of criminal immutability in the context of a desire for retaliations. Jess' thrill of crime with no openness to engaging his vulnerability:

> Afrodita:      *or **you yourself?***
> Jess:      ***no not even myself, I can't change, I enjoy** it for example stuff that I do […] and for example **those who have been evil to me I wish them evil too evil things for them to be drowning to fail**, to see them and **laugh at them***
> (Interview 2)

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[200] The name of Jess' neighbourhood is not stated to protect his privacy. The Macedonian ethnic make-up of the neighbourhood is significant, given that this Macedonian city has areas densely populated by the Albanian community.

**Box 7.11 Artographic Reflections on Vulnerability in Research**

*The psychologist Leni's office was half painted bright peach pink and some of the walls had uneven texture revealing a half-finished job. The office is located at the entrance of the same corridor along which the prison rooms are located. Prison yard stairs lead up to the front door of the corridor, which is located by a surveillance camera, kept locked at times regulated by the prison daily schedule. Hence, the psychologist's comment that she's locked inside with the young men serving prison time. Her office was a small room with a desk and no windows. She had books cluttered on the desk and around with walls decorated with a one painting of flowers in a vase. In addition, the walls were also decorated with drawings and work made by the youth in the prison, some of which had been supervised by her and had already been released. The psychologist Leni welcomed me into her office spending a great amount of time talking about the unfinished interior and its poor aesthetics as a self-contained space in the prison environment.*

Passage removed for confidentiality reasons. The passage contained identifying information.

*It made me reflect that the cost on wellbeing from staying with the violence inside prison was indicated sensitively by Jess' psychologist Leni on a number of our interactions. At the final performance event when the poet Elena raised the topic of rape in prison, which she had read about in the media in the past, Leni took this as an opportunity to explain that in her professional work of 10 years in the prison she has been aware of incidents of rape in prisons, and the problem of self-harming. I could feel the devastating realities of prison as a tragic institution, through Leni's account of trying to work in an environment with limited health resources as well as my own exposure to the prison spaces. While I navigated the field resiliently and recognised that these realities are a part of prison research, I was able to recognise in hindsight as an artist working in a poorly equipped prison, as well as with no therapeutic training, mental health debriefing during the field would've supported my wellbeing better.*

*December-January, 2016-2017*

I began to imagine the scope of Jess' belief in his ingrained criminality was greater than I had acknowledged while in the field. As a result, I was prompted to examine my own assumptions of vulnerability and trust building, reflecting on the need for greater sensitivity when reading from the narrative of Jess' life as well as his poetry. It made me

reflect on the limits of vulnerability in our own relationship, as I saw the need to examine my own sensitivity in the prison space shown in in box 7.11.

Jess' difficulty to engage vulnerably with the hurt he described, was part of the core of sustaining an immutability script. The rootedness of the immutability script in a sense of being in a certain way, implies that there's a confusion of his sense of self with the emotional baggage and set of culturally scripted ideals.

The origins of Jess' sense of self, remain out of reach, as he also exerts a sense of resignation at his criminality being inherent to him the way it is to his uncle:

> *Jess:*      *no, no, no, that room there is **no reason for me to go back** there, no way I can't I can't three days when I go out on weekend If I go home **I don't go in there [in the room]** I sleep in the living room for example and my parents ask me why I don't go to bed in my room because I have a brother two years younger than me but he's smart he knows some of these things, he's not like me, for example **in my family it's only my uncle that's like me [involved in crime]** and **he' still that way** but so **he was in prison and got out** and he was only out for 3 to 4 months and **he ended up in prison again now**.*

Jess' embeddedness in violence as a shield from a disempowering and hurtful environment, followed him after prison. Before release, Jess expressed a categorical stance that 'no way to end up in prison again" because he saw imprisonment as a misstep of his criminal agency, rather than fully acknowledging the disappointment with crime he explored throughout the programme. However, Jess' devices and displayed a range of artistic responses through the programme which stand in addition to a tenacious belief in criminal immutability.

That said, Jess' belief in his criminality comes with his experience of social stigma during his arrest as well as when going outside of prison on weekends. It made me reflect how social stigma was a large part of Jess' expressed difficulty to imagine staying away from crime upon release as he felt his criminal record would be an obstacle to having opportunities for jobs. That the social stigma was a big part of how Jess saw his future was noticeable in his desire to move to a school in Kosovo where he had a relative. He felt that in Kosovo, given the high rate of Albanian population, he would be able to fit in

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because of his Albanian background. When I asked Jess about attending school in Albanian, he expressed that this would not an obstacle for him as he felt motivated to improve his written Albanian and build on his current familiarity with the language.

### 7.3.3 Validating Vulnerable Artistic Rituals: "Like a dignified man"

Jess' poem "I don't trust" performs three key functions for him. Firstly, it is an outlet for his bitterness and disillusionment with the currency of "realness" in a drug-dealing community. Secondly, it draws together on the page his confusion at a difficult crossroad of his life through the mediums of writing to a visual prompt; while trying to shape a truth about his life in the fashion of established Macedonian rap songs.

**Box 7.12 Jess' Self-Authored Poem "I Don't Trust"**

*I don't trust people*
*That surround me*
*because they are hypocrites*
*and do not know how to value*
*the things you do for them*
*none of it is enough*
*some of them*
*turned out to be garbage*
*so I don't trust anyone or anything.*
*I don't trust anything*
*neither people*
*nor what surrounds me*
*the places around me*
*the real ones never spy on you*
*but it was the real one*
*that set me up.*
*I can only trust*
*that there is God*
*and keep faith in him*
*and in my family.*

Third, it's a form of venturing into self-expression, even if the expression of a confused voice. The disavowal of trust, in its repetition and pervasiveness creates a tension between the desire to form trusting relationships and at the same repudiate trust

altogether. While the poem offers faith in God and the family as an alternative, the redemptive ritual does not rescue the tension of trust. Jess steps to voice fear of vulnerability following trauma, is a step to acknowledge, and designate an impasse. Jess' turn to faith in this sense could be interpreted as a quick turn away from the impasse of broken trust.

**Box 7.13 Artographic Reflection on the Programme and Macedonian Political Climate**

*Months before the start of the programme I had met with an official from the Ministry of Justice to discuss the programme activities, and negotiate expectations. As I arrived at the Ministry, the realities of Macedonian political turmoil materialised in front of me – the walls of the newly built façade of the Ministry were splashed with colourful paint. Part of the "Colourful Revolution", activists, many of whom artists and cultural workers, used paints in protest of the ruling party's architectural project "Skopje, 2014" critiqued as culturally inappropriate and nationalist. Escalating political instability had rekindled media representation of public unrest concerning the official use of Albanian language. The language debates inevitably surfaced within the prison classroom conversation this period as a sensitive topic among an ethnically mixed group. I thought the Macedonian participant was surprised by my opinion that we should support language pluralism.*

*The realities of prison politics voiced by prison staff stood in contrast to the programme's inclusion of guest artists from a range of ethnic backgrounds. Staff told me there was a lack of resources and expertise to respond to participants' needs for ethnic language expression, but the psychologist Leni confirmed that the prison made all efforts to offer quiet spaces for religious practice and prayer for residents. These realities of the prison in practice are reflected within the deeper issues of human rights violations reported within the criminal justice system in Macedonia discussed in Chapter 2. This means for prisons to begin to align their practices with the policy guided resocialisation, there is a need to create paths for wider inclusion of ethnic minorities within all spheres of society. However, these processes seem inseparable from the direction of Macedonian politics, which was reflected within the arts circles – my conversations with artists across poetry and hip hop scenes revealed reluctance among artists to pursue state-funded creative development in this climate. Having been able to develop a robust artographic community in a politically unstable climate, I felt that there is potential for artists in Macedonia, across practices, to come together in the name of the value of the arts across settings.*

*Follow up workshop, January 17th, 2017*

Jess' main concern for his future upon release, was the prospect of living a life with dignity in light of his criminal record[201]. However, the desire to restore a sense of dignity was

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[201] Interview 3

precariously unfolding from an immutability narrative which was wrought with tensions of denied pain in response to trauma. As Jess recasts communion by turning to family support there's the peril to continue performing a reductive redemption.

The potential of a poem's move into the space of the impossibility of trust, is making it difficult for Jess to be more open and vulnerable with people after his first time imprisonment. I was not entirely surprised of Jess' poetic response, as it made me reflect on how difficult it must be for Jess to imagine looking ahead within the poor social prospects we discussed as built into the Macedonian schooling and prison system. This made me also reflect on the precarious political climate at the time, shown in box 7. It was an added cause that may have been demotivating for Jess to aspire towards rebuilding his life not only in light of disillusionment with friends as criminal influence.

It is not that Jess endorsed retaliation that keeps his immutability as the basis of his identity, but the lack of a waiting time, to stay with the conundrums of a broken trust, and lashing out. That said, having stayed closely with Jess' story through my artographic enquiry, I was able to begin to question my own understanding of Jess' betrayal and pain.

*7.3.4 Summary of Finding*

**Table 7.5 Finding Overview for Programme's Performance Community**

| Themes and Finding | |
|---|---|
| Themes | *Unspoken stories of drug-dealers' criminal influence and mother's support*<br>     criminal (dis)empowerment<br>     male domination<br>     drug-dealing dishonesty and betrayal<br>     social stigma and police brutality |
| | Perceived inability to change<br>     belief in lack of personal power over change<br>     belief in ingrained criminality like his uncle |
| | *Performance*<br>     audience/ communal affirmation<br>     poetry as performing redemptive rituals |
| Overarching themes | • bearing witness to narrative of trauma and crime<br>• unfolding narrative of criminal immutability<br>• potential for practising vulnerability |
| Finding | **The programme's performance community** of artists, educators, and the prison staff **validated Jess' artistic way of being** |

Jess' ascribed meaning to the programme community of artographers and the ways in which he interacted and inhabited the elicited and co-created spaces in the programme generated insights in how Jess perceives his experience in participating in the programme. Thus, this afforded the location of the formative and defining components for Jess: the relationship forged with workshop educators in the one to one river journey life story conversations; the uncensored self-expression in the poetry and open mics, and the recognition that participation in the programme is validating. He came to see it as a legitimate way of affirming his ability of reclaiming agency and sharing his identification with rap with the community of other prison residents. Jess shared his rapping skills and collaboration during rehearsals towards developing his own voice in writing as narrative poetic account of realness. The programme's performance community was a site for Jess to validate his appreciation of his mother's support through the traumatic time of imprisonment.

## 7.4 Summary of Jess' Portrait

The programme elicited Jess' narrative of surviving childhood bereavement and trauma, following the loss of a close family member at a vulnerable age. Jess demonstrated resilience at navigating multiple extreme circumstances that moved through adopting a criminal life style followed by his first time imprisonment. Jess saw the programme and relationships with artists as a site to artistically explore his re-victimisation by the police which led him to devise a poetic voice in resistance to social stigma and abuse. Creative encounters with artists at the programme also saw Jess explore trust difficulties and forge alternative relations to abusive male bonding in the drug dealing community. In addition, Jess poetic creativity gave voice and dignity to his experience, affirmed by artists, prison staff and other prison residents. The programme also elicited Jess' cult for crime and affinity for retaliation as a large part of perceived criminal immutability. Performances with validation from the audience, saw Jess perform rituals of criminal self-exploration as well as a potential to reimagine his life experiences. Specifically, Jess recognised in his poetry, in addition to hurt and betrayal from drug-dealing circle of friends, the supportive relationship with his mother. Jess artistic being thus arose through his own personal agency in poetry bolstered by artists, prison residents, and staff validation.

**Figure 7.1 Researcher-Made Assemblage in Response to Jess' Artistic Way of Being through the Programme**

### *Postlude: Assemblage of Jess' Developing Narrative Identity*

The assemblage I created in response to Jess' portrait aims to capture his artistic being through the programme through visual metaphors. The metaphors evoke the main themes and findings presented in Jess portrait thus far – to respond to Jess' elicited artistic world and life experiences.

# PART FOUR: THE PROGRAMME AS AN ARTOGRAPHIC COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE: STAYING WITH YOUNG OFFENDERS' PERCEIVED CRIMINAL IMMUTABILITY AND VALIDATING YOUNG OFFENDERS' ARTISTIC WAYS OF BEING AS POETS

*"... poetry is not a luxury. It is a vital necessity of our existence. It forms the quality of the light within which we predicate our hopes and dreams toward survival and change, first made into language, then into idea, then into more tangible action. Poetry is the way we help give name to the nameless so it can be thought. The farthest horizons of our hopes and fears are cobbled by our poems, carved from the rock experiences of our daily lives."*

*(Audre Lorde, 1984)*

# CHAPTER 8:    DISCUSSION

At the start of the present project, I wanted to find out the programme's impact in young offenders' lives; specifically, its artistic contributions to developing narrative identity. To do so, I examined young offenders' artistic responses and meanings arising through the programme, focusing on how they made sense of their lives as evidence for their evolving narrative identities[202]. In part three, I presented findings of young offenders' participation in the programme as an artistic, pedagogic, and, communal performance site[203]. I also demonstrated how the sites of the programme made possible for young empowered themselves to voice difficult experience through their emergent creative process; they exerted creative agency by imaginatively re-creating alternative narratives for their life stories, in resistance to past abuse and exclusion; and, the artistic community enhanced young offenders' alternative ways of being through validating their communal performances. The present discussion offers a theoretical model for the programme's role in driving young offenders'' artistic ways of being, which is implicated in the multiple programme sites. The programme sites have the potential to support alternative subjective and social ways of being for young offenders, which can be explored further as a cumulative change in the context of secondary and tertiary desistance theories.

I found that the programme's multiple sites emerged through the movement between arts practice as pedagogy[204]. The movement featured distinct poetic creativities in practice and enabled the construction of shared third spaces where young offenders voiced unspoken truths and refined their life stories. These third spaces also sustained relationships between young offenders as poets and the artists as educators, cultivating an artographic community of practice. The community bolstered a vulnerable aesthetic in performance bearing witness to lived experiences.[205]. Figure 8.1 conceptualises the programme on a two-dimensional plane highlighting the significance of time-space in understanding artistic practice.

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[202] See chapters 6, and, 7
[203] See chapters 6.3, and, 7.3
[204] See sections 6.3, and 6.3
[205] This figure adapts the process-model for narrative self-development, and connects it to the artistic contributions of the programme to conceptualise developing narrative identity through the programme.
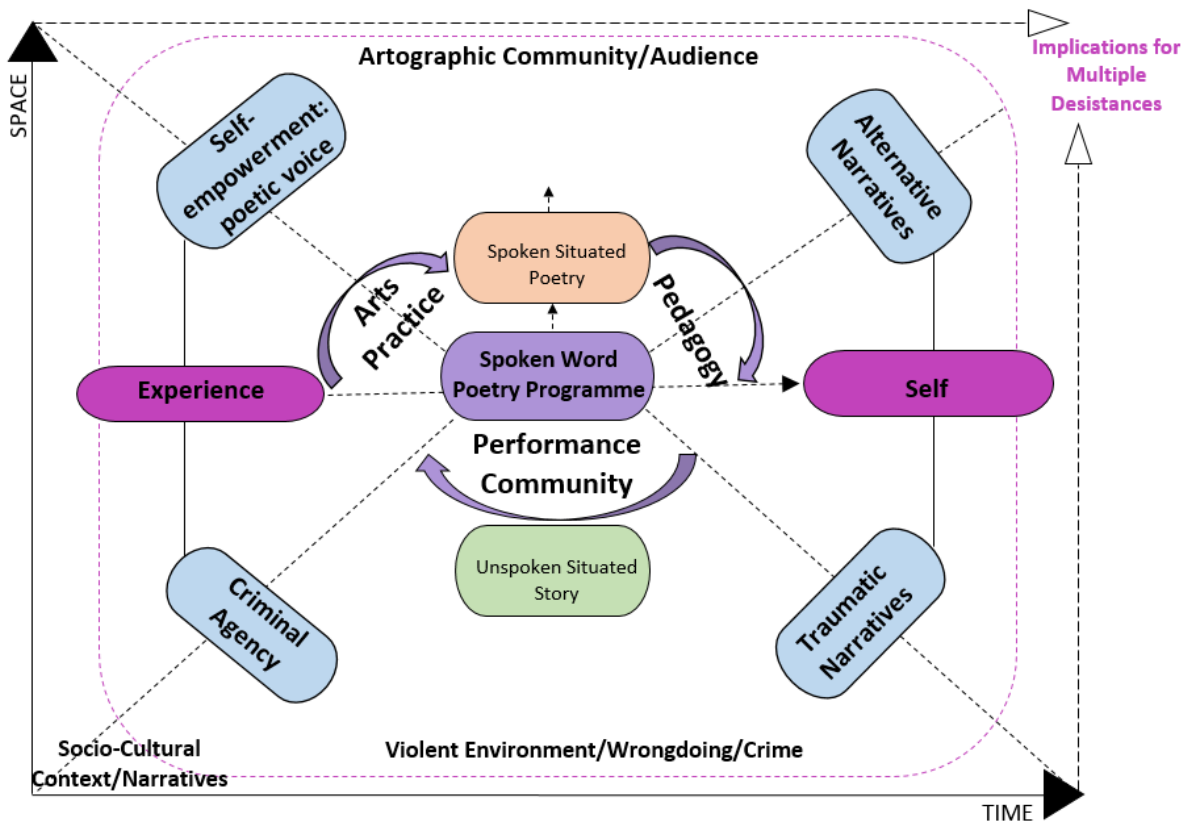
**Figure 8.1 Artographically Making Sense of the Programme's Multiple Sites – Adapted after the Process Model of Narrative Self-Development (McLean, Pasupathi, & Pals, (2007)**

This figure thus offers the basis for a gradual discussion of the programmes multiples sites acting as driver for young offenders' artistic, alternative ways of being, building on the narrative process model discussed in Chapter 5. The model pragmatically shows the fluid interconnectedness of:

1) how the programme acts as a multiple site for arts practice[206], pedagogy[207], and communal performance[208] (programme spaces)

2) what the programme contributes to the narrative process of self-development: (young offender's sense of self over time).

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[206] See section 8.1
[207] See section 8.2
[208] See section 8.3

In section 8.4, the discussion addresses the main research question discussing the findings that the programme's artographic community of practice offers powerful artistic contributions towards young offenders' developing narrative identities.

## 8.1 An Arts Practice Site: Performing Creative Agency

Cultivating an artistic practice was a key feature of young offenders' responses to the programme[209]. Some saw themselves as aspiring artists, while others discovered their artistic talents as the programme unfolded. Significant for developing narrative identity, the programme enabled the narrating and performing of multiple forms of self-empowerment (agencies). In chapters 7 and 8, I described different manifestations of young offenders' agencies, and their beliefs in their own criminal immutability[210]. In this section, then, I focus on the artistic movement from criminal to life-affirming self-empowerment[211]. In particular, the movement shows how criminal self-empowerment, rooted in survival and unprocessed adversity, limits young offenders' opportunities to engage with their vulnerability[212]. It was at this juncture where the cultivation of artistic practices provided a key contribution and continuity to young offenders' sense of self. Furthermore, cultivating these artistic practices encouraged young offenders to express and creatively explore the unspoken parts of their life stories[213].

### 8.1.1 Surviving Adversity: Criminal (Dis)Empowerment

Young offenders enacted criminal agency through a distinctive spatiotemporal embodiment. Astute awareness of space and perceived control of embodied presence played a key role in crime, including for example Luani's deception and Jess' swift action. Deceptive exploitation

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[209] See sections 6.3 and 7.3
[210] See sections 6.2 and 7.2
[211] See Figure 8.2
[212] See sub-section 8.1.1, and sections 6.1 and 7.1
[213] See section 8.1.2

and extortion, like drug-dealing, demanded an ability to create a sense of simultaneity in navigating multiple spaces within a single narrated event. For example, Jess stressed the masterfulness of being "invisible" in the neighbourhood, while running a drug dealing business to swiftly trick people out of their money[214]. Criminal self-empowerment and status was young offenders' main avenue of acquiring a sense of control over their lives. Such agency has been documented in narrative identity research-driven theorisation. In particular, narrative identity theory's component of contamination is useful for contextualising criminal agency that arises from childhood adversity[215] (McAdams & McLean, 2013). But, as Hickey-Moody's conception of young people's agency in the public sphere contests, to settle with the criminal self-empowerment as just another form of agentic expression, would mean "excluding marginalized bodies in ways that requires a disavowal of the embodied nature of social difference. Youth arts in and outside schools often include and speak to marginalized bodies" (Hickey-Moody, 2016, p. 25). Criminal embodiment, then, in its search to constitute a voice, makes the body's struggle a voice unto itself. The confusion of that voice began to untangle in young offenders' poetry[216].

In particular, young offenders' bodies emerged as a contradictory agentic site in a given physical space. The body was also central in both evading authorities and in narratives of social stigma[217]. Criminal agency was covert, not only to avoid imprisonment, but also because policing often involved using young offenders' body as a site for public shaming, and, punishment. It is in such acts of policing that the accumulation of trauma is perpetuated in the body, both physically and symbolically. Even so, re-victimisation and childhood trauma as part of the contamination process as contamination may not be sufficient to explain the embodiment of wrongdoing. For instance, using the concept of 'paradoxical resilience', a study on how children navigate adversity offers a nuanced approach towards understanding the dualities of disempowerment and resistance. In particular, paradoxical resilience literature argues that:

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[214] See section 7.1
[215] See also chapter 4
[216] See section 8.1.2
[217] See section 6. 2.2 and 7.3

> Focusing just on damage and on a very limited reading of resilience that tends to position resilience as an outcome or a set of character traits or skills, the domestic violence literature effectively functions to limit our reading of children's lives just to damage. It underestimates the points of strength that children are able to build, it underestimates their creativity, their capacity to find ways to cope with even the most difficult situations. It underestimates their capacity for resistance and for agency (Callaghan & Alexander, 2015, pp. 80–90).

Similarly, the young offenders' persistent denial of trauma can be interpreted as a way to continue "experiencing a world [they] cannot inhabit" (Tanner, 2007). As Nadeer's work on the effects of posttraumatic stress explains, "it is unbearable to feel that one is of no value, unlovable, or the object of hatred. The traumatic fear, humiliation and profound sense of helplessness that result are powerful emotions that may result in lashing out or lashing inward" (Nadeer, 2007, p. 120). As much as criminal agency revealed entrapped trauma, the embodiment of wrongdoing appeared not to be just a form of lashing out or lashing inward. For young offenders, criminality was a way to maintain an outward appearance of an intact self[218].

While young offenders embodied the sense of 'intact self' to feel in control of their lives, this also signalled the lack of contact with the vulnerabilities of their violently denied childhoods. Embodiment thus involved notions of presence and absence in space which was afforded through a manipulation of the passage of time (Tanner, 2007). It is an attempt to both bridge the gap created both by social stigma, and, the demands of a patriarchal masculinity threatened by emotion (hooks, 2004). This dichotomy seemingly dissipates when criminal agency is understood as constituted through performing repetitive acts that become culturally recognisable over time (Butler, 1988). Criminal agency is thus not contaminated or paradoxical per se, as it is a spatiotemporal assemblage of multiple unresolved experiences held in the body. It includes the re-enactment of survival of complex trauma, of helplessness, as well as resistance. Ultimately, re-enacting such repetitive acts against an unattainable masculine ideal can become recognised as toxic masculinity.

