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IN PRISON
A Clinical Diary

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Despite the shocked public sensibilities arising from periodic news items of flagrant abuses in prisons in the U.S. and abroad, community attitudes most often resemble distracted indulgence, polite disregard or frank disdain. A cultural unconsciousness of the prison interior is not without cost however, and hopelessness is a usual outcome on both sides of the wall. For the purpose of promoting an understanding of this world and those who live within it, a psychoanalytic perspective is taken in the psychological work which is done there, including assessment and individual and group therapy. A psychoanalytically styled reflection and methodology in clinical contacts tempers the insidious and unrelenting pull toward mindlessness so endemic to institutional settings while opening a space for wonderment, hope, and growth within inmates and staff.

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> *I committed murder and I think I got away. I'm hiding at my mother's house. Come get me right away, right away.*—Macy Gray, "I've Committed Murder"

I have come to the prison rather late in my professional career, having traveled by way of hospitals, schools, clinics, a foreign land, and an overbridled youth followed by a lengthy period of rebellion and politics fevered with a liberal disposition. Gradually, I have come to understand prison as a metaphor for many aspects of my own life and for the cast of American culture. It has taken much time before I could bring myself to write about it, but I understand that this is not an uncommon reaction, as Oscar Wilde comments: "I hope to write about prison life and to try and change it for others, but it is too terrible and ugly to make a work of art of. I have suffered too much in it to write plays about it" (Holland & Hart-Davis, 2000, p. 798).

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Prison, in various ways, speaks about both the inner and outer world of individual being, the culture of so-called freedom within which such captivity exists and (in some countries) proliferates, and the reality of mortality.

John Donne (1640) dourly reminds:

> We are all conceived in close prison; in our mother's wombs, we are close prisoners all; when we are born, we are born but to the liberty of the house; prisoners still though within larger walls; and then all our life is but a going out to the place of execution, to death. (Potter & Simpson, 1955/1619, p. 197)

In 2000 and 2001, I wrote about some of the facets of the incarceration experience which had come to my notice and which I have found both interesting and disturbing. It is likely no more a shocking revelation now than it was then that there is a certain irresistible inclination in the prison system to deteriorate into mindlessness . . . to become one with the rage and emptiness which is the aura of everyday life there. Even psychologists are recreated into automatons, doing the bidding of the state's authorities to provide cosmetic service while avoiding any true understanding of the severely psychopathic people who inhabit the prison world. This does not appear to be instrumental; it is not for the sake of money or time or efficiency. In fact, our unit research suggests a drop in efficiency when rote orderliness, quantity, and routine "case management" are the priority.

Along this line, one of the most glaring indicators of captivity is the tendency to classify and pigeonhole for the purpose of control. The establishment seems to demand that prisoners be placed in categories, that they be characterized and relegated to identifiable groupings. In this technological process, they are divested of uniqueness, in short, of what individualizes and humanizes. A prisoner at the Reception Center captures it: "People think that everyone are the same."

Behind prison walls the "king's head remains to be cut off" (Lechte, 1994, p.114). That is, despite the dispersal of power throughout our society in a relatively even fashion, prison remains a juridical institution where power is viewed as being possessed by one or a group, and it is centralized (Foucault, 1975). Inmates as well as staff members, including psychologists, seem to bend to this idea despite the relative freethinking that exists in many other areas of our field and a free society in general. I marvel, at times, of how easily some adhere to arbitrary procedures for performing psychological tasks because they have been authorized by "central office" and the reactionary and resistant stance, which accompanies such usage and deployment of centralized power. So, it's either lock your steps or rebel. I marvel at this phenomenon in myself as well despite the awareness that power and truth are, at root, historical and fickle constructs which vary from situation to situation and which may be culture-bound. In other words, absolutism has its most faithful adherents in the confined and confining space that is a prison.

Prison is an anachronism, almost a caricature of schooling and often a mirror of the military. Evelyn Waugh (1928) once said: "Anyone who has been to an English public school will always feel comparatively at home in prison" (p. 120). The components of this juridical power worth noting are that it consists in the discipline of the body of the captives through technique or technology and surveillance of the many by the few. Per Foucault, the birth of the prison has paralleled the notion since the 19th century that knowledge, specifically knowledge of people, is power. As an aside, one can see how the health care professional is a tool for the furtherance of this modern notion of power.

This is a power over the body first and foremost; an essential power and domination which implies a gratuitous power over mind and soul. Psychologically, it is a power which

originates in the mother-infant dyad and antedates the Oedipal triad. It can be a power which obliterates since it is not that far from prebirth nothingness and has not far to go to postdeath annihilation of self. I will tell a story of this power.

As an employee of the state prison system over a nearly 10-year period, I have seen a number of prisoners determined to pursue a hunger strike. This desperate action often occurs shortly after being remanded to segregation due to a prison offense but can also occur as the individual first enters the prison setting. Usually the person has expressed indignation for some perceived injustice and the wish to make a dramatic impact through refusing food is practically universal. There has been little or no attention to this subject in the literature, and the effects of not eating have been sparsely dealt with, usually in the context of discussions of anorexia nervosa or starvation in third world countries.

The obvious association I would have to hunger striking within the prison setting is similar to that with which I am familiar in the anorexic (Lawrence, 2001) . . . the ultimate retaliation against mother . . . a refusal of her milk of life . . . and a desire for her to watch a slow death much as she must have awaited the dawning life within herself. Within the bowels (or womb) of the prison, the convict grows thinner . . . away from life and freedom . . . deeper into the tomb of his own inner desolation. It does not feel like a hospitable womb but, rather, a hostile one . . . one in which nothing and no one can grow.

Mr. A. arrived at our medium security prison and distinguished himself by the nature of his crime, which attracted the interest of our health care staff because of its unusual heinousness. Apparently at the behest of a friend, he and several others had participated in the brutal rape and mutilation of a young woman resulting in permanent damage to her vagina, rectum, and internal organs from the insertion of foreign objects. There was little information otherwise. He was a younger child in a large family with a strict, domineering hyper-religious patriarch. Mr. A. had been detained in the segregation unit for drug smuggling and was required to undergo a body cavity search involving a rectal exam to see if he carried contraband. He protested this indignity vehemently and fought the male examining physician with all his energy. He lost the fight, and one could not escape the obvious association that the examination and his protest and resistance had with a rape of a male by another male. Such was the "working model of meaning" that I brought with me to our meeting when, a few days later, he had declared a hunger strike.

At this point, it might be helpful to know that mental health professionals of whatever ilk have a very limited amount of time to "give it their best shot." When working in a prison, interventions are frequently limited to a single meeting. I am often reminded of Freud on his Alpine vacation (Freud & Breur, 1893/1995) and his one time encounter with the landlady's daughter, Katharina. The first case of "brief psychoanalytic therapy" was an in depth exploration of a young woman's hysterical neurosis. We are not given any idea of the outcome of the depth analysis of her symptoms but we are given to believe that she did have some understanding of herself that she didn't have before she conversed with Freud. In prison, we can often expect no more than this.

Mr. A. was determined to continue with his hunger strike. He was "innocent" he claimed, and of course, he was innocent of everything else he had done as well. These earlier matters were not open for discussion, but the task of the day was to address his strike and to hear his story such as he could tell. He was indignant about being "defiled" and haphazardly threw biblical-sounding phrases at me willy nilly. The religious material seemed fragments of verses latched together in a feeble attempt to "prove" something although it was difficult to fathom what that was. The idea that fire and brimstone would be visited upon us all occurs to me. Suppressing a rising tide of fury at the audacity of his claims to victim status, I reminded myself that behind the bluster there likely lurked a

childhood history of maltreatment. I listened to what he had to say and agreed that the situation was truly awful. It seemed, I told him, that he had no control over anything in his life and that others were in control over everything. I acknowledged that he would want to regain control over his body and that a hunger strike was certainly his option since only he could decide to eat or not, no one could force him. It seemed like a good idea I granted him. In a situation in which even the smallest of decisions was out of his hands, when he had no power or authority over anything concerning himself, the one thing that he did have control over was whether he would take care of his body and how he would choose to do it. I did express the concern however, that he would eventually lose control of his body again when the effects of starvation set in; that, in essence, the prison authorities would likely take over his bodily functions again and he, if he had some degree of brain damage, would not be able to protest. He also might need to keep his wits about him to fight the charges of drug possession. I did not overtly encourage him one way or the other. The choice was his, I said. Implicit in my words however, lay an offer he could hardly refuse.

He wrote to me shortly afterward and his need to maintain a sense of his own authority was unmistakable. He "apologized" and asked "forgiveness" for his

> rudeness if I was perhaps a little *intagonistic* (sic) in my intellectual flamboyant behavior. I realize your heart was in the right place even if your higher education in psychology leaves you dogmatic in your beliefs that there has to always be a hidden reason or motive behind any inappropriate or illogical behavior. This is a fallacy with psychology in that it works on the premise that everyone who acts irrational at times cannot admit to the reality of their situation causing their inappropriate conduct.

He continued:

> My self diagnosis as I tried to explain to you is that I am very religious with the belief that my body is a temple and I am responsible for keeping it holy and clean as best I can not letting it be defiled or exposing my nakedness to a person of the same sex. I was distraught over the fact that it happened and that I couldn't stop it from happening. The fact of knowing that it could happen again at anytime and that I cannot stop it from happening *unless I am dead* . . . And the way it made me feel so unclean as if I were a *leaper* (sic) makes me truly prefer death than having it happen again to me.

He would end his hunger strike, but he must let me know that nothing I said had convinced him. Rather, it was God-Father in whom he took refuge, who did so. The unwanted sexual thrill engendered by the body cavity search activated a yearning which was terrorizing to him. He reconciled his fear/wish of primitive merger by aligning himself with the hyper-religious father while disowning/debasing the submissive/receptive self and restoring omnipotence. Mr. A's pretentious show of apology for the dubiously reprehensible crime of "intellectual flamboyance" seemed a response to the added affront that the intellection of the psychologist had on this impotent self. His affected manner made a caricature of knowledge and meaning and expressed the disorganization resulting from intense annihilation anxiety and attempt to regain an unassailable position for himself. My thinking and my thoughts were a further peril—an unwanted intercourse and a bid toward depositing of foreign and destructive objects into the "temple." The thought of being force fed may have added to the threat and further prevented the use of coherent thinking. Despite years of assaultive crimes and involvement in grisly brutality, he was an innocent. Rather, in his world, nakedness, vulnerability,

and an intense longing for a malevolently experienced father was his principal offense. His feeble posturing attempts must serve as a poor consolation for loss of self.