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[218] See sub-section 6.2.2 and section 7.3

Criminal agency, then, becomes the living of an internalised myth of the invulnerable criminal. Not only did the lack of opportunity to engage in vulnerability sustain a profound wound to the self, but it also made toxic masculinity a central aspect of criminal agency[219]. In this sense, criminal agency can be understood as a spatiotemporal assemblage of youthful masculinities (Barad, 2007; Hickey-Moody & Kenway, 2016). Furthermore, the concept of spatiotemporal assemblages of subjectivity offers a complex lens for understanding this intersection between criminal agency intersections and masculinity:

> [As] subjective mixtures: composites of space, time, feeling, rationality that fold in to make up subjects. Through such frame of reference, all social subjects are, by constitution, part of a number of transversal collective identities – boys are or become 'themselves' in relation to place, leisure, communities, families, biographies, employment, each of which constitutes a vector of *partial subjectivation*, a wedge in the composite formation of their subjectivity (Hickey-Moody & Kenway, 2016, p. 45).

For both Jess and Luani, then, their distinctive masculinities were assembled differently through ethnic, cultural, and artistic practices of the spaces and criminal cultures they navigated[220].

The young offenders' self-narratives were characterised by emotional scarcity, indicating a detachment from their inwardness. In a comparative study of adolescents' moral development, the "[l]ack of internality and psychological coherence" in violent young offenders' narratives has been linked to committing severe offences (Wainryb, Komolova, & Florsheim, 2010, p. 193). In particular, the study found a lack of alignment between young offenders' internality and criminal agency, which remained largely unexplained beyond the satisfaction in crime[221]. Furthermore, while internality has been traditionally espoused to explain identity in psychology, recent studies have questioned its role in understanding the links between agency and caring (Jaworska, 2007). Mainly, Jaworska's work with autistic adults as well as children found that caring and agency can exist without reflection or attunement to internality. Given the precarious constitution of narrative identity in

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[219] See sub-sections see 6.2.1 and 7.2.1
[220] See also the Postludes for chapters 6 and 7
[221] See 6.2.2 and 7.2.2

adolescence, detachment from inwardness appears to be a narrow description of young offenders' identity.
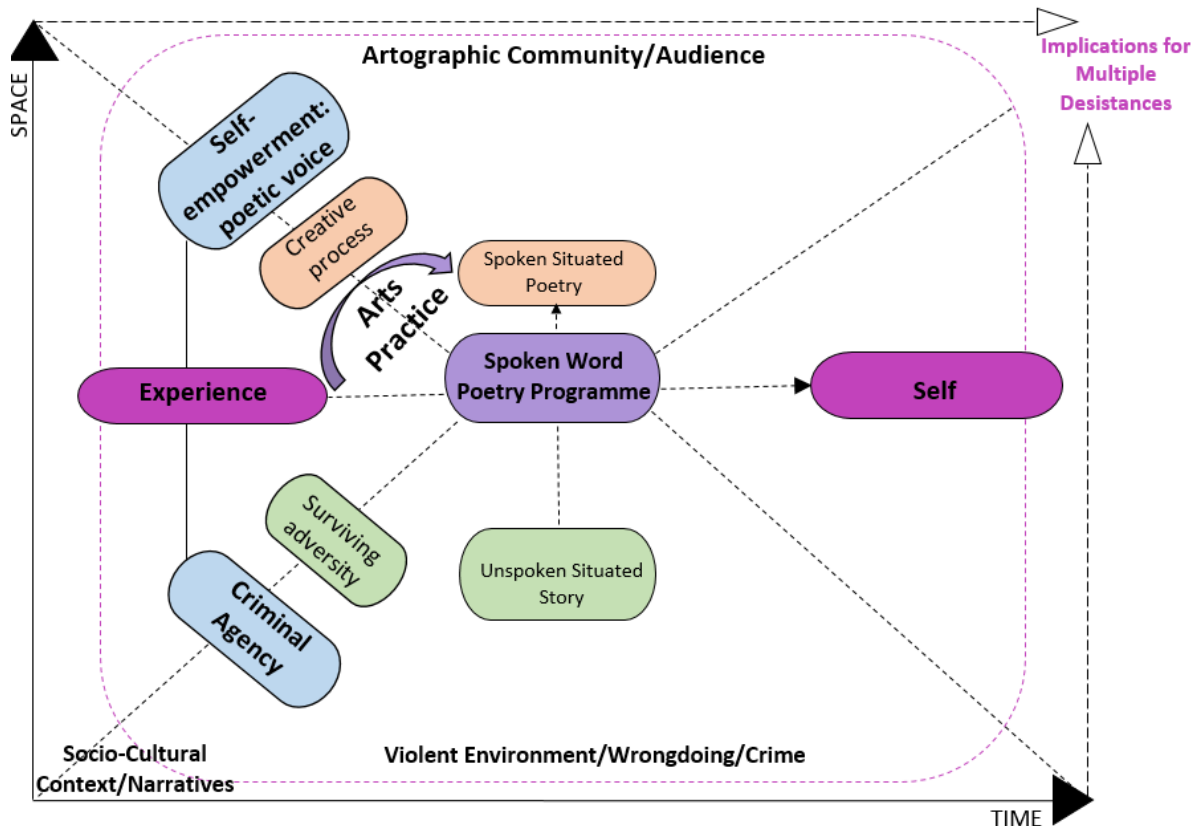


**Figure 8.2 Artistic Practice Site: Narrating and Performing Multiple Forms of Agency**

Young offenders' insistence on immutable criminality, indicated a deeper confusion of their sense of self: criminality was regarded as the foundation for their sense of self[222]. In particular, their sense of self, which pointed to an ontological confusion, saw embodiment of crime as inseparable from acts that shaped their masculinities arising through a non-linear sense of time. Situating criminal agency across the landscape of young offenders' agencies offered avenues to challenge the structural approach in narrative identity's process model of development over time[223]. This resonates with Hickey-Moody's conception of a spatiotemporal accumulation of a sense of self, which can be conceived as a "transversal

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[222] See sections 6.2 and 7.2
[223] See chapter 4

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identity" in ways that evokes artistic creativity of narrative[224] . Granted, narrative identity work in its native field of social psychology (McAdams, 2018), as well as in the fields of criminological research (Maruna & Cursley, 2015) and arts practices in prison (Colvin, 2015), has begun the investigation of less structural measurements and conceptions of narrative identity, which is where the present model aims to make a contribution[225].

*8.1.2 Performing Poetic Voice: Life-Affirming Self-Empowerment*

Earlier in sections 6.3 and 7.3, I had identified three aspects of young offenders' poetic practices: courage for expressing 'unspoken emotions', poetic play to re-imagine lived experiences, and a search to merit their own subjective truths. In this sub-section, I discuss how these poetic practices acted as a revitalising and powerful tool for constituting resisting voices. This finding affirms previous research that has found that spoken word poetry practices can reveal a young people's authentic and literate identities in opposition to socially prescribed ones (H. Gregory, 2008; Somers-Willett, 2009; Weinstein, 2010). An emerging key point from the literature is that the elaboration of resisting voice both responds to and grapples with the known issues identified within spoken word practices (Graebner, 2007; H. Gregory, 2014; J. Johnson, 2017)[226]. This discussion, then, harnesses the lessons drawn from the wider fields of arts practices and artistic creativities to propose different ways of thinking about spoken word practices.

Young offenders' poetic self-expression was an empowering act of voicing their emotional truths and resisting disempowerment on multiple fronts[227]. Emotional courage was activated through brave decision-making and speaking up about difficult experiences[228]. Furthermore, emotional courage involved moving into uncertain areas and engaging in risk-taking through poetic play. In particular, poetic play involved instances of reimagining life

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[224] See sub-section 8.2.2
[225] Figures 8.2 and 8.4
[226] See chapter 2
[227] See sub-sections 6.3.1 and 7.3.1
[228] See sections 6.3 and 7.3

experiences primarily motivated by young offenders' drive to voice unspoken feelings, or articulate their versions of the truth about their past. Poetic play in this way resonates with both perspective-taking, proposed as one of the aspects of literariness (Colvin, 2015), as well as the concept of possibility-thinking, a feature of creative learning (T. Cremin, Burnard, & Craft, 2006). Moreover, as Low (2011) had demonstrated in her study of a school programme combining poetry performance with critical hip-hop pedagogies, the principle of "realness" is a hip-hop legacy in spoken word poetry and slam cultures (Hill, 2009; Low, 2011). In addition, Kim (2013) also found that "spoken word is literacy of an activist form, with long-term potential and impact [...] focusing on voice and dialogue" (p. 192). While young offenders' poetic practices enabled them to constitute a voice of resistance, it was the creative process which fuelled it. Thus, if "the materiality of [young people's] arts practices constitutes a form of citizenship" (Hickey-Moody, 2016, p. 62), then taking young offenders' resisting voice seriously would mean re-affirming their individual lives.

Subjective truth has been identified in spoken word and slam practices under a variety of terminology. The present study's use of the term 'truth' follows Lorde's (2007) articulation of poetry's formative role as the "skeleton architecture of our lives", that susses out "what-it-feels-true-to-me" (p. 38). In addition to being a hip-hop legacy, Fleetwood's (2004) study found that spoken word poetry in the classroom is an art form of "performing realness", which has the capacity to authenticate lives. Similarly, for Somers-Willett (2009), slams are sites for *authenticating* young people's identities. The concept of *authenticity* has also been identified by Blitefield (2004) as one of the main criterion for judging poetry performance in slams.  As Rivera (2013) argues, for young people "you have to be what you're talking about" in slam. In a study of the New York City arts scene, Rivera concluded that:

> through the paradoxical institutionalization of the amateur, the youth poetry slam as a liminal site of cultural contestation facilitates the development of a youth poetry aesthetic that values *parrhesia*, or courageous truth-telling, and in doing so serves a vital role in subject formation and authentication for youth poets (Rivera, 2013, p. 115).

However, ideas of realness and authenticity have been contested as problematic given that increasingly contemporary practices veer towards spectacle (Graebner, 2007). Graebner, in

particular, used the concept of performativity to argue that contemporary poetry in performance does not do what it is says it is doing, and therefore it is ultimately non-performative[229]. Non-performativity is also relevant with regards to the unjust practices of spoken word poetry like the racialisation of black poets. The concept of non-performativity is connected to the role performativity theory has had in troubling the display of anti-racism (Ahmed, 2006; Hesse, 2011). Spoken word and slam practices have been found to perpetuate different forms of violence, with Somers-Willett's study revealing how poetry slams act as sites for racialization of black artists, in the service of alleviating audiences' white guilt (Somers-Willett, 2009). Programmes thus have the responsibility to create spaces safe from structural violence, and could learn from practices such as Anitafrika's cultural adaptation of spoken word and theatre as a healing and empowering tool with women of colour (Anitafrika, 2016). In addition, Rankine's (2014) poetic analysis of race, astutely elaborates racism within performance art, and poses a question and a challenge for poetry: "how can poetry go beyond spectacle and stereotype?" (p. 24).

The present study observed that the centrality of artistic practices in programmes can be a starting point towards dispelling stereotypes. This finding links to a similar finding in Kim's (2013) study of San Francisco's spoken word communities. A recent development in the field saw the adaptation of spoken word poetry as an arts-based method to challenge prejudices in artists' as well as researcher's experiences (H. Johnson, Carson-Apstein, Banderob, & Macaulay-Rettino, 2017). Johnson's conception of a new methodological tool bringing spoken artists with social scientists, called *collaborative poetics,* embodies a movement from arts-practice-as-research through accentuating participation (H. Johnson et al., 2018). The legitimacy of collaborative poetics in progressing scientific knowledge and in addressing discrimination can contribute to addressing some of the challenges that programmes face[230].

In addition to non-performativity, spoken word has been widely critiqued for poor artistic quality. As the discussion chapter has argued thus far, the notion of truth is entangled with

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[229] See chapter 2
[230] For links between collaborative poetics and artography see sub-section 8.2.2

the creativity of the poetic practice. One aspect of poetic creativity was literariness from creation through performing and reception of self-authored poetry. Resonant with spoken word's truth-telling as re-writing life is the concept of *poetic license*, which harnesses the imaginative literary tools to provoke emotional engagement (Perloff, 1990). *Literariness* has long been a subject of discussion in the field of literary studies across different schools of thought, promulgating a range of definitions. For example, Russian formalism framed *literariness* as the text's inherent aesthetics achieved through: *stylistics* (Lemon & Reis, 1965); the *New Criticism*, which refers to the 'pleasure and joy' of the text independent of authorial intention (Barthes, 1980); *Reader response theory*, which views literariness as arising in the transactional interaction between the reader and the poem as a living thing or an event (Fish, 1990; Iser, 1974; Rosenblatt, 1994); and *Deconstruction's* view of literary texts as layered subtleties of precarious meanings (Norris, 2010).

Departing from the existing work on literariness, the present section considers literariness as a feature of the poetic creativity which rendered poetic voice as life-affirming. While there has been an increased interest in the links between literariness and improving quality of life, to my knowledge it has not been explicitly linked to creativity in the arts in prison context, even as Collins's cognitive poetics expounds the psychology of poetic imagination (Collins, 1991). Other examples include psychological research which has focused on literariness in relation to enhancing theory of mind[231] (Kidd & Castano, 2013); the role of literariness in empathy as rooted in stylistics (Miall & Kuiken, 1994); as well as cognitive poetics' espousal of a wider definition of 'literariness' beyond dense stylistic features, such as popular fiction and its role in cultivating narrative empathy (Keen, 2010).

Colvin (2015) has already made links between literariness and narrative identity work in prisons, proposing that these links can give rise to a literariness model for addressing the reductive nature of ex-offenders' redemptive scripts[232]. Colvin also defined 'literariness' as the ability of texts to offer readers the combination of: possibilities, multiple perspectives, a

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[231] Such as understanding other's emotions and actions.
[232] See chapter 3

complex narrative, and to challenge stereotypes and prejudice (ibid.). In the present sub-section[233], I argued how the creativity of the programme's artistic practice and its movement into pedagogy is implicated in driving literariness into action. Unlike Colvin's proposal for a literariness model, the present study follows a line of work that has contested notions of literariness tied exclusively to the literary canon (Lansana, 2004). Rendering visible the literary creativity of spoken word, the present work aims to affirm its artistic practice as central to establishing the possible reach of the arts in prison.

## 8.2 An Emergent Pedagogic Site: Creating Alternative Narratives

Relevant to the programme's contribution to narrative identity, this section focuses on the movement between forms of communion that unfolded in young offenders' stories: from disconnections in past abusive relations, towards forming humanising connections through artographic relations[234]. Forms of communion were often present in young offenders' stories in a self-deceptive manner[235]. Young offenders' trauma in response to abandonment, neglect, or betrayal was often not acknowledged in its full extent. The programme's artistic movement into pedagogy is discussed in relation to literatures across the arts and creative pedagogies, as well as creativities in practice. This artistic movement is also considered in relation to intersecting pedagogic practices across the fields of feminist, critical hip-hop studies. The discussion of the programme's pedagogic potential focuses on the finding that the programme moves from arts practice towards co-creating pedagogic spaces and forging artistic relationships[236]. By drawing these literatures together with arts-based research practices and creativities, the present discussion contributes towards creating artographic creativity agendas for the programmes' pedagogies, with a research imperative to further understand how they manifest in real –world practice.

### 8.2.1 Abusive Relating: Traumatic Narratives

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[233] And also, in sub-section 8.3.2
[234] See Figure 8.3
[235] As was elaborated upon in chapters 6 and 7
[236] See sub-sections 6.3.2, 7.3.2, and Appendix X.

A key component of narrative identity, traumatic bonding was narrated as a form of communion in a self-deceptive manner. Both Luani and Jess's life stories contained many instances of unacknowledged trauma through which they were able to maintain a sense of harmony[237]. Denial of trauma featured prominently in abusive relationships with family, friends, and girlfriends. For example, Luani discarded his woundedness in response to his father's abandonment, narrating an idealised relationship[238]. Similarly, for Jess, an idealised relationship was described in his narrated connectedness to the drug-dealing community. Mainly, Jess described nuances of woundedness arising from disappointment with unfair and dishonest friendships[239]. On the surface, Luani and Jess' examples of traumatic bonding as a form of communion bear the features of "interpersonal connection" or a "connection to a broad collective" as defined by McAdams & McLean (2013) in their study of main narrative identity themes. However, traumatic bonding contains dis-connections as it is not rooted in actual intimacy. Following an empirically derived extensive classification of forms of intimacy, McAdams concludes with the following:

> Experiencing the goal state, not attaining it, may be where the satisfaction lies in intimacy motivation, and key to experiencing warm and close relationships with others may be a loosening of ego boundaries, a surrendering of unmitigated control in interpersonal relations, and a replacement of instrumental activity with spontaneous reactivity (McAdams, 1980, p. 431).

Bearing the intimacy motivation in mind, I can observe that offenders' relations remained significantly devoid of intimacy. On the contrary, instances of narrated intimacy in young offenders' lives were used as a means to an end. For example, Luani's interpersonal relationships were a vehicle for exploitative self-interest[240]. Traumatic tensions underlying young offenders' sense of self resonates with the self-discrepancy theory and its notions of ideal self and actual self (Higgins, 1989). In particular, Luani and Jess' communion is disrupted by a discrepancy between their actual and ideal selves which were shaped by

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[237] See sub-sections 6.1.2 and 7.1.2
[238] See sections 7.1 and 7.2
[239] See sub-section 7.1.2
[240] See sub-section 6.2.1

culture and family expectations (Higgins, Bond, Klein, & Strauman, 1986). For example, Luani's admission to his father's betrayal of the primary role as caregiver would mean admission to his own perceived emasculation. Given that facing the realities of such contradictions are impossible to conceive during childhood, young offenders' learned self-deceptive communion persevered across their relationships.
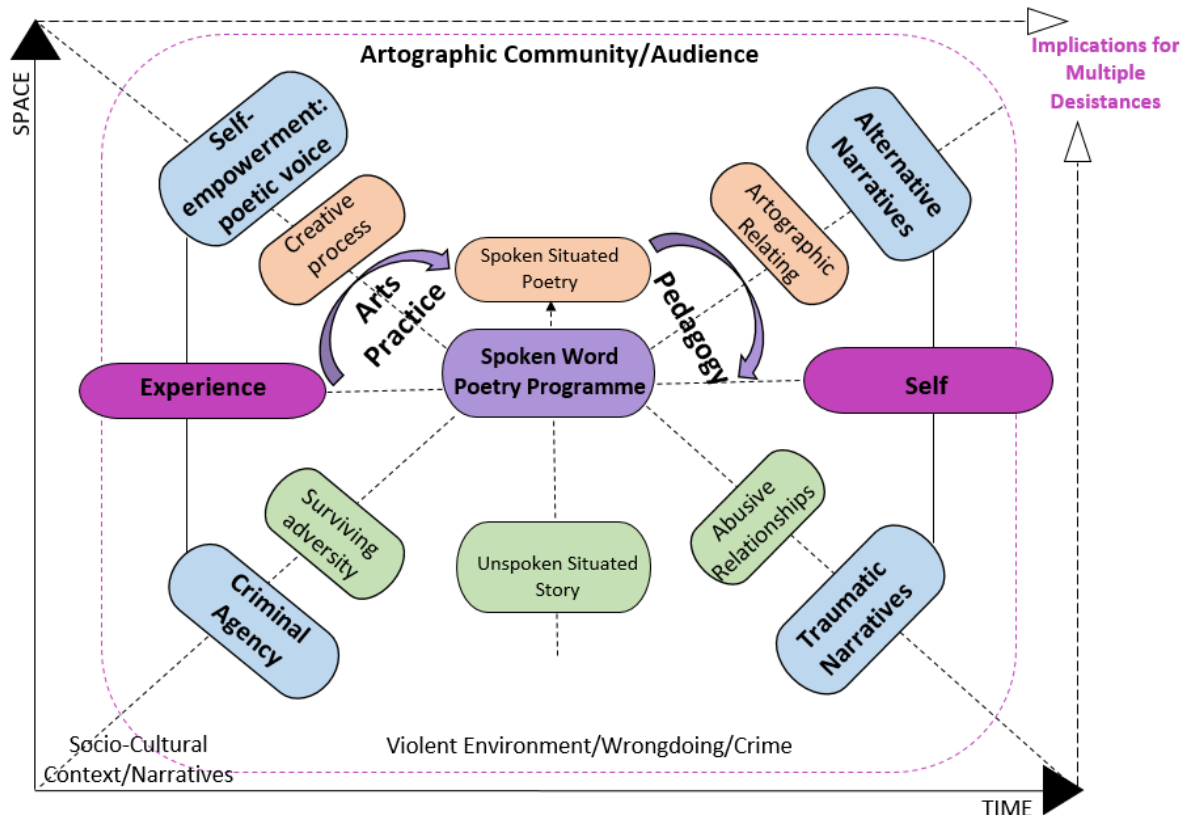


**Figure 8.3 Pedagogic Site: Narrative and Creating Multiple Narratives**

Naming dissonance as the kernel of young offenders' narrated connections, offers pathways for questioning the reductive nature of their stories. Downplaying the significant impact of these violent events in Luani's childhood enabled him to maintain his idea of a loving family. However, across his life story, Luani's use of the word 'love' to describe deceptive manipulation may also be seen as socially reinforced. In particular, this tendency reminds me of hooks' pivotal observation that social cultures shape people's fear of acknowledging the realities of living predominantly loveless lives. For hooks, love is the "will to nurture our

own and another's spiritual growth" (hooks, 2016, p. 6). It encompasses a combination of mainly six components: commitment, trust, respect, responsibility, care with affection, and knowledge (ibid.). Hooks convincingly argues that the presence of one or a few of these elements, alongside sustained abuse and violence, should not be confused with love. In her ground-breaking work on vulnerability research, (Brown, 2015) also asserts that while conflict is a part of healthy relationships, unless instances of abuse are successfully resolved, the relationship ceases to be loving.

The centrality of disconnections in young offenders' communion is crucial for understanding the problem of reductive redemption scripts in reformed offenders' stories (Maruna, 2001). Maruna acknowledges people's tendencies to resort to white lies in order to survive, and, ultimately rebuild their lives even if through overly optimistic views. But in order to create a space for accurate and complex self-narratives, offering clarity to the nature of communion in narrative identity is essential. Similar to the conundrum of young offenders' criminal agency, communion too poses the risk of being dichotomised between the two perceived polarities of love and abuse. The peril of settling for a conception of communion built on trauma, is also exemplified in a study showing forms of agency women negotiate to survive abuse. Particularly, women's ways of navigating intimate interpersonal violence is portrayed as the need to resolve the "paradox of love and violence" (Lloyd, Emery, & Klatt, 2009, p. 269). Hook's critique of love does not deny the presence of communion factors in abusive relations. It also doesn't discard the value of people's survivalist agency, nor does it pathologise traumatic bonding. It offers ways forward for thinking beyond binary notions of paradoxical love, and agency, by way of acknowledging their limits, which in the context of narrative identity theory can create possibilities for less reductive notions of redemption.

*8.2.2 Artographic Relating: Alternative Narratives*

Relevant to developing narrative identity, the programme's artistic practice acted as pedagogy through eliciting arts-based co-created third-spaces conducive to multiple forms

of communion[241]. Like Burnard's study of artists' teaching approach when collaborating with teachers (Burnard, 2011), the present study also found that artists' improvisatory decision-making, and wholehearted relating created alternative prison spaces. Similarly, Bresler's inquiry into arts-based pedagogies explains that they:

> create space for explorations, a certain amount of frolicking, aloneness, isolation, and interaction, with vitality, curiosity, the occasional despair and discouragement balanced with the joy of discovery, within layers of communal and personal relationships (Bresler, 2017, p. 650).