Things regarding Mr. A. were quiet for a few months or so, as far as I knew. Then one day, I was apprised by one of the nurses that a patient had been sent to the hospital for having shoved a broken bottle up his rectum. It was Mr. A. I never got a chance to see him again; however, I had some explanatory hypotheses for this behavior. His action seemed a self-inflicted punishment for his homosexual longings accompanied by an intense and murderous hatred directed at the promptings from his insides. I recalled his words: "I cannot stop it from happening unless I am dead." If he could kill it, destroy the feeling completely, he could then be supreme. Perhaps he was attempting to redeem himself from his defilement at the hands of another male and the brief sexual excitement it brought as much as the years of submissive and likely eroticized and stimulating involvement in criminal activity with his male associates . . . "so unclean, as if (he) were a leaper." Mr. A.'s identification with father's religious passion keeps father with him while attempting to destroy the unbearable yearning internally as well, the symbolic father—the breeding ground of thought—is cut to pieces. The interesting preoccupation of Mr. A. demonstrates an electrically charged ambivalence toward father, the nature of which must be repeatedly staged on the bodies of self and others. His involvement in the offense that brought him to prison was as an extension of a more powerful gang member who apparently planned and encouraged the gruesome event. His submission to father, gang leader, doctor, and the shattering and disorganization of his self image necessitated a drastic action to regain agency. In any case, only aggressive action involving the body was imbued with meaning. Thoughtfulness was not to be tolerated.

In some respects the sovereignty of aggressive action over thought in Mr. A's case reminded me of another man I saw who was in for murder when he stabbed his victim many times and cut off her finger to take her ring. He was seen by health professionals close to a hundred times over a two to three year span for numerous somatic complaints and accident proneness. Many of those accidents involved cutting his fingers while working in the kitchen. His defensiveness when presented with these coincident events suggested that ideas and thinking were more terrorizing for him than any actual physical threat.

Both men's actions are suggestive also of the fierce hatred toward the paternal, exemplified by the phallus, with continued dependent love of it. In this they are similar to the cases of transsexuals wishing to cut off their penis while creating liaisons to acquire another, prison slashers who wish to cut up the guards while insuring continued domination from them, and career criminals who repetitively cut off their own chances of success in the "real world" while securing their place in a permanent state cell. They represent the extreme end of a vast ocean of fatherless, father-hungry enraged men whose single mothers and extended families hold deep resentments toward these prodigal sons and husbands and the culture that encourages them. There seems an especially strong envy, too, in a society in which patriarchal dominance brings outstanding fortune and might to a visible portion of its inhabitants while generations of the disenfranchised dwell in impotent hopelessness.

Such episodes and enactments suggest as well, that there is a tendency in some to use the body as a theater in the tradition of Joyce McDougall (1989) but, in this more perverse strategy, to utilize the body of self and another as well. I am reminded of the inmate who tells me repeatedly about the danger of closeness. He tells me he has pushed his sister away, the only person who has shown him support. He has attempted to assault a female officer who he professes to love. He tells me he set fire to himself because there was a little

bald man's head coming out of his thigh and telling him he would die. This illusion is most likely to occur and terrorize him when he is in bed and in that twilight time between wakefulness and sleep. It is an alien, he tells me. He must do something. After some digression, he tells me he has set other fires. The first time he remembers is at the age of three when he tried to kill his infant sister by setting a fire near her while she lay sleeping. He is convinced in his recollection that he has done this because he wanted to be an only child. Given other material of the interview, I am more convinced that this was an idea which he had somehow derived from his relationship with mother. I tell him "Perhaps you are now trying to get rid of that little bald baby, the way that you felt gotten rid of. You are satisfying mother's wish for you, an alien in the family, repeating something which would have been severely traumatizing for you and confirming your own dangerousness, so the terror of being mother's helpless victim will not consume you." The prisoner, says "Mmmm. I've never really thought of it that way." His symptom may not subside, but he *is* thinking.

Another notable hunger striker could not speak English and had been hostile and mute for days. The interpreter reminded me that men from the Middle East had some significant problems with women of status. Since he was serving time for a prolonged incestuous relationship with his daughter, I could not imagine his mutism turning to loquaciousness in my presence. We saw him in his segregation cell where the stench was overpowering to the interpreter. I must have had a type of negative hallucination because I never smelled anything but a mild objectionable odor; this in contrast to my first year in the reception center when the stink of the prison lingered in my nostrils long after I had left for the day for much of the time.

The same basic approach was applied with this hunger striker as with the other, but given his mutism, it was a one-way conversation, translated. I acknowledged aloud to him that his body was his to control or not as the case may be. He glared at me part of the time, and the other part of the time he looked at the wall in what seemed to me, a gesture of defiance. He could, after all, decide to speak or not. I conceded all these rights, which he maintained. I also made mention of the fact that he would continue to maintain this control until the inevitable occurred and he could no longer decide on his own behalf for his body because of the effects of his malnourished state. At this time, others would take control of his body as they had everything else in his life and force-feed him. Like Mr. A., this inmate was in prison for a sex offense with a female victim which involved both physical injury and severe debasement. The idea that he would again be subject to female control and substances forced into his body may have been too much for him to bear. Determining that this was a fate worse than life itself perhaps, he took to eating the next day.

Such bargaining did not have the same effect on three inmates whose determination to elude medical care for life-threatening but curable illnesses was unyielding. Death came eventually to one. The others held firmly to a belief that they would soon be paroled because of their respective illnesses, and it appeared that their use of body authority would eventually win them freedom one way or the other. However, the body would be sacrificed in the process.

What I said to the prisoners was fictional. They do not have control over their bodies. Their bodies in some sense belong to the state. Just as in military life, the body is not one's own. It is to be deployed or deprived or fed or nursed or simply ignored as it pleases the state. Further, this possession of the body of the condemned is a regression-inducing phenomenon for both the actor and for the subject. As Nietzche suggests, "He who fights with monsters should be careful lest he thereby become a monster. And if thou gaze long into an abyss, the abyss will also gaze into thee" (1907/1886, p. 97). Toxicity consistent

with a career in corrections or in police work is very apparent from the many lurid news reports involving employees. It takes a physical toll. It takes a mental toll. The actor is swallowed alive.

In 2002, I commented on the Stanford Prison Experiments of the 70s. Both the "normal" college students who took on roles as prisoners or guards and the researchers and visitors were drawn into a sadomasochistic behavioral pattern and conflicts about which all perspective-taking was lost. It took an outsider (the experimenter's fiancé) to help people realize what was taking place and to end the experiment after six days. Such regressive relationships, occurring particularly in some institutions, require a considerable vigilance in those who live and work there (Williams, 1994).

The necessity of maintaining a distinction between keeper and kept is visited in the realm of guilt, the partialing out of which can give considerable power. In another twisted version of a modern morality play, the admission of guilt seems overvalued by professionals and nonprofessionals alike and may at times have primacy over truth (Gartland, 2002). As is demonstrated in Franz Kafka's early 20th century short story "The Penal Colony" (1919), it has a tendency to enhance the power of the captor and punctuate the artificially constructed difference between the inmate and the staff. Such a resultant demonization resonates with Daniel DeFoe's lament 200 years ago: "I hear much of people's calling out to punish the guilty, but very few are concerned to clear the innocent." There is a correlative idea during our current cultural epoch.

Generally, the U.S. prison phenomenon represents a country's denial and tendency to abrogate responsibility outside itself, a phenomenon which may be mirrored in international politics. When one has the power, it is easy to render the other as invisible. Recently, Paul Gendreau (2003), a Canadian psychologist of some repute, put forth the comment that U.S. prison policy has been mired in a "nothing works" philosophy that has spanned decades. He observes that American penology focuses on actuarial data and instruments, which quantify rather than look at the make-up of the individual. The basis of risk assessment is an emphasis on the crime itself and various historical and environmental factors which are unchangeable rather than on alterations in character, attitude, or motivations coming about through aging, therapy, the prison experience, or other circumstances. There is also an overwhelming emphasis today in psychological circles on the biological explanations rather than learned phenomena and a current inclination toward defining psychopathy (a particular form of malignant narcissism) as an "evil incarnation" in order to place the phenomenon outside the pale of human experience and exclude the individual from programming or serious study. This "myth of the bogeyman" was noted in a presentation by Irwin in 1985 (as cited in Maruna, 2000) and, though the form of the monster may have changed over the past 20 years, criminal essentialism remains a dominant theme around which much policy and programming is created.

There is purportedly no repair for pedophilia, no healing for psychopathy, no alteration possible in perverse character and rather tired, overworked characterizations of inmates, which do not distinguish one from another. There persists an emphasis on the difference between keeper and kept which is of paramount concern. If "nothing works," we can maintain the prison population of badmen and madmen and be daily reinforced in a belief in our own sanctity and mental integrity. We do not have to, thoughtfully, wonder about ourselves as doers and perpetrators and perpetuators.

Despite artificial distinctions, a lapse of distance is perpetually revisited, perhaps as a projective identification, a sign of traumatic repetition or a stimulus to forbidden desire, merger, or defiance. It shows up in relations with other objects such as time, space, and

mental processes. In prison, the structures of time and space, for example, take on a deified quality with prisoners and employees operating in abject fealty to their supremacy (Gartland, 2002). The corollary for time and space concerns in everyday prison life is mental space and time, which often exemplify the compromised emotional distance necessary for comfortable relationships. In short, time and space may well be representative of relations to primary objects.