In such non-linear and precariously vulnerable creative process, young offenders engaged different narrative threads of their life stories, encouraged and supported by the community. For example, the participant Spear's poetic exploration saw a movement from a tough macho persona to vulnerably sharing the pains of prison deprivation in performance. Moreover, lyrically dexterous, MCB moved out of his comfort zone from writing sentimentally about romance, to harnessing poetry to re-write criminal and racial stereotypes[242]. The artographic movement of arts practice as pedagogy in the context of spoken word poetry programmes is anticipated in Kim's (2013) finding that "spoken word's most radical element may be its insistence upon art itself. The community investment in developing, encouraging, and challenging artistry as a supreme practice of pedagogy" (p. 189).

The particular contribution of artographic pedagogy can be interpreted as boosting narrative identity's components of *meaning making* and *exploratory narrative processing*, which are essential for adding complexity to the life story (McAdams & McLean, 2013). Such complexity is directly associated with literary performativity through its affordances of different degrees of self-exploration towards self-knowledge, and, self-understanding, which are largely implicit (McAdams, 2018). One way of illuminating the implicitness, is McAdams' differentiation of implicit and explicit aspects of narrative identity. Such distinction, McAdams explains, depends on who interprets the life story, participants or researchers which dictates a different focus on narrative identity. The present study observed that while

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[241] See sections 6.3 and 7.3
[242] See A/r/tographic preamble III, Part 3

often not consciously voiced by participants, self-knowledge and self-understanding were generated in the rituals of creating poetry and in poems, as well as through artographic relationships[243]. However, the study's scope did not investigate further the young offenders' conscious relationship to their narratives. Hence, further studies in exploring the links of creating alternative narratives through artistic practices and pedagogy may offer direct insights into narrative identity.

Dialogic relating permeated the artographic relationships outside of the programme's official time and spaces. Artographers encouraged dialogue through attention and respect, towards a symmetry of power (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2000). As relationships unfolded, researcher and participants' goals became bound to one another, overcoming aspects of insider and outside roles. Dialogic relating, much like the outcomes of creative pedagogies found by Thomson, rendered third spaces as inclusive spaces[244] (Thomson, Hall, Jones, & Green, 2014). The artographic relating favoured relational presence with one another as human beings, which is what Bresler attributes to arts-based pedagogies: hitting the "sweet spot" of working with another person. Crucial to narrative identity's component of communion, McAdams's coding system for intimacy motive, drawing on Bakan, Maslow and Buber, understands intimacy as the presence of union, reciprocal dialogue, care and enjoyment in connections in and of themselves.

The programme's artistic community opened participants to bring into the classroom shared stories of prison life. For example, participants talked about working together in the kitchen; and brought up tensions and conundrums arising from their discussion of poems outside the programme's designated space-time. Participants mirrored dialogic relating which arguably can be interpreted as spurring different masculine relations. Prison masculinities in research have often been depicted through the lens of emotions lacking, even though men in prison can develop positive homosocial relations embedded in day to day activities (Crewe, 2014). This followed from artists' caring feedback to participants' poetically expressed personal

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[243] See sections 6.3 and 7.3
[244] See sections 6.3 and 7.3

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needs. The aspect of caring feedback in artographic pedagogy resonated with Dymoke's evaluation of a spoken word poetry education programme in the UK which found "exploratory talk" mediated educators-participants' relations. Particularly, she observed that "poets recognised that they were working with hormonal teenagers, some recently arrived in the UK, living in relatively deprived localities. Although they were not teachers with 'in loco parentis' roles, they acknowledged their duty of care for students (Dymoke, 2017).

In programmes where student-centred learning takes place (H. Gregory, 2014), participants cherish the self through creating countercultural realities (Low, 2011; Saunders, 2012). Eliciting existing conflicts, like for instance the history of rivalry between Luani and MCB, MCB saw the programme as a space to create his own counter-narrative. This arguably was an example of "learning to re-define reality [which] is as Paulo Freire (1972) conceptualized, "an act of love" (Camangian, 2008, p. 52). That said, discrimination emerged in the forms of sexism, homophobia, and, racism. Artists modelled positive narratives of womanhood in their performances, and, the programme's selected poetry examples organically expanded the discussions with themes of race and queerness[245]. Such responses were woven into the artographic practice in a way that evokes the essential commitments embodied through feminist pedagogies:

> Feminist pedagogy is engaged teaching/learning - engaged with self in a continuing reflective process; engaged actively with the material being studied; engaged with others in a struggle to get beyond our sexism and racism and classism and homophobia and other destructive hatreds and to work together to enhance our knowledge; engaged with the community, with traditional organizations, and with movements for social change (Shrewsbury, 1987, p. 6).

Counter-narratives in this sense can be compared to feminist concept of *countersentimental* narratives (Berlant, 2008; Wanzo, 2009). For Berlant, countersentimental narratives "are lacerated by ambivalence: they struggle with their own attachment to the promise of a sense of unconflictedness, intimacy, and collective belonging" (Berlant, 2008, p. 55). Such narratives can also help rethink reductive conceptualisations of either love or resilience

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[245] See section 6.3

(agency) as paradoxical when permeated with instances of abuse[246]. Poetry is attuned to unfolding complexity in narrative identity because "how narrative underlies poetry may not be in the ways in which we conceive linear narrative" (Ong, 1988, pp. 139–151). Similarly, McAdams' latest revisiting of narrative identity stresses its associative layered textures as opposed to structural linearity (McAdams, 2018).

Considering prisons are deviant institutions (Liebling, 2014), re-creating prison spaces disrupted  and also coexisted with institutional power[247]. The programme's third spaces relate to Cremin's (2018) conception of the classroom as heterotopia, "spaces [that] are sites of counter-narrative, and are capable of juxtaposing in a single real space several realities that are incompatible with each other" (p. 7). That spoken word poetry programmes and slams are spaces for creating counter-narratives has been found by a number of studies with marginalised communities' empowerment through slam, and spoken word (Davis, 2018; Jocson, 2006; Rudd, 2012). Davis, particularly found spoken word practice to be a space for envisioning possible selves countering dominant culture.

However, a recent study of Malagasy slam poetry practices, showed that in this context spoken word is not a way for performing identity, as it is a performance of authority, with limitations to what counts as 'free speech' (Wells, 2018). Similarly, a comparative study of UK and US slams, has problematised the rendition of slams as non-hegemonic sites (H. F. Gregory, 2009). Third spaces, while facing difference and discrimination, ex-posed questions about violence within artistic communities, which necessitate further examination against findings that spoken word acts as inherent violence intervention (Kim, 2013). Cremin and Guilherme's proposal for an "epistemological shift" in peacemaking brings into focus the power of humanising relationships:

> If one ceases to say Thou to fellow human beings, then one ceases to see them as persons and they become merely objects, they become means to an end [...] The 'epistemological shift' means to be able to switch from I-It to I-Thou relations; that is, to cease seeing the Other as

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[246] See sub-sections 8.1.1 and 8.2.1
[247] See section 6.3

an It and realising that the Other is a Thou. It is only when this 'shift' occurs that conflict resolution takes place (Cremin & Guilherme, 2015, pp. 1130–1131).

Artographic relating may be able to contribute to harmonious relations, embodying I-though relating. At the very least, much like inquiry with popular pedagogy, the programme was "concerned with mobilizing roles that noncanonical knowledges and students' tastes and pleasures play in the formation of subjectivity and the production of belief systems" (Hickey-Moody, 2016, p. 67). The imperatives to continue grappling with relational practice and dialogue remain at the centre of programme challenges:

> The capacity to move into "good conflict" is essential to relationships based on mutuality. Courage in connection and the capacity to work for relational expansion through good conflict challenge traditional patterns of power; they also expose the profoundly nonmutual and anti-relational biases present in our culture (Jordan, 1990, p. 1).

The movement from arts practice to pedagogy, characterised by sharing distinct artistic creativities and embodying a dialogic relating with the other, resonates with Wilson's radical theory of an ethics of creativity as the practice of care (Wilson, 2018). It was in the pedagogic transformations of artistic creativity that care towards the other manifested relationally and through dialogue.

The emergence of humanising connections through artographic relationships, can be bridged to the theory of wise humanising creativity (WHC) (K. A. Chappell, Pender, Swinford, & Ford, 2016). WHC places the creative process centre stage in developing identity referred to as "journey of becoming". As wise humanising creativity emphasises, the creative process of becoming is not always fun, and in fact it is wrought with conflict and demands mediation of relations. Perhaps this can be foregrounded through the work of the programme's creativity: "to be transformed by another's vitality of actuality" (Krishnamurti, 1992), as part of an artographic community of practice (Springgay, Irwin, Leggo, & Gouzouasis, 2007).

**8.3 A Performance Community Site: Validating Artistic Ways of Being**

The present section discusses how the interplay of artographic practice extended into a site for communal performance. The site saw a vulnerable aesthetic space where exploring a confused sense of self was possible. Young offenders unfolded their immutability script performing redemptive rituals, towards revitalising their lives[248].

*8.3.1 Unfolding an Immutability Script: Unspoken Situated Stories*

Young offender's unarticulated, or minimised traumas are associated with narrative identity's concept of unspoken situated stories[249]. Specifically, unspoken situated stories refer to overlooked yet significant context-specific adverse experiences conceptualised in the process model for self-development over time (McLean et al., 2007). The narrative process model places storytelling at the heart of self-change building on McAdam's formative narrative identity theory in social psychology (McAdams, 1988). In the present study, the process model was adapted to conceptualise the programme's interrelatedness with narrative identity while departing from Maruna's ground-breaking application of McAdam's narrative identity theory in criminology[250]. Revisiting the adapted process model for developing narrative identity through the programme, the unspoken situated stories of adversity were observed in young offenders' narratives as making space for performing vulnerability[251].

As was expounded earlier, the young offenders' ingrained criminality manifested in many different forms[252]. For example, Luani's thrill for crime was narrated as the rush of stealing. Wrongdoing and serious forms of violence were embodied in Luani's self-portrait painting[253]. Moreover, Jess's strong attachment to the drug dealing community culminated

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[248] See Figure 8.4
[249] See chapter 4
[250] See sub-section 4.4.1
[251] see sub-section 8.3.2
[252] See sections 7.3 and 8.3
[253] See sub-section 7.3.3

in extreme forms of identification with a violent crime cult perpetuated through Balkan post-war popular culture[254]. The role of sectarian antisocial behaviour in youth delinquency was documented in a Belfast study stressing the relevance of post-accord social identity in understanding youth crime (Merrilees et al., 2013). Young offenders' continued attachment to crime is one of the key aspects targeted by risk-oriented offender treatment, brought to the attention of arts practices in prison (Johnston & Hewish, 2013). Moreover, sensationalised media coverage of crime trickling into binary cultural portrayal of young offenders reifies the stereotype of the hardened criminal (Fionda, 2005). With young men forming the majority of young offender population, maleness and masculinity are particularly profiled as inherently criminal. In the present study, an example of a particularly corrosive, yet deep-seated stereotype was the "true psychopath"[255]. Young offenders' ingrained criminality reflected a prejudiced discourse, and was embroiled in a confused sense of self.

A distorted view of the self is a common occurrence associated with childhood abuse, also linked to self-injuries later in life in a group of adolescents, predominantly female (Weismoore & Esposito-Smythers, 2010). Various types of adult offenders have been found to display distorted attitudes (Marshall, Marshall, Sachdev, & Kruger, 2003). A study looking at cognitive distortions and empathy association in adolescent sex offenders proposes that treatment programmes address not only risk factors but also self-interested cognitive distortions (McCrady et al., 2008). Young offenders' distorted narration of crime as self-indulgently empowering resonates with the finding that affinity to control, power and egocentrism is common in offenders' erroneous thinking patterns (Mandracchia, Morgan, Garos, & Garland, 2007). However, distorted self-perception can be embroiled in many different forms of psychological processes like emotional dissociation and repression (Bonanno & Siddique, 1999). Also, young offenders' distorted views were implicated in the criminalisation of racial identity (Apena, 2007). In the present study, the ingrained criminality was largely maintained through chasing an unattainable ethnic masculinity. As

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[254] See section 7.2
[255] See section 6.2

distinct from the criminological qualification of cognitive distortions, the present study found that distortions in young offenders' narratives can be explained as a fundamental confusions of the self. Particularly, the fundamental confusion of the ontological self, enabled a tenacious confused sense of self[256].

While the nature of young offender's self-deception was difficult to qualify in the present study, it was nonetheless at the heart of their immutability script. Not only were young offenders' life stories saturated with reductive redemption, but they were the very opposite of the redemption scripts of reforming adult offenders (Maruna, 2001). Moreover, young offenders' narratives didn't resemble Maruna's adult offenders' condemnation scripts either. While remorse or regret are emotions that have been linked to discontinuation of crime (Piquero, 2017), the non-articulation of self-condemnation in young offenders' narratives cannot conclusively be linked to psychopathy and antisocial personality (Saper, 2014). In fact, Saper demonstrates that when juvenile remorselessness is misconstrued it pathologises young offenders in spite of their developmental stage, and it leads to negative consequences such as punitive sentencing.

The present study observed young offenders' stark lack of engagement with inwardness. Particularly self-exploration and understanding of the vicissitudes of their lived experiences was scarce. Hence, narrative seems to evade the breadth and depth of the ontological sense of self, the subjective self that remains when socially practical identities are removed (DeLay, 2016). DeLay proposes pursuing insight into one's ontological subjectivity is an antidote to self-deception, and by extension the recipe for leading the good life rooted in self-responsibility. Delay's critical exposition, both neither embracing nor discarding narrative is critical to turning inward, into one's ontological self. The implication for narrative identity is that a latent unspoken story resides between young offenders' lack of inward gaze, and emotional detachment. This foregrounds the programme's insistence on artistic creativity as the source of cumulative change[257].

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[256] See section 6.2
[257] See sub-sections 8.1.1 and 8.3.3

*8.3.2 Vulnerable Aesthetic Space: Spoken Situated Stories*

Young offenders saw the programme's communal performance site to co-create a vulnerable aesthetic space for sharing unspoken stories[258]. Young offenders' unspoken stories involved performing multiple forms of trauma, and facing difficult emotions with the support of the community. Luani's performance confronted his father's role in his disempowerment[259], while Jess discovered a humanising connection with his mother recreating their embodied dialogue during a traumatic arrest[260]. The notion of a vulnerable aesthetic space in spoken word follows Boal's conception of aesthetic space which includes the audience as an active member of performance, in his pioneering work with the theatre of the oppressed. Boal's aim to transform spectators' passive role into that of active "spect-actors", emerged as an inherent aspect of the programme's artographic movement across arts practice, as pedagogy, as performance community.

Like practitioners of the theatre of the oppressed, artographers recognized the need to listen non-judgmentally, and be guided by participants' ability to express the confusion of being in the world, but struggling to belong. Young offenders' poetic practice, and its elements of poetic play, creative self-exploration, and, immersive expanded seeing[261], are here further discussed in relation to the vulnerable aesthetic space. The programme facilitated the vulnerable aesthetic space as an immersive and generative space. Considering the spatial logic of aesthetic space from its conception by Boal through the spatial theorisation by scholars like Foucault, Lefebvre, Deleuze and Guattari, offers a window into the possibilities of aesthetic space within the spoken word poetry practices (Boal, 2013; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Popen, 2006). I argue the programme's artographic practice can render visible and harness poetic practice's shared qualities with the three properties of Boal's aesthetic space:

> 1) plasticity, which allows the unfettered exercise of memory and imagination, the free play of past and future; 2) 'dichtotomising' character of the 'platform' which enables self-

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[258] See sub-sections 6.3.3 and 7.3.3
[259] See sub-section 6.3.1
[260] See sub-section 7.3.1
[261] Which was introduced across sub-sections 8.1.2 and 8.2.2

observation [the actor on stage immersed in role-play]; 3) telemicroscopic property which magnifies everything and makes everything present, allowing us to see things which, without it, in smaller or more distance form, would escape our gaze (Boal, 2013, p. 28).

Aesthetic space's properties of plasticity and dichotomising were thus far elaborated under the discussion of literary performativity, the poetic play characterised by perspective-taking and possibility thinking[262]. In communal performance, aspects of the third property emerged as immersion and timelessness, both for Luani and Jess. Performances saw young offenders extend the creative risks of creating poetry, transforming their poems into rituals of vulnerability when shared with the community. Rituals of vulnerability involved embodiment of "unspoken feelings", which were precarious in the uncertainty both how performer and audience interacted with them (Dymoke, 2017). It was not clear if vulnerability rituals rendered clarity to shared lived experiences, but they created a waiting space in performance to grapple with the confusion of self. The vulnerability rituals of poetic performance, bear resemblance to Keat's literary concept of "negative capability", which has been harnessed in pedagogies of the imagination, as a catalyst to spiritual self-actualisation (English, 2008). Negative capability as a driver to pedagogic thought has also been found in school practices because it fosters:

> [The] ability to tolerate and encounter difference and uncertainty and suffering without self-destructing. This does not demand an infinite capacity for self-effacement, but the ability to encounter threat without being destroyed and destroying each other. Negative capability is, in a sense, a form of survival (Rodness & Britzman, 2016).

Understood in this way, performance as survival, and protective force against the threat of unacknowledged trauma, offered a continuity across young offenders' confused sense of self, and, deep-seated precarious agencies and communions narrated from childhood through to adolescence. Performance's capacity to instigate staying with the immutability of young offenders' narrated self, created a foothold for them to stand still with the criminal self-empowerment[263], and dis-connections[264] of violent pasts. While young offenders'

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[262] See sub-section 8.1.2
[263] See sub-section 8.1.1
[264] See sub-section see 8.2.1

performances unfolded the tenacity of immutability of self, they also generated new insights[265]. Crucially, the self-knowledge arising through the aesthetic space, is for Boal, therapeutic, which links to the potential of vulnerable aesthetic space to restore young offenders' sense of self.

The ability of the programme's artographic practice to generate insights, was evidenced in young offenders' poems. Perhaps the role of a communal performance, makes the movement to insight more readily felt through the audience validation. Whitley argues that performance of poetry provides far-reaching insights arising through the practice of zero-degree-of-here-and-nowness shortly referred to here as here-and-now (Collins, 1991; Whitley, 2014). Here-and-now requires attention to inhabit six language-mediated cognitive modes described at length by Collins (Collins, 1991, p. 79). In this state, attention shifts across the cognitive modes, and the entanglement of attention delays cognition. Delayed cognition takes place "until it seems that perpetual fear is a propellant into the innocent, fearless, and vulnerable world of the senses", as Ruefle interpreted the processes of negative capability (Ruefle, 2012).

The ability to dance around cognitive modes in order to suspend the self in the sensorial can be linked to the process of generating knowledge by way of unknowing:

> Arts-based pedagogies aim to facilitate intensified looking through the layering of knowledge with *unknowing* […] crucial to these pedagogies are the notions of unknowing and beginner's mind, letting go of ready-made knowledge to allow discoveries and fresh insights. The combination of close attention and prolonged engagement enables the unfolding of perception of what we observe, as well as of the self, with our values, lenses, and emotional and intellectual responses. […] ABR experiences serve as compasses, orienting us toward that which we encounter and simultaneously understanding of who we are and what we aspire to be (Bresler, 2017, pp. 649–651).

If reading a literary text is the opportunity of replaying the fate of others, performing a spoken word poem is the replaying, and re-structuring of one's own fate. A fate examined and designed by the performer in the process of writing, and reaffirmed together with the

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[265] See sub-sections 6.3.3 and 7.3.3

audience. Perhaps in that affirmation the performer is a step closer to beholding the possibilities of one's "fate". When Weinstein warns against equating poetry slam performers with their re-imagined self in performance (Weinstein & West, 2012), she directly addresses what I describe as a gap created by a confused sense of self seeking clarity. Arguably, increased clarity through poetic performance is what was lacking to challenge the immutability script of young offenders. In fact, given the nature of immutability being confused with their ontological sense of self, the task of working with young offenders' narrative identity is an arduous one, but as yet evidenced with young people. For example, Kim's study of poetry slam's personal outcomes, found that it tapped into young people's radical subjectivity (Kim, 2013), the origins of their sense of self.

A vulnerable aesthetic space facilitates the aliveness of a communal performance. Rosenblatt conceived of the meeting between reader and text as a transactional process, a living event. Departing from the idea of poem as a living event, new materialist conception of agencies as arising in intra-action can possibly recast how we think of the literary experience in performance. According to Barad:

> intra-action" signifies the mutual constitution of entangled agencies. That is, in contrast to the usual "interaction," which assumes that there are separate individual agencies that precede their interaction, the notion of intra-action recognizes that distinct agencies do not precede their interaction, but rather emerge through their intra-action (Barad, 2007, p. 33).

Relevant to the vulnerable aesthetic space in performance, intra-action illuminates the nature of agencies flowing through and impacting performer and audiences with poetic intensities. A poem as intensity is thus a life force, effected in and through the here-and-now of a vulnerable aesthetic. The poem as life force impacts the community even if not explicitly revealed as such. The notion of life force connects to the concept of ontological self, found across literatures with overlapping qualities (Morris & Maclaren, 2015). Essential to ontological self is that it is generative and inexhaustible, felt through and beyond the personal lived experiences that influence the pragmatic identity (DeLay, 2016).