In one case, a prisoner expresses the wish to see me because of his 102-year-old grandmother's death. He wants to be alone. He is in a two-man cell in a low level of security. Those with private "apartments" in prison are mostly those who have severe behavioral problems or an assaultive criminal offense. We discuss his background. He is the youngest of 11 children. He gives a confused version of how he came to be in prison, his offense. This is quite a common form of interaction. The listener frequently cannot decipher these stories as they are overly detailed with irrelevancies in some areas and with glossed over or omitted material in others, often delivered in a disjointed and hasty fashion. One is left with a feeling of having been "taken for a ride" as if seated in a train attempting to get a fix on landmarks, frustrated, unable to stop the train, and mostly only able to get a general idea of the landscape. In this man's story, there is a hodgepodge of people whose roles in the story seem fluid and bewildering.

The inmate had an extensive history of drug dealing but was not considered assaultive. His request for more space alone is accompanied by the impression that he can't think otherwise. His thoughts are disorganized. He can't put them together, he says. They are "cluttered." His two-man cell is suffocating him. He feels "squeezed." He has tried to get a private room in the segregation unit so he can grieve. He has been told that one is not available. He is getting angry and wants solitude and begins to make demands on his cellmate and me for same. Now, it is I who feels "squeezed."

We discuss the difference between inside (mental) space and outside (prison) space and the internal habitat containing the record and its embellishments and meanings from his past in a way that he can understand. It is suggested that his experience of a lack of personal space in childhood has contributed to an illusion that he has inadequate mental space for organizing his thoughts and separating out the clutter. The figures in his internal space press themselves upon him with their various seductions, gratifications, and companionships. He associates that it is his family who have lured him into crime. If the other members hadn't been "caught up," he would not have become involved. We discuss the possibility of creating various areas internally with which to give freedom, solitude. This is something that, despite the prison sentence, no one can take away from him. The death of the 102-year-old matriarch is the occasion of a swell in this man's defenses of confusion and action, struggle for space and individuality, some aggression in attempting to achieve these narcissistic goals, and the general inclination away from internality despite the yearning to go within. I am pressured in both directions as well and experience, as I often do, being taken hostage to the inmate's dual needs. But he will not have "prison space," any more than he could have had mother all to himself. Hopefully though, he will mourn this poignant loss.

Time is also a revered structure and tends to be experienced as painfully slow and inexorably bleak. There can seem no linearity in the construct. Time may be encountered as an enemy which threatens from behind or from ahead, or time is a tease: remaining suspended, on the edge but never quite within one's grasp. Although one adheres to chronological time as a fairly dependable object, there is a logical time, which can be asymmetrical, lacking in forward movement (Evans, 1996). One is dislocated, out of order. The narrative flows but not in an expected fashion. Cause and effect are con-

founded; events do not adhere to narrative order. All such perceptions are relational in nature. The following interaction illustrates such time distortion:

Through the prison message system, an inmate lets me know that he is desperate and that he wants to kill himself. All such missives and allusions are dealt with rapidly, and I "call him out" to come to my office. When he arrives, he is in no perceptible hurry. He discusses his daily life as burdensome. He has "too much time to do." He feels very disheartened. The normal suicide assessment is undertaken. Yes, he does want to kill himself. Yes, he has made plans. "Please tell about your plans," I say. He then indicates that he will kill himself by having sex with an inmate who has AIDS. He has no other arrangement in mind nor any specific plan on how this procedure will be activated nor how he will be able to find out who has AIDS and who doesn't. However, he is adamant. Neither the time involved in carrying out this plan nor its practicality in general is an issue, and as for myself, his intention is taken seriously. We examine his wish for self destruction as if the threat were imminent, wonder about the meaning and motive behind his choice of suicide means, and we look at alternative outcomes for his life (since we have a bit of time to do so). My working within his illusion might have brought us further understanding, if we only had more time.

On the other hand, most suicidal scenarios are associated with more ready actions; the necessity of seeing the health provider immediately or he might die, the hasty exploitation of an opportunity with seemingly little aforethought, a sudden reaction to a disappointment which is taken as a death sentence. In these scenarios, mother prison is on top of us, killing us with her desperate pleas.

Prison is composed of a population of people who are being forcibly deterred from action, action which has dominated their experience of their life. The action that was undertaken was, for the most part, hasty and imperative. There remains a sense of urgency and a lack of awareness that there is any difference between thought and action. There is a collapsing of both time and space, leaving no alternatives, no choices but which are action modeled. Most often, there is no conscious awareness or understanding that one has a fantasy life or an internal world of any sort. Although the influence of fantasy and thought is obvious, there is a surprising lack of willingness to acknowledge, create, or shape personal space for intellective pursuits. There is a killing of meaning, an obdurate and relentless sense of behavior without belief, movement without motive. As Chasseguet-Smirgel says, "Thinking: that is the enemy" (1984, p. 120).

Such a state of affairs is mirrored by the "system." Any person steeped in antisocial offending can tell you he had not a thought for punishment, morals, or any similar notions before taking action yet, as I mentioned in 2000:

> . . . general consensus . . . [upholds] the notion that people act out of a threat or promise from the future or from some environmental restraint rather than as an expression of what lies within themselves. Thus, we are moral or courteous or nonmurderers only because there is a heaven or hell or because of prison, lethal injection, or a police officer lurking behind the next corner. In consequence, the only legitimate course is an action-based one in which there must be more prisons, more executions, more policing, more churches. (Gartland, 2000, p. 327)

The psychological corseting by which both the prisoner and employee are often bound in the interest of order, efficiency, and lawfulness seems to inhibit creativity, good will, and drive the experience of helplessness and hopelessness without end. The keeper and the kept are both deadened in the "dungeon dark" as one prisoner put it: "We are fugitives from our own minds." Attention is outside, not inside. Therefore who or what will lead them/us to the light?