Rankine described the existence of an actual self between the bridge across the artist's marketed performance, and, emotions being performed. For the performer, the actual self is as yet unknown, and performance encourages staying with this uncertainty. The path to a subjective unknown is being cleared through vulnerability and redemptive rituals of exploring poetic performance. Between the confused self and the performed self, lies the potential to reveal an ontological self. Moving towards restoring a sense of self is not sufficient to render visible the ontological self, but it has the capacity to clear the way to it as it generates expanded seeing. It is at the interplay of unconscious and conscious knowledge where arts pedagogies can reinforce a revitalised insight into one's sense of self.
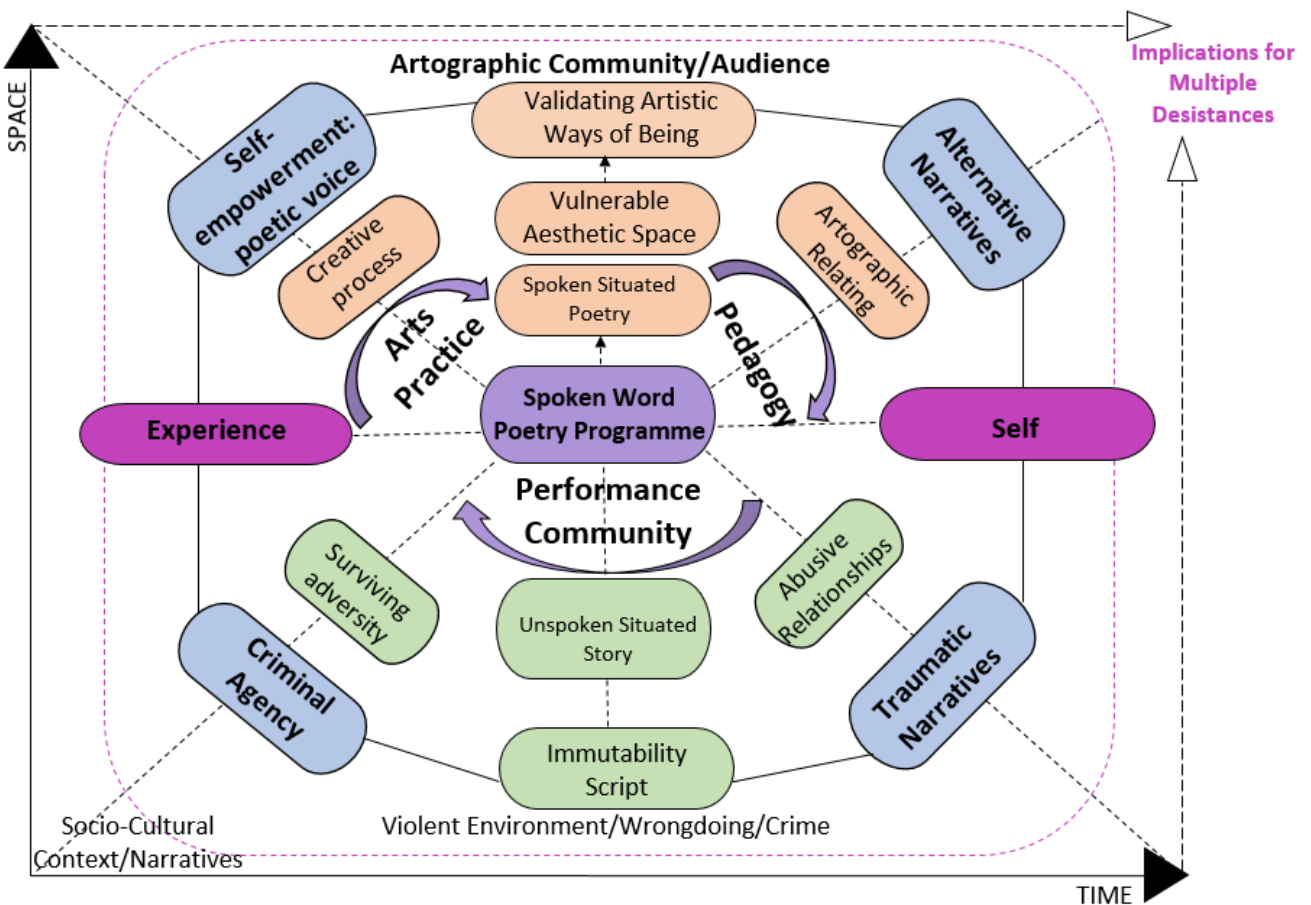


**Figure 8.4 Connecting the Programme's Multiple Sites as an Artographic Process Model for Young Offenders' Artistic Way of Being**

**8.4 Summary of the Artographic Model of the Programme: Young Offenders' Artistic Ways of Being**

Artographic movement between artistic[266], pedagogic[267], and, communal performance sites[268] of the programme illuminates its artistic contributions to developing alternative ways of being for young offenders which is of critical importance for secondary and tertiary desistance. As shown thus far, the centrality of distinct artistic creativities in practice drives the programmes' pedagogic manifestations and recasts communal performance as potential restorative site. Conceiving the programme as an artographic community of practice enabled the present study to demonstrate how young offenders used the programme to expand their agency through multiple forms of self-empowerment with regards to developing poetic voice of resistance and re-imagining traumatic narratives of their pasts. Crucially, young offenders' self-empowerment was further enhanced through the communal validation of artistic ways of being which are inseparable from young offenders' processes of articulating adverse experiences as well as ingrained criminal sense of self. The programme's artistic contributions thus reveal the complexity emerging in young offenders' life stories with the possibility for practicing vulnerability.

*Artographic contributions of the programme*

The unique movement between arts practice and pedagogy as part of an artographic programme architects a vulnerable aesthetic space[269]. The space exerts the qualities of imaginative play and generation of subjective truth concerning one's lived experiences[270]. It does so harnessing and embodying distinct poetic creativities in practice which when nurtured in participants' own artistic practice, can create bridges across participants' life stories and their fears of what has never been voiced before (Lorde, 2007). In this sense, the present study argued that the spoken word poetry programmes are artographic creativities in practice which lay the foundation towards artistic ways of being as critical to

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[266] See section 8.1
[267] See section 8.2

[269] See sub-section 8.3.3
[270] See sub-section 8.1.2

understanding the reach of the arts in the context of narrative criminology. Particularly, the vulnerable aesthetic space has the capacity to open up a truth different to the legitimate knowledges of the dominant space, with a live audience. Such a truth, while precarious in its emergent nature from staying with uncertainty, is nevertheless sufficient to propel a process of self-insight arising through young offenders' counter-narratives. The potential for expanded seeing through the aesthetic space is thus one of the faucets that can reveal the "ontological sense of self"[271]. Such endeavour would require a prodigious engagement with arts practices and pedagogies, and commitment to artographic cross-disciplinary collaborations.

The programme's artographic contributions were contextualised within arts practices, education, and creativities literatures. Existing work has showed that diverse creativities in the arts can transform spaces and communities (Bruin, Burnard, & Davis, 2018); and, that artistic practice and humanising creativity is linked to agency and identity development (Chappell, Craft, Rolfe, & Jobbins, 2012; Chappell et al., 2012). Pupils and teachers working with artists stretch their creative and emotional capacity with enriched experiences in a reframed space and sense of time (Burnard, 2011; Burnard & Swann, 2010; Denmead & Hickman, 2012). Even more, arts-based pedagogies afford expanded seeing through the interplay of conscious and unconscious knowledges[272] (Bresler, 2017).

The truth afforded through arts practices and arts-based methodologies is not only rooted in practice as research, but it also creates research epistemologies that recognise truth as "multiple, partial, context-dependent, and contingent" (Kara, 2015, p. 6). Artographic programmes have the potential to recast performance spaces as humanising and restorative. But, as real-world practices, programmes have also acted as places of violence, perpetuating cultural appropriation; commodification of pain, and, fetishizing blackness[273]. Like schools, spoken word programmes have the responsibility to make and maintain the spaces of the programme safe from psychological, structural and cultural violence (Johnson, 2017). The

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[271] See sub-section 8.3.3
[272] See sub-section 8.3.3
[273] See sub-section 8.1.1

critical question for artographic programmes as creativities and communities of practice is how they can live up to the task of ethics, and the imperatives of respecting personhood.

### Young Offenders' Artistic Ways of Being and Narrative Self-Development

Young offenders' multiple narratives emerged from an immutability script. Immutability script was sustained by a confused sense of self, which precluded the possibility for revealing young offenders' ontological basis of identity. Violent childhoods were narrated as the adolescent feeling of inability to enact change over one's criminality. While there were instances of cognitive acknowledgement that crime is wrong, their life stories suggested an emotional disconnect between young offenders' narratives, and their internality.

Exploring arts practices open-endedly, the present study followed the line of literatures that sought to avoid pathological diagnostic labels for young offenders' lack of articulated shame or self-blame. Instead it looked at broader possibilities for how their agencies developed through poetic voice[274]. Young offenders' narrative accounts of their lives do not provide an integral understanding as to why there's a lack of articulated remorse, empathy or self-condemnation among young offenders. Shifting the focus from lack of empathy to describe young offenders' narratives, the lack of vulnerability emerged as an important aspect in understanding young offenders' immutability script.

Moreover, creating spaces for counter-narratives that tolerate the painful realities of lovelessness in abusive relationships can begin to encourage realistic engagement with cumulative change as opposed to conversion to crime-free life (redemption script)[275]. Arguably, this would prove beneficial for young offenders' practices of storying their lives, given that reductive redemption was not sustaining recovery as it was for adult ex-offenders in Maruna's seminal study in Liverpool (Maruna, 2001). In this theoretical context, it can be argued that young offenders' immutability script created narratives of redemptive impossibility[276]. This means, in the context of art in prison practice and research, there is a

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[274] See sub-section 8.1.1
[275] See sub-section 8.2.1
[276] See sub-section 8.3.1

need to explore desistance theories by departing from the arts' practitioners' creative contributions; there is a need to create in-between spaces to open up young offenders' self-narratives. Much valuable work can be done through creating opportunities for young offenders to practice vulnerability, and possibly even imagine a movement from immutability to a vulnerability script organically through the creative process. Such movement is conceivable and can begin to unravel the unspoken narrative threads of young people's lives, and the nested painful stories within, as demonstrated in the present study's artographic process model for artistic ways of being[277].

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[277] See figure 8.3

The present chapter builds on the discussion of the programme's role in young offenders' artistic way of being as a site for arts practice, pedagogy, and performance community. The programme powerful contributions were conceptualised with the artographic model which guided the presentation of three key conclusions. Conclusions are interwoven with the extant literatures, highlighting the overlaps; envisioning future directions and imperatives for programmes, in conversation with various stakeholders. Revisiting the initial research conundrum offers renewed perspectives on the key challenges of artographic research, and, the study's contributions.

## 9.1 Conclusions: On Programmes, Arts Practices and Pedagogies

Revisiting the programme's set of findings, three conclusions were drawn in relation to the three research questions of the present study[278]. The three conclusions address the three key areas of: the programme elicited artistic responses and experiences, the meaning of these in young offenders' lives, and the overall contribution of the programme in young offenders' lives in the prison context.

### 9.1.1 The Programme Enabled Possibilities for Young Offenders' Creative Agency

> *'What are the new spoken word poetry programme's elicited artistic responses and experiences in young offenders' lives in a Macedonian prison?'*

The first conclusion of the present study is that programmes that configure spoken word poetry practices of artographic communities, can be powerful in creating new creative possibilities for being for young offenders. This conclusion follows from the generative account of the findings that spoken word poetry programmes can inherently embody a new movement between arts practice and pedagogy which supports young offenders' poetic

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[278] Research questions are given below each of the corresponding conclusion sub-heading. For full argument matrix see Appendix NN.

voice as a form of agency and empowerment in performance[279]. This was rendered visible through an artographic conceptualisation of the programme's sites of arts practice and pedagogy. To my knowledge the artographic process model of spoken word poetry is an original contribution to practice and theorisation of spoken word poetry programmes in prison. The model offers ways forward for studying further and illuminating the multiple creativities of spoken word poetry across artistic cultures, different contexts and intersectional populations. This matters because spoken word poetry, its artistry and pedagogy, form a rich, life-sustaining and revitalising set of poetic practices that span a range of geographic regions and settings. These poetries have great potential for bolstering creative agencies of people who have experiences adversities and oppression, but remain significantly under-represented in terms of their nature, scope and possible reach. There's a need to research and theorise the range of creativities in the contemporary spoken word poetry practices especially as their under-representations in research and prison settings is interlinked with the ongoing debates about the place of spoken word in the academy, as well as debated within artistic communities and practitioners.

*9.1.2 The Programme Unfolded Young Offenders' Alternative Ways of Being alongside a Perceived Criminal Immutability*

> *'What meanings arise from young offenders' elicited artistic responses in their lives during the new spoken word poetry programme in a Macedonian prison?'*

The second conclusion is that young offenders' alternative way of being through the programme also unfolded young offenders' perceived criminal immutability. This conclusion follows from the finding that young offenders' artistic being arose in relations with artists as alternative to their history of trauma and social exclusion. Particularly, the immutability scripts unfolded through non-judgmental listening and humanising connections through arts and pedagogy practices[280]. Young offenders' immutability script stands in direct opposition to the desisting offenders' redemption script of ex-offenders[281]. If the redemption

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[279] See Chapter 6, 7, and, 8.1.2, 8.2.2, 8.3.2, 8.4.
[280] See 6.2.2, 6.2.3, 7.2.2, 7.2.3.
[281] See Chapter 3, 3.2.3.

script enabled desisting narrators to distort reality in order to maintain crime free lives, the immutability script is rooted in a confusion of the self, implicated in criminal lifestyle reinforced by young offenders' internalisation of social stigma.

Young offenders did away responsibility for their crimes because they believed their criminality was their original identity, their ontological self[282]. The immutability script differs from the condemnation script of adult persisting offenders who Maruna found maintain criminal lives due to unrealistic core beliefs of their 'true self' as categorically dependent on lack of social choices. Unlike Maruna's notion of 'core self', the present study found that the belief in their ingrained criminality was for young offenders more than a core, it was confused for their 'true self'. If desisting narrators were overly positive in qualifying their 'true self' as essentially 'good' to integrate their criminal pasts, young offenders were stuck with the sense that their inner self was irredeemably flawed. Young offenders' attachment to crime bears resemblance to persisting offenders' feelings of "being doomed to deviance" as "victims of society". Yet, young offenders identified with myth of "the incorrigible offender"[283].

An artographic frame to the arts in prison is not at the expense of the treatment models of offender rehabilitation, but it puts forward a proposal for criminology to welcome artists in prisons not as providers of rehabilitative solutions to offender risk needs, but as supporters of creative empowerment and creative encounters with offenders (Cremin, 2013; Gelsthorpe and Cox, 2012). Arguably, these personally agentic and pedagogic processes of relating may play a role in young offenders' ability to begin to imagine the prospect of 'redeemability' of their criminal sense of self in the eyes of the public and society as well as the people harmed by their crimes. This matters, because 'redeeamibility' continues to be a contentious issue in offender rehabilitation due to its reductive nature in real-life, and most importantly because

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[282] See 6.2.2, 7.2.2, 8.3.1.

[283] This was exemplified with Luani's self-characterisation as a "psychopath", and Jess' description of himself as the odd one out in his family with the exception of his uncle who was 'the only other criminal outcast'.

it has been identified as the central aspect that cuts across both desistance and restorative approaches to rehabilitation (Maruna, 2016).

This means, the programme's pedagogic site as well as community validation of young offenders' performed resisting voices as well as inability to conceive a crime-free life, as a relational and communal space may inform processes of the subjective agency of secondary desistance, and the social integration of tertiary desistance. McNeill called for criminological treatment of desistances as concatenated and interdependent. The artographic model's proposal of a fluid movement across young offenders' creative agency, artistic being, and staying with perceived criminal immutability non-judgmentally. This may inform the move to an integrated approach to desistances, and an interest in the credibility of the arts in prison under the umbrella of arts as and creativity practices (Davey et al, 2012).

*9.1.3 Artistic Being through the Programme May Inform Young Offenders' Rehabilitation*

> *What are the contributions of the arts practice of a new spoken word poetry programme in young offenders' lives in a Macedonian prison?*

The third conclusion follows from the finding that the young offender artistic way of being through the artographic sites of the programme supported personal agency through poetic voice validated by the artist and prison community. Agency manifested as self-empowerment that young offenders constituted through their poetic creativities supported by connections with artists. Following from this and the previous two conclusions, and I can conclude that the programme's overall contribution to young offenders' lives is that it offers a rare site for creative being that is alternative to abuse, social exclusion and criminal agency. The programme as such is also a site where young offenders creative being can unfold their sense of and orientation to criminality without the pressure to dichotomise complex life experiences in the two categories of criminal and crime-free. Young offenders' internalised sense of criminality was complexly shaped through their backgrounds, upbringing and social reception of crime. Social stigma appears to be woven into the fabric of institutions like the justice system, and a cycle of social exclusion which preceded imprisonment exacerbates young offenders' self-perception and hope for the future. While creative being through the

programme may not directly support rehabilitation criminological streams of desistances can be informed by it and prisons may become more open to see the full scope of where the arts can make a difference in offenders' lives.

Desistance theories explain how people rebuild their lives, positing three forms of desistance: 1) primary: stopping re-offending, 2) secondary: deep identity shift 3) tertiary: identity validation beyond the personal (moral, social, judicial, restorative) (Cheliotis, 2014). The programmes artographic sites resonate with the conceptions of both secondary and tertiary desistance. The conception of these forms of desistance is driven by an attempt to address the limitations of traditional rehabilitation approaches with offenders. As such, the programme offers new lines of thinking about the arts in prison as envisioning creative being to be inherently conducive to forms of distances that support rehabilitation on a personal and social level[284]:

> Although synonyms at first sight, the two terms [rehabilitation and recovery] differ significantly in their linguistic implications. A person can be rehabilitated by a program or by a treatment professional, yet recovery is an individual, agentic, and purposeful process (Maruna, p. 26, 2001).

Maruna purports that "ironically, the study of desistance might best be construed as the study of continuity rather than change—continuity of non-deviant behaviours. Continuity research focuses on the personality variables, interactions, and environmental consistencies that allow for long-term persistence in various behaviours, and not for "causes" (Maruna, p. 27, 2001). For supporting secondary desistance, the most influential aspect of the programme was the centrality of its arts practice in spurring young offenders' agencies through poetic creativity they found life-affirming and empowering[285]. Most visible in terms of supporting tertiary desistance, was the humanising role of relations with artists; and performance communities' validation of lived experiences through reinforcing redemptive rituals and exploration of young offenders' criminality non-judgmentally[286].

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[284]Maruna reviews the definitions of desistance conceived either as an event of terminating crime or maintaining a crime-free life. Desistance termination is commonly explained as a rational choice, while maintenance as either part of maturation or having healthy relationships. See chapter 2.

[285] See 6.3.1, 7.3.1.

[286] See 6.3.2, 6.3.3, 7.3.2, 7.3.3.

It is exactly in this area that the presence study shows how through the artistic process and belonging to a community young offenders were able to develop alternative ways of being through the artistic sites of the programme. From this finding, I can conclude that the programme can inform a movement between secondary and tertiary desistance, and by extension may be valuable to welcome the arts in prison as creative being which has something inherently conducive to wider goals of rehabilitation. I have identified in the literatures that a link between creativity and goodness has been made both within the arts (Kara, 2015) and within criminology's good lives model approach based on offender strengths as opposed to risk needs (Ward, Yates, Willis, 2012) I suggest, that rather than try to make the arts in prison relevant to the outcome-oriented model, perhaps the arts may be better suited to be seen not even directly under the criminological streams of desistance per se, but rather through the lens of creative being as potentially linked to leading an ethical and good life.

## 9.2 Implications: Putting to Work New Possibilities

Following the conclusions, I here turn to elaborating the significance of the findings and their conclusion of the present study through three key implications, and artographic challenges.

### 9.2.1 Putting Arts Practices Centre Stage

What putting arts practice centre stage means in the context of spoken word poetry programmes needs to be explored further so that spoken artists, educators, practitioners and researchers can enable artographic sites for artistic being. The significance of arts practice as central in programmes was discussed in relation to poetic creativities in practice[287]. There is a need to consider and reframe what spoken artists bring into programme spaces through their artistic practices.

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[287] See 8.1.2, 8.3.2.
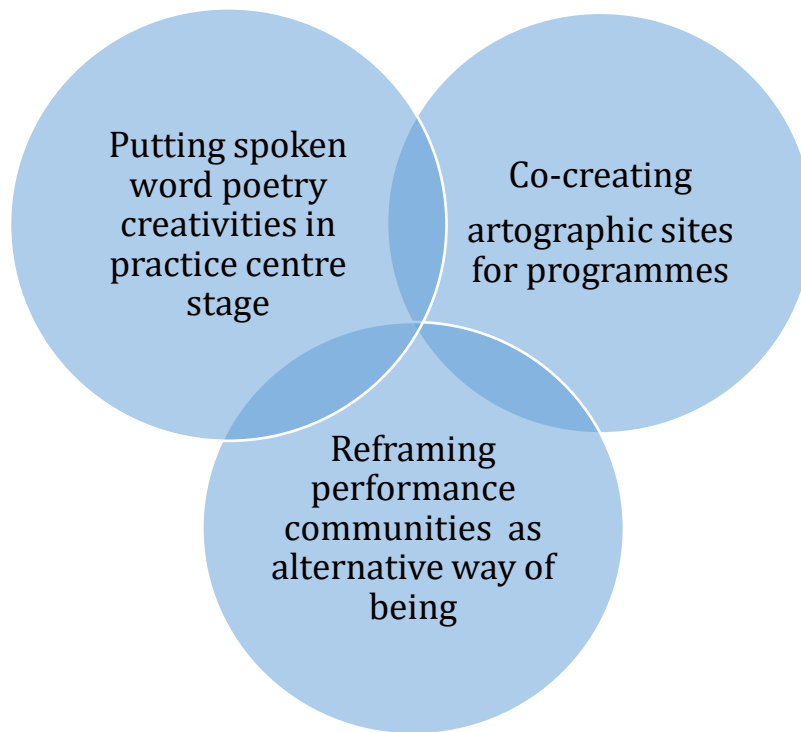
**Figure 9.1 Implications from the Study**

Importantly, artists and arts educators should think how programmes can fully appreciate participants' own capacity to create and develop distinctive poetic voices, encouraging them to take artistic risks. Programmes should embrace young people's attempts at vulnerability and artistry even as they "rhyme 'love' with 'dove'", pointed out as the weakness of poetry slam (Miller, 2007). Even as young performers sometimes sentimentalise pain, making space to listen for creativity and vulnerability is necessary honour young peoples' emotions. Artographers should be concerned with creating an evidence-base of how and where spoken arts performances are still very much alive and thriving even as researchers and practitioners have detected and proclaimed the 'death of performance poetry'[288]. Contemporary poetry trends have shown that artists do wish to address the concern with slam's 'competitive spirit, to maintain their dignity and artistic integrity at the face of

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[288] See Chapter 2, Graebner's perspective on contemporary performed poetries.

criticism of 'artlessness'[289]. For this, spoken poetry institutions, leaders and artists should find responsible and inclusive ways to reclaim and render visible the richness and legacy of spoken arts poetries.

*9.2.2 Co-Creating Artographic Sites in Spoken Word Poetry Practices*

A second key implication of the present study is the imperative to shift the focus from works in arts practices in prison towards how building artographic communities and practices works. This can mean that somewhere between the proclaimed artistry of craft and complexity, which predominately the page poetry critics of spoken word poetry wish to preserve, and, the celebration of the "noble amateur" and 'poetry ignorance", lies an 'actual artistry and vulnerability" that remains largely unseen, and unengaged in the ongoing poetry debates. The poet Rebecca Watt's article in the PN Review (Watts, 2018) where she slams down poets at the heart of the UK spoken word poetry scene, Kate Tempest and Hollie McNish, urges that "honesty" and "accessibility" as criteria for the value of poetry have damaging shortcomings such as commodifying poetry. She urges that "If we are to foster the kind of intelligent critical culture required to combat the effects of populism in politics, we must stop celebrating amateurism and ignorance in our poetry". However, if artographers are to be a part of enabling spaces for critical engagement with the issues of spoken word poetry practices, then "we need to model the vulnerability we wish to see" (Brown, 2012). It is the task of poetry and research communities and gatekeepers across poetry and creative industry to devise ethical and creative ways to engage and examine what 'actual artistry and vulnerability' looks like, how it is contextualised and manifested, as opposed to perpetuate divisive artistic politics, and devalue the scope of artistic creativities[290].

*9.2.3 Reframing Performance as a Site for Alternative Way of being*

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[289] See 8.1.2, 8.3.2.
[290] See 8.3.2.

Thirdly, there is a need to reframe performance sites as revitalising and alternative ways of creative being in seeing how the programme offered performance spaces for communal validation of lives as inseparable from young offenders' poetry. This echoes Claudia Rankine's astute clarification that populist art and its critics fail to detect the crux of the matter that just because artistry and vulnerability fail to shine through it doesn't mean that the willingness and possibility to engage the same is absent[291]. Similarly, it is a practice and research, as well as policy imperative, to elicit and enable constructive avenues to engage the blind spots of populist spoken word as well as spoken word. Artography should be taking part of conversations that aim to open up the current poetry debates[292], in order to stay connected to the complexities of a world-making artistic creativity that has the capacity to honour human dignity and restore personhood.

*9.2.4 Reflecting on the Challenges for Artographers*

Following on from the findings, conclusion, and implication, several challenges arises for artographers: for one, as the drivers of artographic community if spoken arts practices are multifaceted and precariously unfolding practices, it's easy to fall trap into favouring ones at the expense of others. If the landscape of poetries has been thus far elucidated as a continuum moving from 'page' to 'stage' poetry, then practitioners and particularly researchers and research institutions have to be mindful of narrowing down the scope of spoken arts practices and move past artistic creativity myths[293]. This means, acknowledging young offenders' poetries as distinct poetic creativities in their own right. Thus, it is a research imperative to qualify and understand the nature of spoken arts creativities in practice and particularly more practice-driven artographic studies across settings with intersectional populations.

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[291] See 8.3.3.

[292] A deluge of undocumented spoken word poetry versus stage poetry social media commentary followed Watt's article in the PN review. This poses questions about documenting and exploring artists' views and what fuels the divide in poetic cultures.

[293] See 8.3.2 and the discussion section of creativities frame (Burnard, 2012).

The second challenge is that the crisis of spoken arts practices mirrored in the ongoing debates can bleed into research and pedagogic silos. Artographers have a complex task of exploring, opening up and reframing the poetry debates largely caught up in the page/stage poetry binary. The debates surrounding spoken word poetry practises pose an opportunity for practitioners, researchers, and arts and creative gatekeepers to challenge narrowing definitions of artistry and who counts as a 'true artists' and who is the 'noble amateur'; to reflexively consider a just, cross-disciplinary and collaborative manner of cultivating and researching poetic creativities that focuses on understanding multiplicity. Arts-based research has offered avenues for challenging the notion of who gets to call themselves an 'artist', and Johnson's collaborative poetics has already created precedent for spoken word practices and research to focus on some of the above challenges, like staying with and troubling prejudices[294] (Johnson, et al. 2018). Artographic lens of spoken word offers opportunities for artists to recognise their own practice-based pedagogies and research; it also creates the possibility for researchers to extend their research imaginary in working alongside artists and discovering their own artistic identities.

## 9.3 Recommendations: Harnessing Artographic Communities of Practice

Following on from the implications, three recommendations (see Figure 10.2) arise for 1) artists and arts educators/practitioners; 2) young people 3) researchers 4) prison practitioners; 5) policy makers and 6) arts gatekeepers such as creative industry leaders among national and international, as well as local arts organisations/organisers.

*9.3.1 Harnessing Distinct Artistic Creativities in Practice*

Thinking of putting arts practice centre stage, an immediate action that artists, arts educators and practitioners can take is to create self-awareness of their own artistic

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[294] Collaborative co-researching and artistically inquiring into our own experience of prejudice and witnessing others' in a research collective to challenge some of our held assumptions can be a starting point for engaging current poetry cultures across practice, research, and practice as research see Chapter 4, and, 8.1.2.

practices. One way to do this is a resolve to listen and turn the focus back to the self: to engage in arts-based self-inquiry, and examine the links between their artistic creativities and pedagogies. In addition, the willingness to create collaborative practices is a recommendation not only for artists, and educators, but also for all stakeholders involved in arts activities for improving lives, Young people should seek platforms where they can use their voices and connect to practitioners who are willing to listen.

Putting arts practice centre stage

Harnessing distinct spoken artistic creativities for life-affirming self-empowerment

Creating artographic agendas for programmes

Cultivating artographic pedagogies for humanising connections

Architecting communal performance sites for practicing vulnerability

Reframing performance communities as alternative way of being

**Figure 9.2 Recommendations Aligned with Implications**

Moreover, close to collaboration, to put arts practice centre stage involves rooting spoken word poetry practices in its aesthetically resonant preceding arts movements, cultures and forms like performance poetries of the 70s and 80s[295]. Bolstering and making space for

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[295] Evoking the spoken word as it manifested in the Beat poetry, the Black arts movement, the Harlem Renaissance, hip hop culture and music through to African griots (see discussion of literariness 8.1.2).

contemporary expressions of spoken art creativities that blend spoken art forms and music-based poetries with other art forms border-crossing cultural and personal belief as well as spirituality.

Policy makers should focus on the lessons and legitimacy of practice as research, and align their influence on creative industry leaders and researchers to empower artists and arts practitioners as researchers. In spite of the homogenising trends in poetry slams, arguably not one of the competing poets at the world poetry slam championship failed to convey a unique spoken arts voice hailing from 24 different countries across five continents[296]. Arts gatekeepers, creative industry leaders, and arts organisers should be putting centre stage artistic voices that may already have put a stamp on the culture but also ones that are still on the fringes of mainstream spoken word or particularly poetry slams. It is imperative, to market the work of spoken word poet and spoken word arts accurately: in dialogue with poets, and in alignment with the distinctive nature of their work[297]. Macedonian policy makers should align the agendas across the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Social Care – there should be greater communication across education, culture and justice system. Finally, Macedonian policy and prisons staff would should consider integrating the arts within prison not as a version of treatment or education, but as credible to stand in their own right alongside other resocialisation projects.

*9.3.2 A Pedagogic Site for Humanising Connections*

Critical for policy makers is to make space not only for 'what works' in arts practices, but also 'how they work'. Spoken artists by embodying the breadth and depth of their artistry

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[296] See Chapter 5, pilot lessons from the World Poetry Slam Championship, 2015.

[297] Rupi Kaur's poetry has been the bone of contention across creative industry and poetry circles because it is a bestselling book of poetry for the New York Times. Arguably, the division arises from an assumption that there is only one way to have "good poetry". Without relativizing, a more pertinent question would be asking: what are different types of poetries "good for"? This could make space to argue, for instance that Kaur's poetry expels at making space for young women to reflect on avenues for boosting their self-confidence, and honouring their self-worth; and at the same time, to admit that Kaur's poetry is not good at providing bridges for sustaining a complex narrative around the issues it tackles. But, to admit both, is to make space for different types of poetries and, recognising what they can do.

create a pedagogic practice of humanising connections across prisons as well as across care and educational settings. The imperative action for spoken artists and practitioners is to reflect on and inquire into their artistic practices and how they navigate and move between their practice and pedagogy. Indeed, artists engaging in me-searching and re-searching the 'how' of their artistic practice and education can render visible the artographic function of practice as pedagogy. Prison practitioners should turn the gaze to how artists complement prison work, and how partnering with artists can serve to lay the grounds for engaging treatment differently across prisons, secure settings, schools and communities. Macedonian artists should connects across the creative and artistic values of their work not at the expense of political activism, but with a joint cause for sharing creative goodness across settings.

*9.3.3 Performance Site for Restoring a Sense of Self*

Perhaps one of the most pressing actions for spoken word artists and prison practitioners, as well as artographers, is to create spaces for practising vulnerability in performance. An immediate step is to examine and reframe the criteria for assessing the value of spoken word poetry performances across programmes and creative scenes. Specifically, to reconceptualise criteria of 'authenticity' and 'truth-telling' in performance, to 'vulnerability' in performance. Spoken word poetry organisers, both individual and institutional leaders, have the power to create multiple forms of assessments within poetry slams as a competitive arts form. These practices, especially given their scale on national, and worldwide platforms, influence how young people and spoken word artists create and thin of their art. Some practical tools for artographers in spoken word practices is to ask questions concerning the creativity and vulnerability in spoken word performances[298]. Crucial to linking spoken word

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[298] How does a spoken word performance question the dominant narratives of a given topic? Does it engage possibility thinking and perspective taking as opposed to offering easy answers and taking sides? What lies between the poet and the performance, is there an engagement of a third element in-between? Does the performance embody a sense of emotional courage and risk taking, and how imaginatively does this come through? How does the performance affect the space and people in it, what does it mean to each individually and to the community; what are the shared and co-created meanings?

practice as restorative is to further examine diverse poetic creativities in practice, trace in-depth its contours as well as illuminate its possibilities, and multiplicities (Burnard, 2012).

## 9.4 Limitations: Staying Attuned to the Challenges and Imperatives of Artographic Research Practices

The limitations of the study comprise a critique of the rigour of artographic research in relation to established artographic principles. In addition, the methodological tools, inclusive of the ethical challenges are assessed against the criteria for arts-based research.

### 9.4.1 Quality and Rigour in Arts-Based Research

The present study performed artographic research methodology, research design and data collection, recognising artography as a self-sufficient and distinctive way of doing research from qualitative research. While the study drew heavily on existing qualitative methodological tools like the case study approach and portraiture analysis, it adapted and recreated these method following artographic principles. Given that the core of the methodology of the present study rests on developing an artographic community of practice, I first address its quality and rigour within the four key commitments of the practice (see Irwin, 2008). Then, I move to critique the present study's artographic rigour guided following up-to-date criteria for arts-based research practices (Leavy, 2018).

Firstly, the four commitments of artographic communities of practice include commitment to: "1) ways of being in the world 2) inquiry 3) negotiating personal engagement within a community of belonging 4) creating practices that trouble and address difference" (Irwin, p. 72, 2008). Being artographer in prison is particularly challenging due to the difficulty of drawing undrawable boundaries. To be an artographer involves to be with the other in a way that recognises both the separateness and the unity that comes with co-existing and co-creating through the programme's artistic spaces. Hence, I made concerted efforts to embody the key recognition of artographers that we are not independent of the work of other practitioners by collaborating with the prison staff, psychologists and therapists.

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**Table 9.1 Artographic research critique: criteria adapted from (Leavy, 2018)**

| *Methodology* |
| --- |
| <ul><li>The research goals of locating the interrelatedness of the programme with narrative identity development are aligned in the conceptual artographic of the model (see Chapter 9, 9.3).</li><li>The holistic and synergistic criteria of the research was challenging as the study sought to integrate poetic/narrative/collage inquiry with qualitative and therapeutic tools under the umbrella of artography. Offering a holistic feel for the findings and the participants' narratives was attempted with the assemblages of narrative identity, which have room for improving their completeness and artistry (see Interludes in chapters 6, and, 7).</li><li>Analysis, related to the holistic criteria, involved feedback from several sources in addition to my supervisor Prof. Pam Burnard, including the therapist Fiona Peacock, and the kind feedback of the visual artist and artographer Rebecca Heaton. There is room for flashing out and exploring further the nature of artographic portraiture to render visible its distinctiveness from portraiture (see 6.2).</li><li>Translation stands for the movement across art forms and mediums of expression to communicate research. The present study used visual poetry to translate themes, and then it used collage to clarify findings. These were layered and concatenated, and the tools used across were the approaches of artographic inquiry: iteration, tolerating ambiguity, reconfiguration of data, free writing, associative thinking in response to poems and paintings, and internal as well as video-recorded dialogue with the painting which was then translated with a drawing (see 7.3).</li><li>Transparency and explicitness was modelled in providing prose statements of the key insights that artographic inquiry offered. For instance, research poems were followed with explicit statements about how they progressed knowledge (see chapter 7).</li></ul> |
| *Usefulness, Significance, or Substantive Contribution/ Public scholarship/Audience Response/ Aesthetic or Artfulness and personal creativity* |
| <ul><li>Accessibility, participation, aesthetic, and audience feedback/making a difference: feedback was sought by fellow artists at an arts-and-crafts workshop organised by the Pembroke poetry society. The TEDx talk also provided a platform for feedback and discussions with audience members and practitioners across different fields. The visual research inquiry is signposted as process-art as it doesn't embody an aesthetic and craft as artistic output.</li></ul> |
| *Ethical practice and reflexivity* |
| <ul><li>*Sensitive portrayal in academic prose and public performances:* Luani and Jess' life stories were constantly examined for how well they reflect the complexity of their lives through embodied reflexive empathy. Participants' ownership of their poems was acknowledged, with consent for dissemination being obtained under agreed anonymous artistic names.</li><li>*Artistic licence:* the balance between artistry and research practice was challenging in two areas. One, public dissemination largely related to the artographic/poetic inquiry through the lens of artistic practice even though the researcher explicitly emphasized the research aspects. Second, the present study largely remained within the research practice with artistry being the driving force behind, rather than the central focus in terms of research outputs. Given that the focus was to put centre stage the artistry of participants, the imbalance of researcher artistry in research practice in a way a part of the conscious choice of the present study.</li></ul> |

A way of being an artographer was limited by my assumption of work ethic and beliefs of prison officers and psychologists based on the social stigma and myths mixed with the veracity of research reports. Hence, I sought to mitigate this by actively talking to prison and arts practitioners. I also undertook training both formal and informal with The Geese theatre and the Cambridge society "Sing inside" both of which do prison arts practices. I also took part of the "Learning Together" project from the Institute of Criminology at Cambridge which saw students learn alongside prison residents in HMP Grendon.

Secondly, in terms of inquiry, it was daunting to take on the task of translating my poetic practice into research due to the fact that my poetic identity and practice had been largely unconscious. Through me-search and seeking feedback from the artistic and research community I was able to make progress in generating self-knowledge of my poetic identity and begin to recognise when and how I have been already embodying poetic enquiry as pedagogy as research. Hence, a critical constraint is to have navigated fieldwork as an inquiry into my artographic identity which felt precariously unformed. At the same time the willingness to embrace the ambiguities and uncertainties of poetic practice all be it intuitively meant I had an entry point to commit to artographic inquiry and model the same for others as much as possible while taking on board the lessons that other artists offered. This was an opportunity thus to emerge at the end of the research process with a sense of an emergent artographic identity.

Thirdly, as a poet/performer/educator/researcher I felt the limitations in terms of the hurdles required to navigate and bridge the insider/outsider divide, not only with prison practitioners, and young offenders, but also with poets and rap artists. For example, some hip hop artists felt that acapella rap doesn't provide an entry into the crux of rap artistry which is tied to beats and music. Similarly, some of the participants expressed concerns that the researcher and educators would not have the courage and ability to confront the realities of crime and the nature of prison politics. Nonetheless, as discussed in Part 3 [299]as well as in

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[299] For instance, mitigating efforts included having ethnic representation of artists, and plurality of languages in guest performances as well as poetry in translation, which was also an attempt to 'trouble and address'

the critique of analysis, there were mitigating factors that enabled community building and border crossing differences of age, professional and life experience, language, and ethnic as well as cultural stereotypes. A key limitation here is the time-frame of the programme and sporadic visit of guest artists while offering brief connections, longer-term commitment can focus more in-depth on culturally responsible practices and focus on structural marginalisation of Romani culture and language.

Finally, I turn to a critique based on Patricia Leavy's seven categories for evaluating arts-based research, because the categories exhaustively transpose what is known about quality of arts-based research to date. For the purposes of the present study, I boiled down the seven categories to three key areas shown in Table 9.1.

*9.4.2 Critique of Research Design and Methods*

My focus was on building and inquiring into a new practice of spoken word poetry, and obtaining in-depth individual life stories in order to locate artistic responses relevant in young offenders' lives the two aspects were subsumed under the research design as an artographic study of the programme which showed both strengths and limitations.

In terms of the challenges of building a shared community of practice the strengths of the fieldwork process proved to be its collaborative, responsive and committed approach to inquiry. This was nurtured from the initial seminar with the prison staff and artists, to the negotiating shared expectations and building trust with young offenders. Nonetheless, limitations arose in terms of securing artist and educator collaborators. For example, negotiating time constraints and managing last minute cancellations meant being flexibly and emergently aligning alliances with programme's research agenda and values. Particular challenge to preserving ethics and research integrity was navigating power politics from access through to programme implementation. The fieldwork process brought into focus the blind spots of the corrections and criminal justice practice at large like structural inequalities

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assumptions of artographers. Similarly, educators addressed exertion of sexism during the main rehearsal while also allowing space for self-expression.

among prison residents, substandard living conditions like sporadic heating; and lack of resources like individual support for completion of formal education.

Concerning the challenge of selecting three ethically appropriate and culturally sensitive main data collections methods, I found they yielded rich and relevant data. The workshop observations as the vehicle for the research design enabled forging relationship as part of a community due to the movement between practice, pedagogy and research. I found the individual life story interview to be particularly engaging for participants who experienced it in a reciprocal manner as an individual workshop with the use of mixed arts tools and iPads. The same applied to the follow up interviews with arts evaluative tools. Participants' self-authored poems emerged organically within the workshop setting and co-created spaces of the programme which saw creation, writing and rehearsal become a natural part of the creative process. Limitations applied to the variation in responses with different arts-based tool, with some participants experimenting with all forms from drawing apps to painting, while others had a low rate of writing and drawing outputs.

Limitations arose in the challenges to maintain continuity across the programme for Jess as he was released from prison the week before the final performance event. In addition, follow-up interviews with the rest of the participants were carried out immediately after the performance event and two weeks after. This meant that Jess and MCB were not present at the final interview which saw the celebration of the successful completion and graduation from the programme. Participation at these final events are a critical part of the rituals of redemption and feed into developing narrative identity as much as they also illuminate research inquiry. Relevant to research advancement, is having the ability to carry out a longer-term follow up into participants' responses and ascribed meanings to the programme over time.

Finally, the ethico-onto-epistemological challenges of working in a prison setting meant that the choice of data collection methods as well as ways of implementing the same were restricted by prison policy, rules and setting. For example, video documentation was not possible which could've provided a different insight into performances. That said, it was

remarkable to be able to negotiate a rap concert inside the prison classroom, the shared online teaching tool with prison staff, and the use of iPads for drawing and creating oral poems. However, these forms of data collection posed security and privacy threats which were outside of the researchers' control. [300]This raises questions for future research in devising ways for mitigating systemic flaws when working in deviant settings with socio-political and institutional shortcomings.

*9.4.3 Critique of Analysis*

One analysis and interpretation challenge is that following the completion of the programme, even though it featured a follow-up, young offenders' portraiture was conducted by the researcher alone. The ability to have access and longer-term follow up of the present study would offer a different perspective to young offenders' narrative identity[301]. In addition, the lack of direct access to prison residents' psychological profiles[302] and criminal files, in spite of interviews with the prison psychologists, means that the portraits may have been contextualised differently, and with more detail concerning offending and socio-cultural background of participants.

It was unsatisfying to see how as a researcher I too was bringing in assumptions in the analysis which were complicit in the denial of young offenders' childhoods and humanity, which I hope to have mitigated and challenged as much as possible in the analysis of Luani

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[300] For example, while artists signed ethics consent forms for safeguarding data protection, culture and practice of safeguarding is not rooted in Macedonian practice. Moreover, even though the researcher selected guest artists and sound support, their access into the prison was screened by the prison authorities where security protocol was not stringent enough for a secure setting like prison.

[301] See 8.3.1, 8.3.2 For instance, the extent to which young offenders were able to reflect on the meaning of the programme in their lives over timer. Also, the extent to which the researcher's identified implicit narrative identity aspects have been consciously or unconsciously explored by the young offenders during and after the programme.

[302] Asking questions about the mental health needs of offenders, questioning institutional agendas can inform the ways in which the programme can maximise its contributions to narrative identity development. It would also provide a comprehensive view of the individualised narrative identities of offenders who have specific mental disorders, and undisclosed criminal history which interacts with their subjective life stories.

and Jess' life stories and poetry[303]. That said, it is the willingness to see past the distorted social narratives of young offenders is where I have shown[304] the tough and most rewarding work of artographers, and prison practitioners begins.

## 9.5 Contribution to Knowledge: Revealing the Creativity of Artistic Being through the Artographic Programme

The three contributions of the present study include a 1) artographic research design and portraiture analysis of artistic being 2) new theoretical lens for young offenders' way of being 3) an artographic conceptual model of spoken word poetry programmes. The contributions respond to identified gaps in the literature with significance across four key areas: methodological, theoretical, practical and heuristic concerning both spoken word poetry programmes and life experience as well as their interrelatedness.

### 9.5.1 Artographic Research Design and Portraiture Analysis

The present study's artographic portraiture found a set of nuances and possibilities in the interpretation of the two offenders' artistic experiences[305]. In terms of young offenders' identities, the present study identified young offenders' sense of self was equated to a stereotype of the incorrigible criminal embroiled in the social stigma. It thus revealed that a perceived immutability script is central to young offenders' being in the world.

The present study has made a significant methodological contribution to knowledge through its artographic research design and methods, as well as a cross-disciplinary artographic

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[303] Someone with different artistic beliefs, life experiences and national and cultural identity would have had a different focus and interpretation of their narrative identities. See 6.2, and 7.2.

[304] See 6.2. 7.3. Working with the immutability story of young offenders and inquiring into the vicissitudes of unarticulated empathy and remorse, as opposed to settling with the authority of existing social and research conceptions, can render visible the complexities of the lives of young people behind bars.

[305] For example, relevant to the immutability script, is the theme of redemption. The present study found that young offenders' life stories were wrought with unrealistic redemption of their disempowerment and complex trauma which gave rise to contamination of their agencies and communions. As redemption was narrated in conflict with young offenders' life realities, the present study did not identify the presence of redemption as warranted. See Chapter 5.

approach to analysis arts in prison. It developed a research design that embodied the artographic movement across spoken word poetry practice, education, and research. To my knowledge, this is a scarce example of putting theory to practice to conceive and deliver a spoken word poetry programme largely practice-driven. Moreover, it is a scarce example of a spoken word poetry programme which has deviated from the overarching and generalised engagement with pedagogical theory in spoken word poetry programmes dominated by Freire's critical pedagogy. In so doing the research design, which overlapped with the practice of the programme, while not unique in attempting to develop and research the nature of spoken word poetry pedagogies in practice, it illuminated the lack of theoretical and research coverage of existing spoken word practitioner inherent pedagogies.

Moreover, the study's artographic research design with two portraiture case studies enables addressing the gap in the field which demanded focus on the process of the arts in prison as well as the individualised and in-depth nature of studying artistic experience. The organic use of mixed and multi-purpose arts-based data collection methods enabled a sensitive, engaging and new approach to collecting life story data in addition to the established life story data collection protocol to study narrative identity. Thirdly, the artographic adaption of the analysis method of portraiture extended the ways in which we can interpret and understand artistic programme responses in addition to the existing identity-oriented studies of spoken word and young people, as well as structural identity approaches in social psychology[306]. With this, and the practical contribution of future directions for concerned stakeholders, the present study has laid the grounds to further examine and explore the possibilities of spoken word poetry practices in prison potentially with various populations and communities.

*9.5.2 New Theoretical Understanding of Young Offenders' Way of Being through Poetry*

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[306] Relevant to the value of the present study's analysis approach to delve deep into the complexity of artistic experience opened up with artographic reflexivity and collaboration with a psychotherapeutic counsellor which enabled me enact relational embodied approaches to analysis and engage with participants lives through reflexive embodied empathy. The integration of cross-disciplinary and mixed arts-based approaches and strategies in the analysis of young offender's life story was consolidated under the overarching method of artographic portraiture

It is necessary to address, the presence of a fundamental confusion of the self that co-exists with young offenders' rational realism about society's stigmatisation of their criminal pasts and convictions which translates in lack of opportunities to reform and reintegrate in society upon release. Thus, the major contribution of the immutability script, is the emphasis on the possibility for it to unfold creatively through the arts.

*9.5.3 Artographic Conceptual Model of Spoken Word Poetry Programmes*

The artographic model bridges arts-based research paradigm to the practice of spoken word poetry in the prison context drawing together areas of the arts practice, arts pedagogy, artistic creativity, creative pedagogies and learning. It proposed that the programme under the artographic umbrella may offer alternative and wide-reaching frame for spoken work programmes in prison beyond the currents in criminology informed by literary studies. It does in an informed manner by considering literary schools like the reader response, cognitive poetics, and performance studies. The artographic model offers a theoretical lens for the practice and pedagogy and the movement between artistic practice and artists' pedagogy in spoken word poetry programmes. It identifies that artistic practice in spoken word is the literary artistry and performance artistry both of which are entangled and offer ways for practicing agencies and redemptions as a part of a community. The community is one that harbours the capacity to drive spoken word poets and artists' pedagogy as they navigate the blended roles of artists' educators. Spoken word's artistic community is the bedrock of artographic relationships which spring forth spoken word pedagogic practice. The artographic model can also inform thinking within the stream of narrative identity work with offenders which integrates and goes beyond the proposed model of literariness (Colvin, 2015)[307].