Peter Fonagy and Mary Target commented in 1999 " the lack of capacity to think about mental states may force individuals to manage thoughts, beliefs and desires in the physical domain, primarily in the realm of body states and processes" (p. 53). In 2000, I noted with Fonagy, "The childhood abuse victim 'who coped by refusing to conceive of their attachment figure's thoughts, and thus avoided having to think about their caregiver's wish to harm them' typifies our cultural insensitivity to and intolerance of what might be the internal world of the disenfranchised other" (Gartland, 2000, p. 328). Despite evidence that punishment does little to deter crime (Gendreau, Goggin & Cullen, 1999), we continue to act as if this is the only viable solution. A disregard for past and present, a misplaced focus on the future, outside of the now and out of our hands, to control; a focus on people—typing, mass application of behavioral method which discourages independent thought all reflect the incessant demand to control without reflection; to control the body.

In my view, there are a number of theoretical ideas inside psychoanalysis which can be employed to understand the psychopathic character and theater and to cultivate the establishment of creative space within the prison structure and within the individual inmate's mind. These are based in notions taken from Jacques Lacan (Evans, 1996; Fink, 1997, Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel (1984); Henry Krystal (1988); Joyce McDougall (1989); Peter Fonagy (1999a, 2002).

The perverse character and prison structure is an "anal universe" with a disintegration of individual components and no standards, anchors, or familiar boundaries. Like that found in jungle warfare, there is no guide post to provide a pathway out. Rather, this is a circular world in which the only outcome is the gravitational downward pull and the slow and certain annihilation of distinction. The downward pull bespeaks a relaxing of the ethical value or any editorializing on behaviors and instead, one becomes the thing, the emotion. In this world, there is no victim and no perpetrator, and artificial distinctions are only maintained for expediency's sake. The guard wears black, and the inmate wears blue. In this world, among other individualizing characteristics, those of gender and age are collapsed. Even language is destroyed as a meaningful, informative, communicative construct. But then, in order to communicate, there must be two entities, and in the anal world, there are not two; only one. Is it any wonder that time is not perceived as following the natural law? About this, Oscar Wilde (1937/1898) once wrote:

> I know not whether Laws be right or whether Laws be wrong;
> all that we know who live in gaol is that the wall is strong; and
> that each day is like a year, a year whose days are long. (p. 35)

As a resistance to the reality of the Oedipal dyad (Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1984), the personal wants and desires are pursued. Yearning for the paradise of exclusive maternal preoccupation, the perverse resistor will not let go his determination for the tennis shoes, the banker's money, the dealer's drug, the sexual desserts of companion or body within his range of vision. There is no difference between himself and the object of desire. These two are profoundly intertwined but as fecal matter without generativity, like mud slapped against a wall. There is obliviousness to the reality of the third element in the picture . . . that the shoes belong to someone else, that the alcohol has an accompanying withdrawal. Mother is a metaphor for the desired object whether it is someone else's money or someone else's body. All the denials in between: the refusal to see differences in the genders ("she could have fought me off"), in the ages ("even though he was 5-years-old, he seduced me into having sex with him"), in the roles (the officer-staff and inmate), and so forth exemplify the determination not to face the reality of the Oedipal situation.

The psychopathic tradition of collapsed margins operating within a bounded universe and separated from community standards is interestingly demonstrated in the concerns of a notorious serial murderer, one of the most prolific in history, who likens his psychological positioning to the theme of *The Matrix*. This 1999 movie, a 21st century echo of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, presents an allegory of the sometimes violent fight for independence and survival of the self in the process of development. As Morpheus, "the most dangerous man alive," reminds the infant Christ figure, Neo: "The Matrix is everywhere. It is all around us. . .the world that has been pulled over your eyes to blind you from the truth." In this particular case, the ongoing internecine conflict engendered in the extraction and growth of the individual personality from the compelling exertion and seduction of the annihilative mother provided the contextual source for the murder of many young women. In order to escape his "plugged in" existence, he took a "final solution" approach. Accepting the limits of the social world while continuing to create a new and individual one was, nevertheless, an unreachable goal for this man. Ironically, the inmate, having already expired 20 years of a life sentence, is continually unaware of the consequences of an inability or refusal to accept the limitations of his humanness and is, therefore, truly confined: "The world is a prison. You are a slave, born into bondage, born into a prison that you cannot smell or touch; a prison for your mind. Welcome to the real world" (Silver & Wachowski, *The Matrix*, 1999).

In the prison setting, a denial of the third presence and the triangularity that such presence emplaces creates a general atmosphere of spatial distortion and loss of distance. There is a radical departure from agreed upon, consensual involvement in some third goal so that top down management and oppression of desire is maintained; in so many words "shit flows downhill." In a primitive style of relating, prisoners and guards may mirror each other while artificial, physical boundaries are maintained in a stiff, unyielding fashion "on the rock." Although "security" is the applauded principle, a fear-determined, boundary-making does not set the stage for a truly creative and effective containment; in fact, it may exacerbate the very insurrective or destructive process that one is trying to suppress. Fear of one's own and other's aggressiveness has annihilative characteristics all its own since it distracts from the mechanisms that can be truly helpful.