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[307] The artographic model considered Colvin's proposal to complexify narrative identity's redemptive script by drawing on literary studies' contribution of literariness through reading literary texts she identifies as canonical texts. The artographic model departed from Colvin's definition of literariness – it extended it to artistic work that would not be described as canonical. The artographic model argued that literariness is one aspect of the artistic practice of spoken word poetry which when combined with and in interaction with a set

In summary, the artographic model bridges theoretical and research models (McLeans, Pasupathi and Pals, 2007), under the umbrella of arts-based research. The artographic model offers ways of celebrating both artistry and humanity in a complex way that has the potential to harmonise divided spoken word, poetry, artistic and educational practitioner communities.

## 9.6 Final Reflections: "A Poem is a Human Speaking to a Human Inside"[308]

Before I embarked on this research I was keen to learn about the prison context as a novel site where I had yet to explore the possibilities of poetry. In many ways, as I look back now, I was searching to untangle misconceptions about poetry as well as what being a human is, particularly the division between 'us' and 'them', the ordinary people and the hardened criminals. I remember a critical conversation with a fellow student from criminology who had just returned from a prison research feeling scathed by the exposure to desecration of the lives of others through violent crimes he read through in prisoners' files. Hearing the details of the crimes at the time when I was preparing for prison fieldwork seeking training as someone who had never stepped into a prison before, my fear was fuelled through the vicarious stories of other prison researchers. Now, I feel less of the unintelligent fear of the 'hardened criminal' that I am fearful of the tragedy of crime and the tragic institution of prison. I fear that as I look to the future, we haven't come a long way at illuminating the effects and aftermath of violence and trauma, and that we might continue to do so within stereotypical binary of victim-perpetrator narratives which is devastating in the lives of all. But, to look to the future, is to work with fear and create hope rooted in evidence, and our realities. This is not an easy task. Criminality is woven into the fabric of social, relational and personally internalised way of being for young offenders.

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of other aspects the model illuminates, forms a part of the artography of spoken word programmes that offer multiple sites for young offenders artistic being See Chapter 5, and 8.

[308] Astley, 2011 in Being Human anthology.

**'A POEM IS A HUMAN SPEAKING TO A HUMAN INSIDE'**

**flying** out of the poem

             **invisible** *spectacular you*

             have always staged the entrance of voices

             into your interior pushing the interior

             to enter to declare itself under-

                          scoring the disassociated dialogic dimension

the 'I of me' game, of **your I** caught unawares

                                 your, always tending guard

describing, so many times the theatre of the drama

                    in which you are

                          the blind womn

                          &

                          THE POET

you stage

the unknown foreign forces into your course

                  I mean to say into your

                          inner form

 [YOU FIGHT WITH YOURSELF] I MEAN TO SAY you fight over *for* yourself

                  you tear yourself apart:

                        &

                              You

                              Let

                              It

                              Be

                              SEEN

                              by the people

*you mean I mean to  say I fight,*

*I am tired of keeping my shatterings sewn up in my poetic inquiries a language no longer disintegrating in me a wholeness– pieced out – released just about I am tired of picking fights with myself Afrodita, not a stage name or a Greek tragedy and each time I say to myself how tragic it is, yes, yes, how tragic, you are not a poet fully unless the moment of denying the denial lights to see, I too have wished to be  to be seen, I mean to say TO BE able to see myself as NO ONE, it takes more than one for  I-it, and, I-Thou, I too have wondered how this stay put heart manages to change for art only and not for anything else, before it's too late they say stop writing, begin again through the wreckages my voice too rises, put down at the navel the poem meets you with the power of awake, after hooks, how I love to awake how much longer will it take to see? what I are is what I  have always been*

Artographic me-searching, we-searching, and re-searching, with young offenders, I was able to witness the courage of their artistic practice, which bears testament to the creativities of young people. The participants in the present study, the two lives unfolded through the portraits, Luani and Jess, bear testament to their own creativity as young children to device alternative ways to navigate abusive and devastating homes. It is not a surprise that they saw wrongdoing as the only choice to seek independence in adolescence, even as it is not a justification for crime. After participating in the programme it should not have been, and continue to be, a surprise that Luani and Jess artistic creativities are distinctive and powerful drivers for developing alternatives way of being to their pasts. Luani and Jess' artistic being in a supportive community, is one example of how the arts can be an in-credible way of being human in relation to other humans. As such artistic creativity cannot be at the margins of people's lives – it will have to be at the very core of human beings' capacity to revitalise their lives, because the arts have always been woven into the core of our being, and of our being together in the world as people. This is something I have personally lived through my poetic practice, and this project has helped me gain clarity of the powerful role of poetry to open up my life as entangled with the stories of the participants in the study.

As a result, echoing participants' poetic voices, I re-visited my initial artographic inquiry of the self to trace how this project helped me grow. I capture this growth through a found poem (Cixous, 2006), which can be read as three poems, the poem in red, the poem in black without the red words, and the poem including all words. The found poem in this way aims to capture the conflict of 'divided/fragmented' self, which through the vehicle of the poem lives the wholeness of life towards 'flying out' of the poem as a human, a poet, educator, researcher in search of seeing the wholeness of living and the goodness of creative being in real-life.

# APPENDICES

Appendix A The Impact of Arts Interventions in Prison: Based on the Summary of the Literatures Reviewed
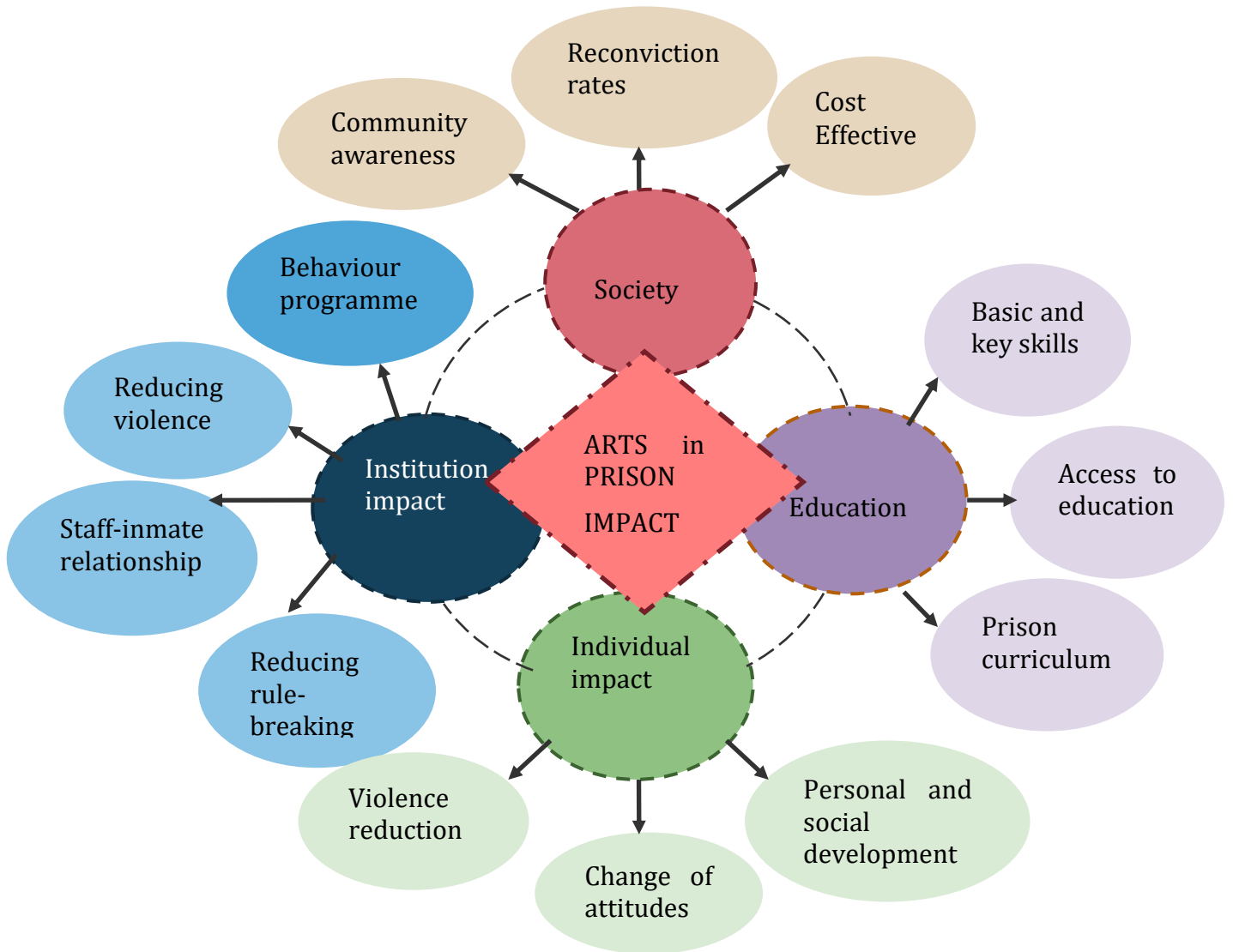
Appendix B Piloting Poetry and Interview Data Sets Thematic Analysis: Use of Narrative Identity Coding Constructs – Descriptors

| Coding Construct | Definition |
|---|---|
| **Agency** | The degree to which protagonists are able to affect change in their own lives or influence others in their environment, often through demonstrations of self-mastery, empowerment, achievement, or status. Highly agentic stories privilege accomplishment and the ability to control one's fate. |
| **Communion** | The degree to which protagonists demonstrate or experience interpersonal connection through love, friendship, dialogue, or connection to a broad collective. The story emphasizes intimacy, caring, and belongingness. |
| **Redemption** | Scenes in which a demonstrably "bad" or emotionally negative event or circumstance leads to a demonstrably "good" or emotionally positive outcome. The initial negative state is "redeemed" or salvaged by the good that follows it. |
| **Contamination** | Scenes in which a good or positive event turns dramatically bad or negative, such that the negative affect overwhelms, destroys, or erases the effects of the preceding positivity. |
| **Meaning making** | The degree to which the protagonist learns something or gleans a message from an event. Coding ranges from no meaning (low score) to learning a concrete lesson (moderate score) to gaining a deep insight about life (high score). |
| **Exploratory narrative processing** | The extent of self-exploration as expressed in the story. High scores suggest deep exploration or the development of a richly elaborated self-understanding. |
| **Coherent positive resolution** | The extent to which the tensions in the story are resolved to produce closure and a positive ending. |

Република Македонија
**Министерство за правда**

До

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Скопје, 14.07.2015 година

Влада на Република
Македонија

Министерство за правда -
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Управата за извршување на санкциите постапувајќи по барањето доставено од Ваша страна, Ве известува дека сме отворени за соработка и ќе ни биде задоволство да се реализира Програмата за поетска изведба во Воспитно-поравниот дом Тетово, за која што сметаме дека ќе биде од корист за третманот на малолетните лица кои престојуваат во Домот.

Во таа смисла, Ве известуваме дека се дозволува непречен пристап на тимот кој ќе ја спроведува Програмата во ВПДом Тетово кој е времено лоциран во Отвореното Одделение на КПД Идризово во Велес за периодот за кој е предвидено да се реализираат програмските активности,  од 1 септември 2015 - 1 септември 2016 година.

Со цел обезбедување на сите услови за непречено одвивање на активностите, потребно е да ни доставите податоци за двајцата асистенти кои ќе бидат дел од тимот и да остварите првичен состанок со одговорните лица во ВПД Тетово.

Контакт тел. на ВПД Тетово: 044/339-144

Со почит,

**ДИРЕКТОР НА УПРАВАТА ЗА**
**ИЗВРШУВАЊЕ НА САНКЦИИТЕ**
Лидија Гаврилоска

АБ/

Appendix D Informed Consent Form for Study and Programme Implementation in the Macedonian Prison: Prison Government's Additional Approval

UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE
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**ПОТВРДА ЗА ДОБРОВОЛНО УЧЕСТВО ВО ПРОГРАМА ЗА ИЗВЕДУВАНА ПОЕЗИЈА**

Јас, Афродита Николова, докторанд на Факултетот за образование, Универзитетот во Кембриџ, и универзитетски лектор, наставник и поет од Македонија, сум одговорна за нова предлог Програма за Изведувана Поезија (ПИП) во Затвор Охрид. Програмата вклучува пилот студија (јули, 2016), планирање на содржината и протоколот на спроведување на креативни работилници во соработка со директорот, вработените и шест млади, во горенаведената институција, како и двајца едукатори соработници и уметници. Целта на оваа соработка е развивање на нова Програма за Изведувана Поезија (ПИП), нејзино имплементирање во Затвор Охрид во периодот помеѓу јули, 2016-Јануари, 2017, со цел поддржување на процесот на ресоцијализација на младите лица осудени на казна затвор,.

Тримесечната Програмата за Изведувана Поезија (ПИП) се состои од 10 двочасовни работилници, 6 проби за изведба како и индивидуални креативни сесии по потреба, една поетска изведба. Во текот на проектот, младите учесници ќе бидат целосно информирани за природата на креативните работилници и би имале простор доброволно да се вклучат во или повлечат од предложената креативна активност според нивна одлука и проценка на директорот и вработените во затворот. Младите учесници ќе имаат можност да се запознаат и да придонесат за развојот на предложената програма. ПИП се состои од низа активности меѓу кои се и употреба на драмски техники, уметнички слики, популарна музика, хип хоп култура, поетски вежби за создавање на песни за изведба или рап. ПИП се стреми да овозможи градење на позитивни идентитети кај младите со разнолика етничка структура во македонскиот културолошки контекст. Слични уметнички програми ги носат следниве придобивки:
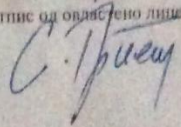
- Можности за само-изразување
- Активирање во процесот на искуствено учење
- Усовршување на вештините за соработка и комуникација
- Зголемена мотивација за учење и описменување
- Чувство на надеж за иднината
- Поголемо само-определување
- Развој на чувство на успех
- Здобивање на вештини за трансформирање на негативното искуство во позитивно

Целта на истражувачкиот аспект на предложената програма е да помогне во процесот на ресоцијализација и да ги востанови механизмите преку кои оваа програма би можела да ја збогати практиката и активностите на секторот за ресоцијализација. Исто така, индиректниот допринес на самата програма за престанок на криминал е исклучително важен за работата на затворите во РМ во целост. Поради ова, истражување е насочено кон следниве три аспекти:

- Востановување на успешна уметничка програма, активности и практика, коишто ќе го поддржуваат личниот развој на млади осудени лица во Македонија
- Критички преглед на процесот на градење позитивен идентитет преку создавање и изведување на песни за себе за време на Програмата за Поетска Изведба
- Објаснување на перцепцијата на младите за работата со уметнички активности и поетска изведба.

Со почит,

Афродита Николова
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18.05.2016
Охрид
Потпис од овластено лице

*Head of Faculty: Professor Peter Gronn  Acting Secretary of the Faculty: Jane Bloomfield*
*184 Hills Road, Cambridge CB2 8PQ Telephone: 01223 767600 http://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/*

Appendix E The Research Site Location on the Map of North Macedonia



*Note.* The young people resident in the Correctional Education Institution that was being renovated, which was the original proposed research site, had been transferred in the prison where the study was carried out. Hence, all young offenders for the country of Macedonia were resident in the Ohrid prison in the South-West part of Macedonia. The researcher was in continuous contact with an official B.J. at the Directorate for Administering Sanctions, the Ministry of Justice as well as the Prison governor for arranging the details regarding the programme implementation.

Appendix F Programme Development Progress Plan Week 1: Workshop 1 and 2 and Rehearsal 1

| June 20-August 31 5 week-long programme | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| July 11-17 Week 1 *"I am not" (The Fictional Self)* | | | | | | |
| **Workshop 1** **NOTE: Facilitators and Staff are responsible for ensuring they stress and explain the requirement to respect the persona; space of each participant, the boundaries of physical contact and the responsibility no to suggest offensive things or physically challenging moves in drama-based activities.** **Participant observation/FGI main goals:** **1) participants and staffs' perceptions of the activities, themes and facilitating style** **2) -tracking the life story and poetry development process and their relationship** **3) -evaluating self-reported self-confidence through arts-based/drama-based exercises.** | | | | | | |
| **Objectives** | Lead-in Activities | Model Poem | Scaffolding (Use of accessible language) | | Compositional Activities/Prompts | Sharing Poems (Reflections & Feedback) |
| | | | Compositional Tool (poetic craft) | Themes | | |
| ***Learning space*** **-building trust and a non-judgmental environment** **-begin exploring the personal in a safe and one step removed way.** ***Artistic experience*** **-get a sense of an embodied and drama-based ways of knowing and expression** **-becoming comfortable with sharing ideas, the potential of performing and the nature of constructive feedback.** ***Poetic craft*** | 20 min -Facilitator enacted scene called "A potential car accident". Two facilitators are involved. The script is based on an episode in the model poem. The script summary surrounds two people driving cars. One falls asleep for a moment and they (almost) crash (open for interpretation). Processing techniques: | 8-10 min "How to Drive a Car" by the researcher as a poet. | 5 min -Surreal and detailed imagery -Comparison -Storytelling: the use of the 2nd and the 3rd person to express 1st person views and emotions. | 5 min -making one's interests come true -strength and perseverance -enjoying the small things -having fun through curiously and discovery -everyday micro-cultural imagery e.g. drawing the concrete streets with chalks | 15-20 min -Grant a Wish exercise (the poem develops based on how to make the wish come true; the wish can be funny or surreal e.g. How to breathe underwater). Facilitators and staff assist participants to write down a wish on a paper. The pieces of paper are folded and placed in a hat. Each participant takes one wish. The facilitators and staff assist | 5-10 min -Perform your name exercise 20-30 min sharing ideas for poems/feedback 10-15 min reflection and participant/staffs feedback 5-10 min Emotional Sculpts regarding Week 1 and the rehearsal. |

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| **-develop a sense for detailed description and poetic imagery** **-get exposed to basic storytelling (character/action/place).** *Note:* **the feedback in the first week focuses on the high points.** | 1) *Opening up discussion.* The participants describe/script the scene (facilitators use questioning strategies as prompts) E.g. "Who might these people be? What seems to be going on? What do you think that gesture means? What does it seem like this person is saying at this moment? Where do you think this could be taking place? When does it look like this is taking place? Day or night? Past, present or future? Why do you think this person is looking at this person in this way? How do you think people are related in this scene?" (Baim, Brookes, & | | | | participants with audio-recording ideas and/or writing down key steps for developing the wish into a poem. E.g. "To breathe underwater, first, you grow gills". | |

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| | Mountford, 2002, p. 40)<br><br>2) *Inner voice from the audience.* Participants explore the rationale of the behaviour by stating what the characters might be thinking and feeling. E.g. "Oh, no, we're going to crash!" | | | | | |
| **Workshop 2** | | | | | | |
| ***Learning space***<br><br>***Artistic experience***<br><br><br>***Poetic craft***<br>**-basics of storytelling (character, action, place)**<br>**-conversational tone** | 10 min<br>Trust Walking exercise | 10 min<br>"I am Not" by the poet Gjoko Zdraveski | | -exploring the city and memorable places<br>-the multiplicity and diversity of roles a person can play (a traveller, a nephew, a friend, a star gazer etc.)<br>-social versus inner perception and perspective<br>-the meaning in the things people don't like<br>-the meaning of silence | 20 min<br><br>The Language of a tomato exercise (for practicing detailed description).<br><br>Take me on a Journey/a place that I know (p.88) | 5-10 min<br>-Mimicking Ourselves exercise.<br><br>The groups stands in a circle and engages in a chain of mimicking and gestures which add up as the movement's progress from one person to another. For example, a person claps. The person next to them repeats the clap and makes a noise. The third person repeats the clam and the noise, and adds their own |

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| | | | | | | | gesture/sound and so on.<br><br>20-30 min sharing ideas for poems/feedback<br><br>10-15 min reflection and participant/staffs feedback<br><br>5-10 min Emotional Sculpts regarding Week 1 and the rehearsal. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| **End of Week Rehearsal (FGI)** | |
|---|---|
| **Objectives** | Activities and Prompts |
| **-practice performance skills through drama-based exercises**<br><br>**-get a sense of poetic license (lies)**<br><br>**-exploring the meaning of subjective truth ( "keeping it real") in poetry** | 15 min<br>"What are You Doing?" exercise (Baim et al., 2002, p. 86)<br>The facilitators, staff and participants from a circle. One facilitator stands in the middle miming a "simple repetitive action". A person from the circle should ask the facilitators the question "What are you doing?" The facilitator (or person miming the action) should lie. For example, the facilitator can mime drinking from a cup, but respond that they are eating/chewing food.<br><br>Processing: Elicit the required skills as well as the role of physical movement in conveying meaning to the audience in performance.<br><br>30 min<br>Performing poems from Workshops 3 and 4, sharing constructive feedback. The researcher and facilitator probe for connections between the life story (actual self) and the poetic story (fictional self).<br><br>15 min<br>Emotional Sculpts (concerning self-confidence). |

Appendix G Programme Development: Progress Plan for Week 2: Workshops 2 and 3, and Rehearsal 2

| June 20-August 31 5 week-long programme | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| July 18-24 Week 2 *"Everything is Possible" (The Surreal Experience)* | | | | | | |
| Workshop 3 | | | | | | |
| Objectives | Lead-in Activities | Model Poem | Scaffolding (Use of accessible language) | | Composition al Activities/Pr ompts | Sharing Poems (Reflections & Feedback) |
| | | | Compositional Tool (poetic craft) | Themes | | |
| *Learning space*<br><br>**-confidence-boosting through low-risk exercises and constructive feedback**<br>**-becoming comfortable with use of equipment and sharing poems/performing**<br><br>*Artistic experience*<br><br>**-making sense of emotions through metaphors**<br>**-feeling and enunciation words**<br><br><br>*Poetic craft*<br><br>**-practicing the basics of constructing metaphors**<br>**-exploring rhythm through diverse beats, repetition and singing in a poetry performance.** | 15-20 min<br>What's in a picture? ("Dixit" cards/Photo Elicitation).<br><br>Facilitators and Staff participation. Place the cards on the floor/table and ask participants to pick 1-2 cards they like.<br><br>Processing technique: 1) Describe the card 2) State the choice rationale 3) What feeling/s does the card provoke? Why? Pick an image/object that facilitates a certain emotion/reaction. | 5 min<br>"Worry more about…" by the researcher as a poet. | 10 min<br>-Rhythm and Repetition<br><br>-Surreal Imagery and building metaphors<br><br>-Imperative structure/addressing mode. | 10 min<br>-nature (micro and macrocosm)<br>-cultural and childhood memories<br>-kindness<br>-overcoming disappointment<br>-the effects of competition<br>-life priorities and joyous things<br>-internal versus external motivation. | 15-20 min<br>A list poem/A letter poem<br><br>Facilitators and staff assist participants in choosing a main like to be repeated throughout the poem. Then, participants' audio-record the brainstorme d ideas and are given guidance for developing the recorded steps into a poem. | 5 min<br>Voice Exercise "The Eagle Sound". Participants gather in a circle. The facilitator demonstrates breathing techniques from the diaphragm and a bird-like sound which can be used for practicing proper breathing.<br><br><br>30 min Performing poems and constructive feedback.<br><br>10-15 min Participant reflections and feedback.<br><br>3 min Guided Phantasy |

| Workshop 4 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Learning space*<br><br>-cooperation and community building<br>-communication skills<br><br>*Artistic experience*<br><br>-the dynamics of group performance<br>-introduction to hip-hop culture and the art of rap<br><br>*Poetic craft*<br><br>-exploring rhymes (half-rhymes, internal rhymes) and word play<br>-getting a sense of alliteration | 10-15 min<br>Mirror exercise<br>Facilitators and staff divide participants in pairs, person A and person B. When the facilitator claps person A starts moving while person B enacts the same movement as a mirror image of person A. Later, they swap roles. The facilitator and staff explain the safety frame of the exercise.<br>Processing: Seeking participants' responses regarding the experience in both roles. Checking views concerning required skills and the type of relationship (Baim, Brookes, & Mountford, 2002, p. 103) | 10 min<br>Rap and spoken word poetry duo based on the rap song "Curse and Bliss" by the rap band "Divizija". The duo consists of the rap artist Kinder and the researcher as a poet. | 10-15 min<br>-rhymes, word play and alliteration<br>-comparison<br>-rap versus spoken word poetry | 5-10 min<br>-creative passion<br>-standing up for your own art<br>-believing in yourself<br>-nurturing talent<br>-communion and empathy<br>-the power of words | 20 min<br>Group found/collaged poem (Materials: newspapers, images, colourful paper). | 10 min<br>"My gesture is our gesture" exercise (Herndon & Weiss, 2001, p. 53).<br><br>The group stands in a circle. The facilitators models that a person in the middle will do a number of gestures (waving) and/or sounds (clapping) that the group should follow/repeat. The person in middle changes as the exercise progresses.<br><br>30 min Performing poems and constructive feedback.<br><br>10-15 min Participant reflections and feedback. |

| End of Week Rehearsal (FGI) | |
|---|---|
| **Objectives** | Activities/ prompts |
| **-practicing poetry memorization**<br>**-presence on stage and clarity in delivering lines and meaning**<br>**-exploring the power of voice and intonation.** | 10 min<br>Tongue twisters. Facilitators elicit tongue twisters/saying from participants. In the circle position participants practice tongue twisters and sequencing lines/learning new tongue twisters.<br>10 min<br>Participants practice diverse intonations of poetry lines and enunciation of words. Facilitators process the relevance of this exercise for performance.<br>30 min<br>Sharing/performing poems from Workshops 3 and 4.<br>10-15 min<br>Participants' reflection/feedback in drawing and/or spoken.<br>Emotional sculpts concerning the rehearsal. |

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Appendix H Programme Development Progress Plan Week 3: Workshop 5 and 6, Rehearsal 3

| Timeline: June 20-August 31 programme | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| July 25-29 Week 3 *"What happened?" (Collective Memories)* | | | | | | |
| Workshop 5 (2 hours with a break) | | | | | | |
| Objectives | Lead-in Activities | Model Poem | Scaffolding (Use of accessible language) | | Compositional Activities/Prompts | Sharing Poems (Reflections & Feedback) |
| | | | Compositional Tool (poetic craft) | Themes | | |
| *Learning space*<br><br>-encouraging empathy and cooperation<br>-group building and trust<br><br>*Artistic experience*<br><br>-Experience communal storytelling<br>-Engage in theatre making<br><br>*Poetic craft*<br><br>-exploring the cinematic quality of language in imagery building<br>-getting a sense of the crux of the poem (a transformative and powerful change) | 15-20 min<br><br>Interactive observer: group building a character<br><br>Processing technique: Inner voice of the audience and inner voice of the character | 5-8 min "I want to wake up" by Istok Ulchar | -detailed imagery<br>-narrative structure and progression<br>-character building | 5 min<br>-motifs from urban lifestyle and the city<br>-imagining a better world<br>-social criticism<br>-the self in relation to socio-cultural phenomena (the personal versus the social) | 15 min<br>Word at a time story. The facilitator encourages group storytelling whereby each participant contributes a word after repeating what had previously been said. | 20 min<br>Building on the Interactive observer at the start of the session and created character, facilitators process the scene further with forum theatre and interview in role.<br><br>30 min Performing poems and constructive feedback.<br><br>10-15 min Participant reflections and feedback through single frozen pictures. |
| Workshop 6 | | | | | | |
| *Learning space*<br><br>-encouraging empathy and emotional exploration<br>-team work and cooperation | 15-20 minutes Guess the Feeling: Feeling | 10 min "Don't talk to strangers/to death" by rap artist Tonyo San | 5 min<br>-exploring dialogue<br>-personification<br>-rhyme | 5 min<br>-reconsidering life goals<br>-fear and growth<br>-overcoming obstacles | 20 min<br>Saints and Sinners (Brainstorm/record "saintly" and then "sinnerly" one line long | 20 minutes Soundscapes (low passing to high focus) Two groups guided by the facilitators recreate the sounds of a chose environment (e.g. |

| Artistic experience<br><br>-engage in roleplaying ones' own script<br>-employ voice techniques to explore the power of the non-verbal to own one's voice on stage<br><br>Poetic craft<br><br>-developing dialogue building skills<br>-perspective-taking and practicing the use of personification<br>-honing rhyme skills and the possibilities of intonation | Sculpts (high focus) | (or "Life is beautiful") | | -the transience of life | responses to the statement "Excuse me, I think that is my seat." Additional statements to select from (or generate new): <br>-Excuse me, I think you spilt my drink.<br>-Would you mind if I went in front of you? I am not feeling well.<br>-Could you seat down please, I can't see. | forest, jungle, traffic jam) by using their voices and body movements as a group. Each group has to guess the recreated space and discuss the choices for sounds.<br>30 min Performing poems and constructive feedback.<br>10-15 min Participant reflections and feedback through group frozen pictures. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| End of Week Rehearsal (FGI) | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| July 30-August 1 The BIBAC Conference in Cambridge<br>-Potential Supervisor update on fieldwork | | | | | | |
| End of Week Rehearsal (FGI) | | | | | | |

| Objectives | Activities/ prompts |
|---|---|
| -presence on stage and clarity in delivering lines<br>-conveying meaning in silent modes and through movements<br>-practicing improvisational performance and theatre | 10-15 minutes<br>Block of Air (high focus). The groups form a circle. The facilitators stand in the middle and models the exercise. With a block of air, the facilitator delineates an object (e.g. a guitar) and they show the action associated with the object (e.g. play the guitar). Group members guess what the object is and the facilitator passes the object to the next person to stand in the middle who clap and use the block of air to create another object.<br>Facilitator praises the group for their accomplishments and explores conveying meaning to audiences through theatre.<br>30 min<br>Sharing/performing poems from Workshops 5 and 6.<br>10-15 min<br>Participants' reflection/feedback in drawing and/or spoken.<br>Emotional sculpts concerning the rehearsal. |

# Appendix I Programme Development Progress Plan Week 4: Workshops 7 and 8, and Rehearsal 4

| June 20-August 31 5 week-long programme | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| August 8-14 Week 5 *"Unlock your Voice" (Honing Performance)* | | | | | | |
| Workshop 9 | | | | | | |
| Objectives | Lead-in Activities | Model Poem | Scaffolding (Use of accessible language) | | Compositional Activities/Prompts | Sharing Poems (Reflections & Feedback) |
| | | | Compositional Tool (poetic craft) | Themes | | |
| *Learning space*<br><br>-accepting constructive feedback<br>-respecting others creative vision<br><br>*Artistic experience*<br><br>-intercultural arts<br>-the power of invigorating performance<br><br>*Poetic craft*<br><br>-stage movement<br>-using intertextuality and diverse languages | 15 min<br>Group Frozen Pictures constructed by participants. | 10 min<br>Rap performance of "Reprezent" by the rap band Shutka Roma Rap. | 10 min<br>-group poems<br>-developing rhymes<br>-intertextuality | 10 min<br>-owning ones' creative expression<br>-going against the grain for positive personal values<br>-collaboration | 20 min<br>"Take 5" exercise.<br><br>Participants compose their own three rhymes and then ask each participant to add three more. The rhyming goes on in the circle for five rounds.<br><br>The facilitators assist participants in developing a group poem. | 15 min<br>Jacket on an Alien (perspective taking: thinking of the audience and nuanced modes of conveying things and emotions).<br><br>30 min Performing poems and constructive feedback.<br><br>10-15 min Participant reflections and feedback. |
| Workshop 10 | | | | | | |
| *Learning space*<br><br>-support the performing community<br>-enact constructive feedback and setting goals for the final performance<br><br>*Artistic experience* | 15-20 min<br>Grandmother's footsteps. The Facilitator models the exercise by playing the role of the grandmother. The participants are supposed to approach | "Alphabet Gymnastics" Elena Prendzova and the researcher. | -word plays, alliteration and puns<br>-rhythm | -perfecting skills<br>-social criticism<br>-building new things<br>-everyday life | 20 min<br>Can a generation speak for its nation? Exercise. The facilitator guides participants to choose a place/negative social memory and compose a letter of complaint. | 15 min<br>Alternating the rhythm of selected poetry lines in one's own or/and other participants' poems.<br><br>30 min Performing poems and |

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| -explore the creative zone of performance<br>-get a sense of audience interaction and feedback<br><br>*Poetic craft*<br><br>-explore clustering alliterative words<br>-get a sense of sprung rhythm | Grandmother without her spotting them. Facilitators encourage cooperation and safe play. | | | | | constructive feedback.<br>10-15 min Participant reflections and feedback. |

| End of week rehearsal (FGI) | |
|---|---|
| Objectives | Activities |
| | 15 min<br>Find the hole in the dream exercise. The facilitators encourage participants to consider missing episode in their poems that they might want to include or develop. Participants engage in a mutual constructive feedback.<br><br>15 min<br>Change stations on the radio exercise. The facilitators divide the group in pairs or two groups. Each group performs their poems in a diverse music genre/style (metal, rock, pop, jazz etc.).<br><br>30 min<br>Sharing/performing poems from Workshops 7 and 8.<br><br>10-15 min<br>Participants' reflection/feedback in drawing and/or spoken.<br>Emotional sculpts concerning the rehearsal. |

| August 15-21 Week 6 *Performance Event and Follow-Up* |
|---|
| *Learning space*<br>-real world performing experience with a selected audience inside the prison<br>-connecting with the audience and sharing first impressions<br>*Artistic experience*<br>-Embodying a rehearsed piece independently<br>-exploring the presence of spoken word performing (towards a "Degree-zero-and newness)<br>-performing a fictional self as a form of enacting identity for empowerment<br>*Poetic craft*<br>-performing and stage literacy<br>-improvisational performance |

Appendix J Programme Development Progress Plan Week 5: Workshops 9 and 10, and Rehearsal 5

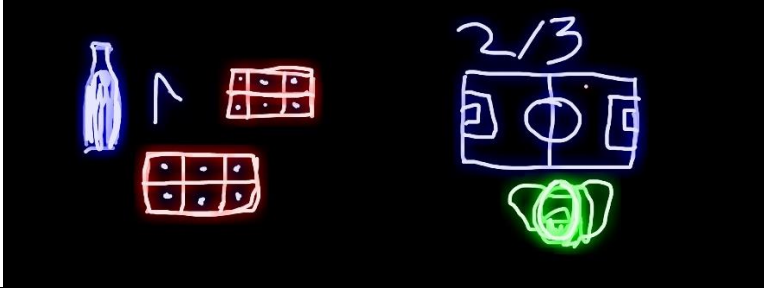| June 20-August 31 5 week-long programme | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| August 8-14 Week 5 *"Unlock your Voice" (Honing Performance)* | | | | | | |
| Workshop 9 | | | | | | |
| Objectives | Lead-in Activities | Model Poem | Scaffolding (Use of accessible language) | | Compositional Activities/Prompts | Sharing Poems (Reflections & Feedback) |
| | | | Compositional Tool (poetic craft) | Themes | | |
| *Learning space*<br><br>-accepting constructive feedback<br>-respecting others creative vision<br><br>*Artistic experience*<br><br>-intercultural arts<br>-the power of invigorating performance<br><br>*Poetic craft*<br><br>-stage movement<br>-using intertextuality and diverse languages | 15 min<br>Group Frozen Pictures constructed by participants. | 10 min<br>Rap performance of "Reprezent" by the rap band Shutka Roma Rap. | 10 min<br>-group poems<br>-developing rhymes<br>-intertextuality | 10 min<br>-owning ones' creative expression<br>-going against the grain for positive personal values<br>-collaboration | 20 min<br>"Take 5" exercise.<br><br>Participants compose their own three rhymes and then ask each participant to add three more. The rhyming goes on in the circle for five rounds.<br><br>The facilitators assist participants in developing a group poem. | 15 min<br>Jacket on an Alien (perspective taking: thinking of the audience and nuanced modes of conveying things and emotions).<br><br>30 min Performing poems and constructive feedback.<br><br>10-15 min Participant reflections and feedback. |
| Workshop 10 | | | | | | |
| *Learning space*<br><br>-support the performing community<br>-enact constructive feedback and setting goals for the final performance<br><br>*Artistic experience*<br><br>-explore the creative zone of performance | 15-20 min<br>Grandmother's footsteps. The Facilitator models the exercise by playing the role of the grandmother. The participants are supposed to approach | "Alphabet Gymnastics" Elena Prendzova and the researcher. | -word plays, alliteration and puns<br>-rhythm | -perfecting skills<br>-social criticism<br>-building new things<br>-everyday life | 20 min<br>Can a generation speak for its nation? Exercise. The facilitator guides participants to choose a place/negative social memory and compose a letter of complaint. | 15 min<br>Alternating the rhythm of selected poetry lines in one's own or/and other participants' poems.<br><br>30 min Performing poems and |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| -get a sense of audience interaction and feedback<br><br>*Poetic craft*<br><br>-explore clustering alliterative words<br>-get a sense of sprung rhythm | Grandmother without her spotting them. Facilitators encourage cooperation and safe play. | | | | | constructive feedback.<br>10-15 min Participant reflections and feedback. |

| End of week rehearsal (FGI) | |
|---|---|
| Objectives | Activities |
| | 15 min<br>Find the hole in the dream exercise. The facilitators encourage participants to consider missing episode in their poems that they might want to include or develop. Participants engage in a mutual constructive feedback.<br><br>15 min<br>Change stations on the radio exercise. The facilitators divide the group in pairs or two groups. Each group performs their poems in a diverse music genre/style (metal, rock, pop, jazz etc.).<br><br>30 min<br>Sharing/performing poems from Workshops 7 and 8.<br><br>10-15 min<br>Participants' reflection/feedback in drawing and/or spoken.<br>Emotional sculpts concerning the rehearsal. |

| August 15-21 Week 6 *Performance Event and Follow-Up* |
|---|
| *Learning space*<br>-real world performing experience with a selected audience inside the prison<br>-connecting with the audience and sharing first impressions<br>*Artistic experience*<br>-Embodying a rehearsed piece independently<br>-exploring the presence of spoken word performing (towards a "Degree-zero-and newness)<br>-performing a fictional self as a form of enacting identity for empowerment<br>*Poetic craft*<br>-performing and stage literacy<br>-improvisational performance |

Appendix K Individual Interview: The Life Story Frame and A Frame for the Interview Schedule

| Interview Component | Schedule and Prompts |
|---|---|
| **Introducing the Interview** | This (group conversation) is about introducing yourself through a story. Because everyone introduces himself, you will work on your own and choose your own way of telling the story. There is no right or wrong answer. I would like you to think of your story as a flowing river which has a start, curves and continuation just like stories have a beginning, unexpected events, and potential endings. Start the story by organising the photos, materials, objects and your own drawings around the line of a river. Select objects and visuals that remind you of specific memories from different stages of your life: for example, some good moments, challenging moments, and moments that made some kind of change for you.<br><br>Are there any questions? |
| **River Journey Elicitation Tool** | Participants share their stories with visual art inquiry and as a mode of introducing oneself to the group and facilitators (River Journey Tool (Burnard, 2012; Stevenson, 2013). |
| **Prompts for the Researcher** | Concrete details<br>When, where, who?<br>Thoughts and feelings<br>What was the role of the concrete experience from the person's view?<br>How is the experience related to their identity? |
| **Key Goals to Document** | An influential childhood memory/an important story<br>An important adolescent memory<br>A think that best describes who the person is (from their point of view) |
| **Guiding Questions** | 1. Describe the first line of material in the river. Why did you choose them specifically? What did they remind you off? Is it related to any (important) decision you have made - how? How did you feel then?<br>2. Which parts of the river are positive for you? Describe these elements? How do they relate to your story?<br>3. What are the negative parts in the river? Describe these parts and how they relate to your story.<br>4. How do you like to see the story develop? (Where is the river flowing in the future?) If you can decide how to direct your story what would be the best thing? What is the dreams situation for the future? What do you think would be a realistic situation?<br>5. What would be a negative ending of the story? An ending that you wouldn't like in your story, but you really think it could happen for real? |

| MCB's drawings wit the app "Glow Draw" as part of his Digital Story of Playing Football |
| --- |



| Deki's Drawing of Future Hopes to Settle Down, Have a Family and a Car and a Poem |
| --- |



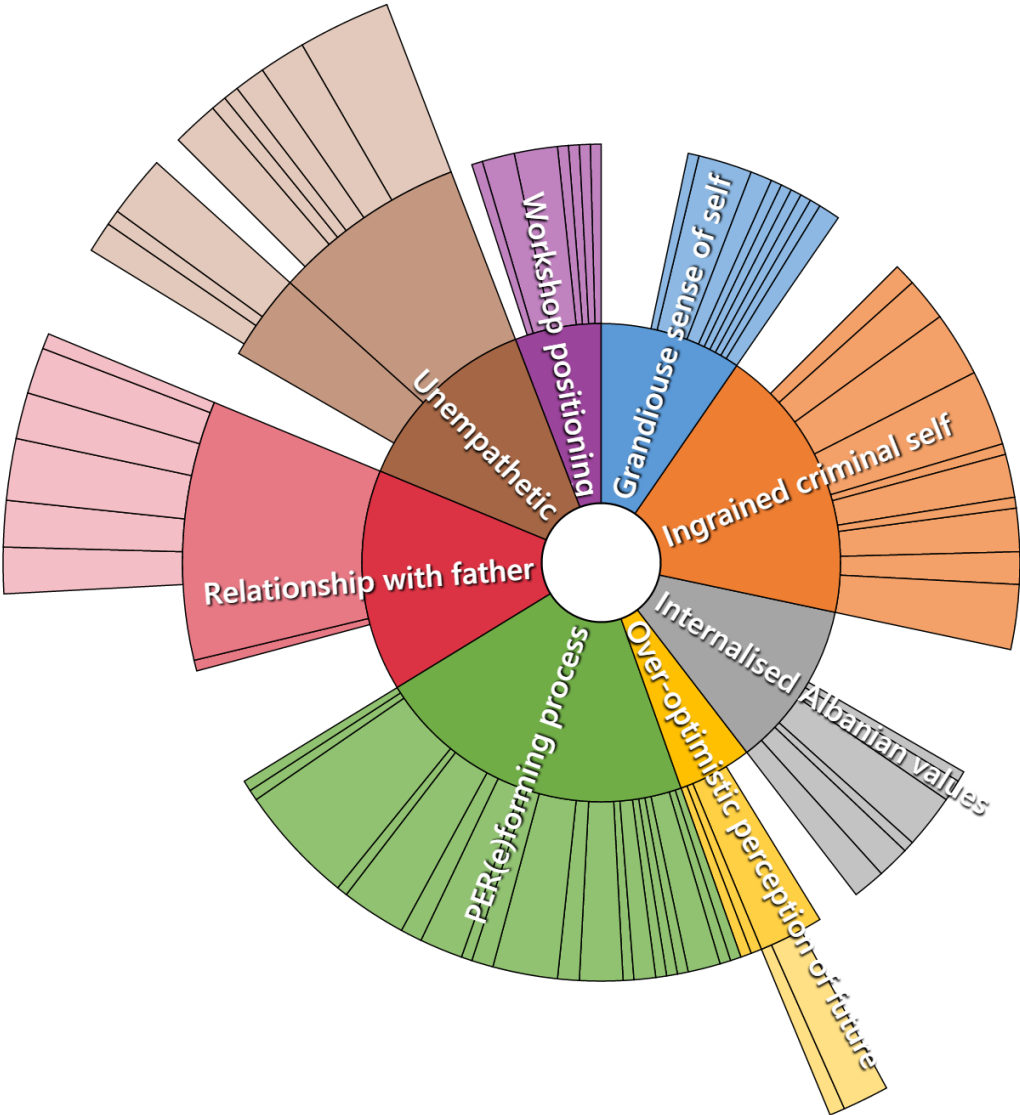ЈА ЛЕЖЕВ 7 ДЕНА ВО САМИЦА СЕДЕВ И РАЗМИСЛУВАВ

НЕ ВЕРУВАМ ДЕКА ЧОВЕК МОЖЕ ДА СТАНЕ МАЈМУН ОТИ Е РОДЕН ОД МАЈКА

ВЕРУВАМ ДЕКА ГОСПОД, АКО САКА МОЖЕ ДА ТИ ГО РАСТУРИ СВЕТОТ

ГО ГЛЕДАМ ЕЗЕРОТО ВО ОХРИД, КОЛКУ Е УБАВО СЕДАМ И РАЗМИСЛУВАМ ЗА МУЗИКАТА НА МОЈАТА ИДНИНА.
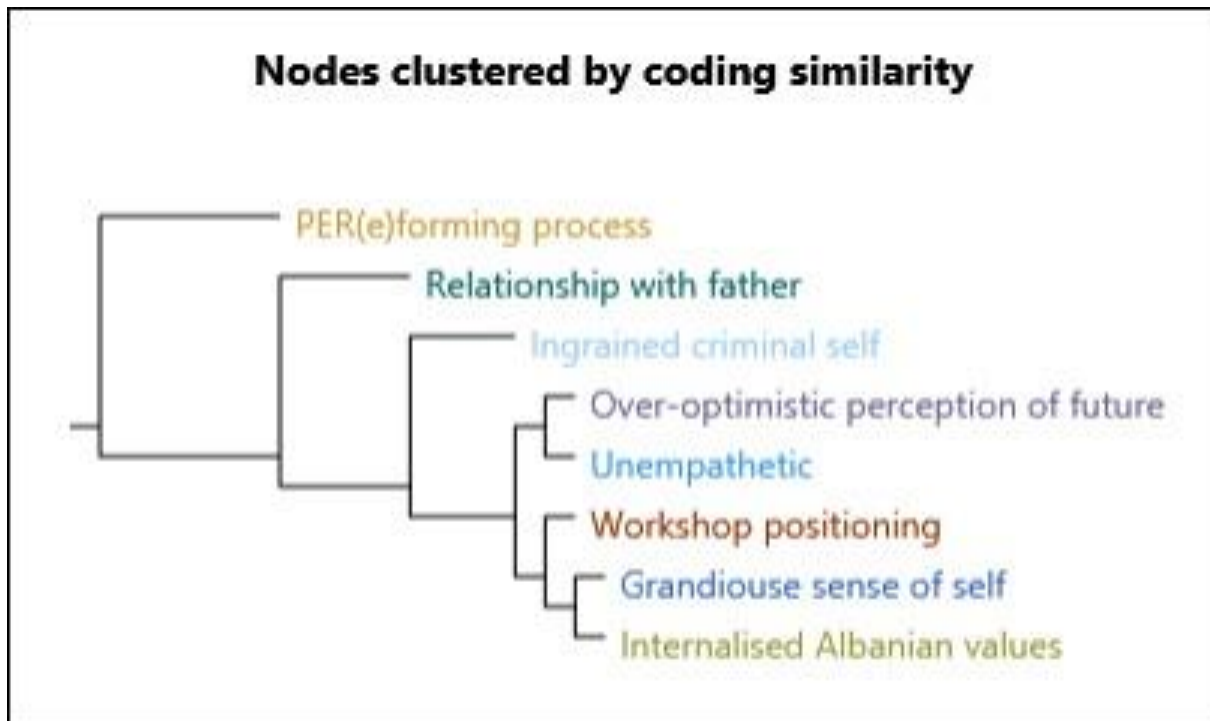
ДАЛИ ЌЕ БИДЕ ИЛИ НЕМА ДА БИДЕ?