It would seem useful, considering the exigencies of the prison system, to introduce a third term, a symbolic other which mitigates and tempers the dyadic relationships often so fraught with intensity and which easily become enmeshed and amalgamated. These mitigations might include a TV, a written policy and procedure with carefully outlined instruction, or grievances which temper a growing ire and sense of righteous indignation over some perceived indignity. I am swayed in the direction not only of concrete objects which hold both prisoner and guard (and by guard, I also reference psychologists and health care providers), but also those constructions of the conscious and unconscious domains which arise out of the relationship. With Ogden (1994/1999), there is a third presence created out of the meeting of the inmate and the therapist: a presence of possibility in the Winnicottian (1951) sense. The inmate contributes his persona such as he sees it at that time, I give a translation of the self into the realm of ideas, attitudes, and has beens, might have beens, and could bes. The resulting thought is a new potential structure (Gartland, 2002).

Still Ogden's ideas of the analytic third (1994/1999) seem a bit opaque and emphasize the unconscious cocreation of the analyst and patient as "the third". The additional analytic object is incidental to the persuasion of the analytic pair in its creation and Winnicott's (1951) ideas fix on a space but not as much on the point of the triangle that creates it. Sterba's (1934, 1940) ideas emphasize the positioning of the analysand in

identification with the analytic process. All of these constructions of the analytic third have some applicability to the prison situation. However, the fact is that there exists a more confining, in the sense of a predetermined or prestructured, third presence in the prison setting. In this sense, the Lacanian (1978) "third" may be a useful construct since it not only speaks of the third as a growth-producing construct (potential space, unconscious cocreation) but fixes on the destructive element in the same breath (as a castration, as a disruption, as a limit to freedom and not its expansion). In perverse character, it may be more helpful to use such an idea since its limit setting and lawful nature is not far out of mind. Sometimes an inmate may have spontaneously constructed their own, albeit perverse "third" in the form of a voice or imaginary companion as I recently encountered in "Super Max" where the "worst of the worse" are housed. Perhaps that self aspect provides a mediating function, but it can hardly be determined as growth-producing in an unrefined form. Frequently, such self-phenomena function to license rather than limit the access to the primitive maternal imago. Rather, the Lacanian third is the Name of the Father, the introduction of lawfulness, language, and the extension of attention outside the self and its mirror-image.

McDougall also has some ideas which are very frequently applicable to a prisoner population.

> . . . There is a rejecting and death-bearing image of the mother with whom the child, once he has become an adult, will identify, consequently behaving in similar manner to his own child-self. When, in addition, the father appears to have played a rather muted role in the child's life, being therefore represented in his inner world as someone indifferent to his child's well-being, such patients act as shockingly careless parents toward themselves. They tend to look either to the world of others or to addictive substances to repair their sense of damage. These combined factors contribute to a disturbed sense of subjective identity with a concomitant lack of distinction between self and object. This favors the persistence of unrecognized psychotic anxieties regarding one's bodily and psychic integrity and eventually facilitates psychosomatic expressions. (1989. p. 58)

Interestingly, McDougall was not at the time working with a prisoner population. However, there is a definite application here as well as with Krystal's (1988) discussion of infantile trauma and self-healing. In our population, it appears often the case that there is indifference in a father-absent or father- or mother-addict family with circumstances of body maltreatment and rejection-like images of primary parenting. Psychosomatic concerns are frequent in this population as well as psychotic anxiety, which contributes to perverse character construction and related actions. When we are terrorized, we cling to "mother" in a relationship that transcends word.

At the Reception Center, following the administration of a number of routine psychological tests, a prisoner enters my room for a briefing about his programming. Based on his record of aggressivity, he will be referred for one of the prison programs that psychologists offer. A brief introduction follows:

> Ten men get together, and they talk with one another and a therapist about some of the things that led up to their becoming aggressive with others in the community. Perhaps they come from a background in which family members pushed each other around a lot, didn't respect each other's space, neglected each other's needs. Perhaps they have problems with drugs or alcohol. Perhaps they are involved in gangs or neighborhood issues. They talk about these matters and about change in the future. We do not call our groups Anger Management Classes because, as you know, you do not have to be angry to be aggressive. Perhaps you were sad, desperate, fearful, tired or perhaps you didn't notice any feelings at all. You also had some

> thoughts and ideas about what was going on in your life and in that situation although you may not remember these right now. These you might also wonder about and speak with others in the group about.

Most often, the inmate's testing results are not what I would consider abnormal for this population. I give him some brief interpretation of the testing results, nevertheless. Inevitably it is something simple that he can easily agree with: "You tend to act before you think and then, sometime later, you may say to yourself 'now, why did I do that?'" is frequently a very safe interpretation. Another favorite is "You tend not to follow rules." I might go further when I see that the inmate readily agrees with what, in a prison setting, could only be considered so ubiquitous as to be rather pedestrian and unimaginative: "You are not crazy but that does not mean you don't have problems. Although you are quite calm now, there are times when you may feel 'down.' Maybe it is at these times that you are most likely to drink, take drugs, and get into trouble." If I see or hear something from the inmate which might be taken as concurrence, I will then proceed to give him a few ideas regarding his responses to his emotional state that he might find useful.