ТЕШКА СУДБИНА

1 ВО ЧЕТВРТО ПОЧНАВ ДА БЕГАМ ОД ШКОЛО #ТУТУН ОД ПРСТИ МИРИСИ МИ НОСЕА ДОМА ТЕПАЧКИ; СО МЕТЛА МАЈКА МИ НАВА, НАВА, НЕ ГЛЕДА.

2 НА 12 ГОДИНИ ИМАШЕ ДРУГАРСТВО А СЕГА ДОЈДЕ ВРЕМЕТО: СИТЕ ГЛЕДААТ ДА ТЕ КОРИСТАТ, ДАЈ МИ ЦИГАРА, КУПИ МИ СОК, СВАРИ КАФЕ БРАТ, ЦИГАРЕТО Е СТАНДАРД, ВО ЗАТВОР.

3 ЈАС НЕ ВЕРУВАМ ДЕКА АКО НЕКОЈ ЛАЖЕ ИЛИ МЕ КОРИСТИ Е МОЈ ГРЕВ КАКО МАЛ ОД БАБА БАРАВ 10 ДЕНАРИ ЗА ЦИГАРИ ДЕНЕС МИ Е СРАМ САКАМ ДА ЗАРАБОТАМ САМ.

Appendix M Individual River Journey Life Story Classroom Set Up

- Workshop positioning
- Grandiouse sense of self
- Ingrained criminal self
- Unempathetic
- Relationship with father
- Internalised Albanian values
- PER(e)forming process
- Over-optimistic perception of future

**Nodes clustered by coding similarity**

- PER(e)forming process
- Relationship with father
- Ingrained criminal self
- Over-optimistic perception of future
- Unempathetic
- Workshop positioning
- Grandiouse sense of self
- Internalised Albanian values

Appendix P Luani's Relationship with his Father: Initial Thematic Analysis - Organising Evidence with Sub-Themes removed for confidentiality reasons. The appendix contained sensitive data that might indicate the identity of the participant who is anonymous in the present study.

Appendix Q Luani's Relationship with his Father: Initial Thematic Analysis - Organising Evidence with Sub-Themes removed for confidentiality reasons. The appendix contained sensitive data that might indicate the identity of the participant who is anonymous in the present study.

# Appendix R Luani's Thematic Analysis - Examples of Codes

| Codes Clusters with Sub-Codes | | Initial Themes |
|---|---|---|
| *A sense of ingrained criminal self* | *Controlling* | |
| Born into a criminal background | Closed to intimate relationship | |
| Father as criminal | True Girlfriend | |
| Father's agency over his criminal background | *Deceptive in life* | |
| Indirect confession of crime | Deceptive in workshops | |
| Lack of agency over crime background | Girlfriend objectification | **3) Ingrained Criminal Self** |
| *Opportunistic* | | |
| Opportunistic in life | Manipulative behaviour | |
| Opportunistic in romantic relationships | Opportunistic in workshops | |
| *Distrustful of the researcher concerning crime* | | |
| *Father as the great life teacher* | | |
| Father's good pieces of advice | Emotional distance from father | **1) Relationship with Father** |
| Love for father the strongest | Supress emotion in prison | |
| Motivation to serve time | | |
| *Father's bad advice or memories* | **Broken-Hearted by Father** | |
| In prison for a relative's crime | | |
| *Grandiose sense of self* | **Conceited/Ego-driven** | |
| Favourite rap band | | |
| *Internalised Albanian values* | | **2) Internalised Albanian upbringing** |
| Distrust in women with no respect to Islam | Family blood vengeance | |
| Father authority as ultimate | Organised family crime | |
| *Mother as primary carer* | | |
| *Over-optimistic or unrealistic about the future* | | **4) Unrealistic Perception/Expectations of the Future** |
| Positive view of the past | Satisfaction with past experience | |
| Lack of shame | Pregnant Girlfriend | |
| Thought about staying away from crime | | |
| *Rap for personal expression* | | Writing about Life as Personal Growth |
| Poem based on father memory | Workshop interests | Music Making as a Source of Fulfilment |
| Valuing knowledge | Workshops as triggering meaningful reflections | |
| *Writing or music making process and beliefs* | | |
| A sense for rhythm | Dislike of rap plagiarism | **1) Re-Writing Real Life/ PER(e)forming Real Life** |
| Creative flow required to write good | Language barrier to write | |
| Making music as immersive | Love for music | |
| Making music as passionate | Strong affection to his raps | |
| Writing ideas as elusive | Write about real life | |

## Appendix S Luani's Thematic Analysis - Examples of Axial Coding

| Axial Coding | Contained Relations |
|---|---|
| • *A sense of ingrained criminal self*<br>• *Father as the great life teacher*<br>• *Father's bad advice or memories*<br>• *Internalised Albanian values* | Unresolved tensions in Relationship with Father |
| • *Controlling*<br>• *Deceptive in life*<br>• *Distrustful of the researcher concerning crime*<br>• *Opportunistic* | Learned Callous Survival Skills |
| • *Grandiose sense of self*<br>• *Over-optimistic or unrealistic about the future* | Unfounded Hope for the Future |
| • *Rap for personal expression*<br>• *Writing or music making process and beliefs* | Creative Flow/Process as Subjective Empowerement |

Following our conversation on masks, Luani made his first attempt to paint his own self-portrait as a mask in acrylics. He selected light purple to paint the mask. As can be observed in the initial version of the mask painting below, it's a fearsome self-portrait in the making. For example, the mouth has pointed teeth while the mask edges have a set of extensions that look like propellers. The eyes are presented in the shape of triangles one of which contains a human-shaped eye looking at the fearsome mouth. The educator Ivana and I left the arts and crafts materials for Luani to keep working on the self-portrait until the next session. Luani expectantly presented his painting at our next workshop shown in Figure 6.3.

**Luani's Self-Portrait Paintings removed for copyright reasons. The copyright holder is Luani.**

The second painting shows Luani's mask painted black preserving the original idea of its shape. The open mouth is red with a set of sharp pointed teeth. The eyes are here presented with two different geometrical shapes: the right eye as a blue circle, the left as a green triangle. Each nostril is represented with a geometrical figure corresponding to the shape of the eyes, at the very end of two vertical lines pointing towards the mouth. The mouth is striking because of its visceral and bloodthirsty rendition forming the central part of the mask.

In addition, Luani also used the painting as a deceptive tool to attract the researcher's attention with both its seductive and sinister tone. For example, the text written onto the masks' forehead, '…lov you', is directed at the researcher. The letter "o" contains a small ring painted on top of it, which, as Luani explained, stands for a ticking bomb, an explosive surprise. Moreover, Luani clarified that the mask with the propellers at its edges signalling a forward motion is "is coming at [the researcher]". Confirming he created the painting for the researcher, Luani silently embodied his dissatisfaction with the researcher's dismissal of his boundary crossing at the final performance event. He communicated this to the researcher establishing eye contact across the classroom performing an admonishing hand gesture. With the research disengaging, Luani withdrew from his pursuit. Poetic inquiry into the self-portrait as deceptive tool, yielded key insights connected to Luani's identity.

**[An Explosive Surprise: iLoveyou]**

The sender is not on your contact list

Text Message from iLoveyou

Friday 14:41

Show message

Block

**I** think **L** is a crooked gun
**O** is a ticking bomb
**V** is a pointed tooth
**E** is an impossible fork

YOU are no fool – "I never lie
I just stand halfway through
in shadows so you don't see me"
a text message is close
to a full disclosure, others say
– it's just kids playing around
will you play along, Miss, follow me
in dark alleys, (yes, my fingers
are pointed at you from across
the classroom) in the public eye
it's like smokes and mirrors –
come closer I'm coming closer

**Key insights:**

• Spatiotemporal embodiment of fearsomeness and seduction for unempathetic and deceptive self-interest
• Impression management and half-truths for unemptathetic and deceptive self-interest
• The necessity for research strategies to draw "undrawable boundaries" (Liebling, 2014).

Appendix U 6.2.2 Luani's Painting: A Self-Portrait – Use of the Blob Tree Expanded

Engaging in embodied perspective-taking, I drew a sketch of the prison, participants populating the prison yard, myself standing outside its gates. Locating another imaginary door as emphatic entry point into participant's lives I found it was blocked with an impermeable zone. The zone was a representation of post-fieldwork anxiety reinforced by the prejudiced prison narrative. Located in a claustrophobic cave, the zone was a dark-green pool of data in which I had been submerged, a positing that had become an obstacle to opening up the data. Guided by Fiona's reflective questions, I was able to face the mix of dread and instinct to repair the transgressive violence that left me powerless. The loss of human lives and implied homicide in the self-portrait was outside of the programme's and my responsibility as artographer while its gravity was brought to the attention of the prison psychologist. Repositioned in the data, I re-contextualised Luani's sensationalised criminality in his overarching life story (Blob tree activity is developed in Wilson and Long, 2009).
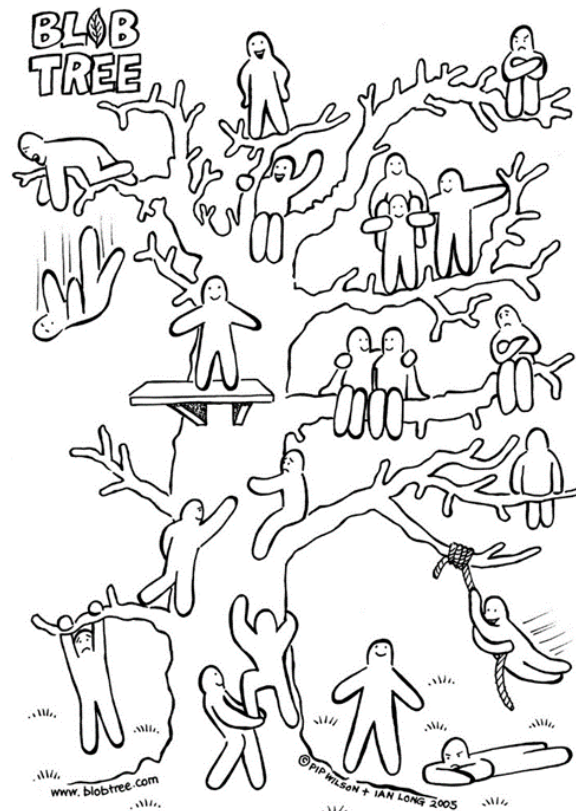
Appendix V Poetry from Prison Residents who Attended the Final Performance Event and Performed at the Open Mic

*Fieldwork reflections enabled me to see my own prejudices against the group of youth who were dislocated in the prison temporarily from a correctional facility. I grew to understand how ruthless prison hierarchy is and how removed and shielded I was from it as the visiting poet/educator/researcher. The collaborating educator and I decided to invite Roni, and two other willing prison residents, Matty and the Iron Dance to attend some of the creative workshops. Soon, in my interaction with the Iron Dance, as well as the open mic session when he and Roni showed us their break dance moves as well as taking part in a rhyming circle, it became clear to me how mistaken I was to assume that they would struggle to fit in or find the programme workshops valuable. At the rhyming circle participants listened to Roni construct his own lines orally watching his dance; even though some of the youth participants had their derisive smiles hidden under their amused faces, Roni and the Iron Dance had a sparkle in their eyes having been welcomed as part of the group and validated by the educators. It was a moment I realised my complicity in the othering of the kids and also the need for programmes to account for how the presence of poets/educators/researchers disrupts as much as perpetuates prison hierarchy and affects the spaces of bullying it encounters.*
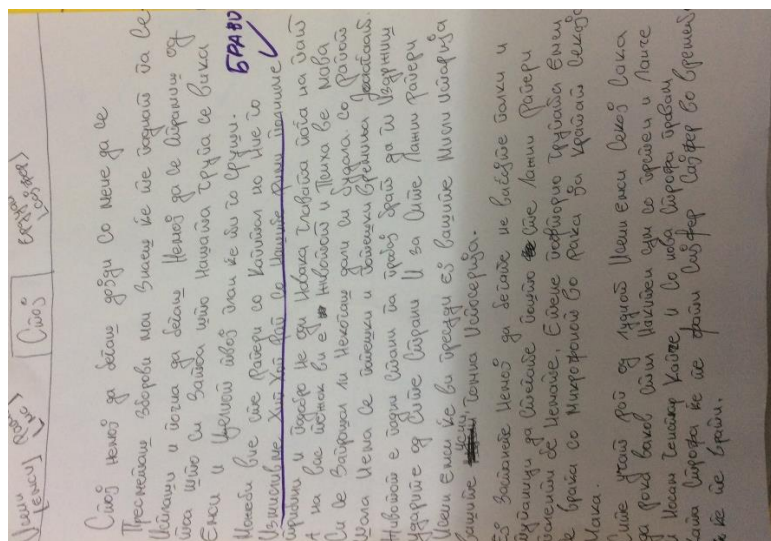


*In the follow up session after the performance, a group of the corrections prison youth approached me with a piece of paper of their own song they were eager to share with the educators. Even though some of their writing was interspersed by famous rap lyrics, the gesture of putting it on the page with their own lines and the desire to share this was an indicator of wanting to break through the veil of invisibility cast over some of their voices. These thirds spaces, are as much important as forging dialogue among educators and participants, as much as they affect a sense of potential rite of passage from being othered to being validated and seen. The Iron Dance, Roni, Matty, and the group of K. and B. were no longer the 'DTO kids' they too were the kids who brought their movement and voice into the creative space of the programme, they were poets too. This also meant that we did forge however brief, harmonious interactions. That said, the voice of Mane remained out of reach, a clear reminder that prison hierarchy and privilege shape creative spaces and poets/educators/researchers should be aware to acknowledge the goals and limitations of creative artistic practices as well as strive to realistically and mindfully alleviate as well as manage risks arising from how their presence and work in prisons affects and shapes the overall landscape of prison spaces and its residents' relations.*

Hello, hello
I'm coming home
I'm totally blazed
Hello father, hello mother
Hello brother
Why is nobody talking to me
Are you listening
Do I count in this house for anything?
Dad starts walking towards me
Staring dreadfully questioning me:
*Where have you been this whole week?*
*You just disappear, who do you think you are?*
*Look at me, tears running down my cheeks*
*You don't care for us; why do you keep doing this?*
*Tell me, what should I do with you?*
*My head will explode, my heart aches*
*Tell me son, I can't take it anymore*
*For God's sake I could never leave you*
*I can't step outside because of you*
*The police lurk around looking for you*
*You've become a big thug*
*Never wants to give up—*
Dad, dad, the crime keeps me alive
won't let me sink
*Is there a way out, is there a way out?*
*This kid has gone mad, I can't say anymore*
*Is there a way out?*
Dad, it's not hard to move on
To make some money on my own

To sell white or green
That's not a problem for me
I have learnt how to survive
ever since I was kid

Thank God for helping me out
I would give everything for my bros
They would give everything for me
There is only one group on my planet
OTR on top of the rest nobody can touch us
As soon as I go out I will do what they deserve
I live every day like it's the last day
...
I burn like embers no matter where I am
I fight like a lion without any fears
Half of my back can hold all the wings
I lie in bed and do not care for anything
Turn up the volume I wish to calm down
If someone is disturbed send my regards from Macedonia
My group has been fighting all their lives
Our lives are more than just nothing
I'm used to being locked up
I fight all my life I've been taught not to give up
I pray to God to forgive me
I dream I'm inside fire
The tears won't come out
God, wake me up from this devilish dream
They hate me, but I love you.

Appendix W Matrix: Young Offenders' Artistic Way of Being through the Artographic Spoken Word Poetry Programme

| Literatures | Research Qs | Findings | Discussion Points | Conclusions | Implications |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Burnard, 2011; Fisher, 2003; Gregory, 2014; Johnson, 2017; Kim, 2013; Lansana, 2004; Low, 2011; Nwosu, 2015; Weinstein, 2010. | What are the contributions of the arts practice of a new spoken word poetry programme in young offenders' lives in a Macedonian prison? | The programme as an artographic site enabled young offenders' artistic ways of being. | *Artographic model and young offenders artistic ways of being as poets* | Artistic Ways of Being through the Artographic Programme May Inform Young Offenders' Rehabilitation | Co-creating artographic sites for programmes |
| Brown, 2015; Bruin, Burnard, & Davis, 2018b; Collins, 1991; Graebner, 2007; Cremin, 2018; Somers-Willett, 2009; Cremin, Burnard, & Craft, 2006; Whitley, 2014. | A) What are the programme's elicited artistic responses and experiences in young offenders' lives in a Macedonian prison? | Young offenders saw the programme as making spaces, which included: 1) An *artistic site* 2) A *pedagogic site* 3) A *communal performance site* | *Artistic practice*: emotional courage, poetic play, subjective truth *Movement between artistic practice and pedagogy*: co-creating third spaces, counter-narratives, dialogic relating *Communal Performances*: vulnerable aesthetic space, audience validation | The Programme Enabled Possibilities for Young Offenders' Creative Agency | Putting distinct spoken word poetry creativities in practice centre stage |
| Colvin, 2015; Dymoke, 2017; Maruna, 2001; McAdams, 2018; McLean, Pasupathi, & Pals, 2007. | B) What meanings arise from young offenders' elicited artistic responses in their lives during the programme in a Macedonian prison? | The programme sites enabled young offenders': 1) poetic voice as resistance 2) relating with artists as alternative to traumatic pasts 3) communal validation of performed life experiences | *Artistic practice:* survivalist/criminal/poetic agency/self-empowerment *Movement between artistic practice and pedagogy*: pedagogic relating *Communal Performances*: audience validation of artistic ways of being | The Programme Unfolded Young Offenders' Alternative Ways of Being alongside a Perceived Criminal Immutability | Reframing performance communities as alternative way of being |

Appendix X An Imagined Letter to Participants (Parts Adapted for Prison Report)


*Note.*Even though I didn't stay in touch with the participants of the present study, I have prepared a report for the prison hoping that for some of the participants it will be possible to reflect on the programme with the prison staff. Some of the participants will have served their time and returned to their families, some will have the difficult prospect of crossing barriers of reintegration upon release in a scarce socio-political climate and lack of support networks. Here, I wish to articulate to the young people what I found and some of the things that they can do to harness them in their lives.

*Dear Luani, Jess, MC B, Spear, Deki, and Koni,*

*Thank you for letting me in into your lives and sharing your life experiences as part of the programme in the prison. I am honoured to have been able to witness your multiple distinct talents while creating and learning together alongside a community of artists, educators and prison staff.  The time I spent developing the programme with you as the heart of the present PhD thesis is the most valuable experience in my life because it has taught me three critical things about the role programmes can play in improving human life:*

*Firstly, I saw you're how you build up a courage to make the choice to take a risk and examine your lives in the spaces of the programme through conversations about your most cherished hip hop artists through exploratory talk about different art forms, and dialogue during breaks and workshops about the difficulties of your situation like social inequalities and lack of opportunities we know well that shape the trajectory to crime and imprisonment. I saw how you used your life experiences, imaginative thought in writing, oral creating, and performing at open mics. I saw you grow over the course of the programme in how you expressed your opinions and voices in writing and in performance trusting the artists and yourselves more by the end of the programme. Your artistic growth and gradual move from writing about things like cooking that was not as close to your hearts as it was to write about your fathers and mothers and friends the times when those relationships were hurting, the times when you were disappointed and you disappointed them were a lesson in vulnerability that helped me and the other artists to challenge stereotypes we all have about lack of talent for young people wo drop out of school and have criminal records. Your performances bear witness to your distinct artistic voices of resisting trauma and societal labelling that bears the hallmark of artistry valuable in its own right. This is particularly valuable because you did it even though from day one it was obvious to me that the trajectories of your lives and personal relationships have taught you not to trust others and to avoid vulnerability at all cost. I want you to know that you are artists and poets and performers and your artistry I appreciate and value your poetry and verses for their craft and for their ability to confront the uncomfortable realities of your lives and offer new ways of seeing yourselves not only for yourselves but for others too, and that is one of the tasks of a poet as researcher, to clarify ways of seeing, so in this way, you are researchers of life too. You told me that after the performance event you were surprised to learn that you felt more confident in yourself and how you interact with others and the positive feedback from your peers and for some from, your families. I learnt that your artistry and agency to express yourselves and to stand up for yourselves is not a surprise because you are*

*capable of exerting and performing different types of agencies which affirm your power to have a degree of control in your life that you have felt you didn't outside of crime. And this matters, because we all need to believe as a society to change the narrative of young people who navigate adversities and crime doing so that you too will move towards imagining and growing to believe that you are not beyond redemption as many of you believe and as society wants us all to believe.*

*Secondly, how we develop, facilitate and implement programmes has to involve your contributions as human beings first and foremost, to listen to your stories and relate as people. You taught me that listening is something that is much needed inside the prison and a type of listening that doesn't judge or label people. Hence, the spaces we co-created involved non-judgmental listening and acknowledging the things we as artists/educators and outsiders to prison didn't know. It was through sharing different types of spoken arts from across cultures and in different languages, and time periods that we were able to relate to one another and begin to open up spaces that were new. These third spaces were enabling of humanising connections as we saw elements of our shared humanity through the poetry of artists before us and our artistic community. Reading about experiences of other people in prison like the art book created by Serbian ex-offenders, helped us remove some of the shame and stigma of the pains of imprisonment and narrow the barriers that our life experiences and different opportunities has created. Your input into the facilitation of the programme and collaboration meant that the art we shared discussed and created informed the ways in which it can serve as education and offer developing connections and a sense of communion and belonging that are crucial for developing a sense of self that incorporates human dignity and honours the value of human life.*

*Thirdly, you can transform any space into a space for performing your poetry and art and bring this into your expressed desire to pursue formal education and for some of you can integrate your creative processes in painting and writing into the active pursuit of vocational training and expressed desire to rebuild your lives. You can spend time both in prison and after release to continue the sense of confidence in your voice, and talk to others, your friends and venture into new friendships perhaps a little less burdened by the shame of your criminal records and the newfound realisation that education and the possibility for redemption happens in different forms and settings when people are willing to do and try something different, as you both told me and showed me with engaging with poetry and a mix of artistic activities.*

*I'm grateful for your willingness to share your childhood stories, your losses, your fears, and your turning points, and your hopes. Thank you for showing me new ways of seeing Macedonian culture and cities, and family way of life across ethnic backgrounds, and for the incredible resilience of navigating adversity and difficult decision-making and finding indirect means to survive, and for showing me that you are able to grapple with the urges to numb down emotion and begin to question some of what you have been raised and repeatedly told to believe in. I hope that you will have more opportunities to see that crime doesn't have to define your lives what your participation in the programme helped me see.*

*Kindest wishes,*
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