Using ideas taken from Krystal (1988) and McDougall (1989) as a model, I might tell the inmate that if I had to wrap up all the advice in one lesson, the most important instruction I could offer was to "tolerate your feelings without doing anything." I will acknowledge that this is tough. Likely, there are some good reasons from his life about why his feelings are very intense and seem to demand he act on them. I tell him that no matter what he does though, he cannot get rid of his feelings. It is not like going to the bathroom. They will always be with you. But it may be that someday they will seem less intense if they are tolerated without action and with increasing understanding. It is probable, I tell him, that he doesn't feel that he should be the one to calm himself. Perhaps somebody or something else should do it. I may tell him that I have noticed that addicts don't take care of themselves very well. They tend to have poor health, bad relationships, and can't seem to comfort themselves. This is something the inmate may have to learn to do while in prison. He may need to learn to comfort himself. He will need to mother himself. I give him some examples of calming mothering and overly excited or hostile mothering. I remind him that if he learns to do this for himself, he will always have this inside himself and then will not need to take drugs or beat up his girlfriend because she is threatening to leave him.

The prisoner may then, perhaps, see for a moment, suspended in a more elaborated and liberalized psychological space within a confining prison space that there is a possibility of low toxicity. He may tentatively say something about himself. The test results have facilitated this encounter in my view. Testing has functioned as "the third." The prisoner allows for his personal self to be addressed in quite a forward manner with the testing as a buffering agent perhaps, a "holding cell" of sorts. The test results are the prisoner's way of telling who he is in an indirect manner, a manner which saves him the indignity of admitting who he is. He can still believe that his cover is not "blown." In fact, we have many who admit pathology, including suicidality, on testing which is administered in a group with little direct contact while denying problems in a face-to-face encounter. Psychologists also "apprehend" the individual through their written evaluations: describing and explaining the person's psychological and social history, behavior, emotions, fantasies, thoughts, and other aspects of the self. They participate in "capturing" the lawbreaker with the "techniques" of their own brand of "special forces" training: through the use of language.

The intake process as described here is an example of an artificially created (as

opposed to cocreation of prisoner and guard) construct which is then used to, in turn, author a further presence or further third presences. The testing is the first father-third which bars and interferes in the intense and highly biased, emotionally de-differentiated relationship between keeper and kept, between the healer and healed. It gives rise to other "thirds" or heirs to the original "father" which take their turn in the consulting room (the use of language, explanation, interpretation, instruction, distraction from temporal preoccupation, the prospect of "group," and its infringement into the therapist-inmate dyad of intimacy, the awareness of past, an ego split in the Sterba sense in order to appreciate one's own experience instead of merely living it, to name a few).

The "paternal metaphor" in Lacanian terminology emphasizes the presence of the third angle of the triangle for the purpose of the establishment of a greater freedom while upholding the idea that there is a cut, a castration to the connection between the two parties of the dyad. It is often experienced as an annoyance, a fly in a comforting maternal ointment which would wipe away all distinction in the dyad. The sexual or psychopathic seduction of a member of the staff might be viewed as a highly prized narcissistic satisfaction but also has a component of no small amount of disappointment and fear for many incarcerees since it implies that there is no stopping the insatiable and destructive infant. A successful limitation functions to maintain the inmate within our agreed upon social world and averts a life or death sentence and an eternal dismemberment from that world.

While in prison group therapy, we examine the most firmly held precepts that the inmate holds about himself. There are certain assumptions adopted for the purpose of framing the encounter in a reasonable way. He is assumed to have done the deed. He is assumed as wishing to disengage with the doing of the deed in future, and he is assumed to be saturated with falsity regarding the nature of his relationship with his deed so that his virtuous intentions are generally viewed with suspicion. Pseudoinsights are easily exposed for what they are over the course of weeks and months. Whatever charm or artifice has been used to lure the therapist and inmate into an illusion of blissful union is questioned and future "merger and mayhem" are avoided.

Further means are introduced into the therapy world and may be experienced by both therapist and client as "interlopers" in the formation of a traditional analytically informed therapeutic process; a written autobiography perhaps, a relapse prevention blueprint. If the therapist can put "all the cards on the table," so to speak, in an attempt to foster discussion of these paternalistic limitations and short circuits in the entitlements and self serving, exploitative, narcissistic quality of interpersonal relations, it would seem fruitful. The prisoner could perhaps revise his persona as a homeless wayfarer in a world to which he has not belonged and accept the anchorage in the world to which the rest of us are tied. Transferences are likely to boil down to one basic reality apropos of the Rolling Stones, 1968 legacy: "You can't always get what you want, but if you try, sometimes you just might find you get what you need."

In a like-minded way, Shadd Maruna reported on the Liverpool Desistance Project in which former inmates provided narratives about their lives; whether viewed as condemning or generative, these narratives functioned as space-making in the sense that they encouraged an awareness of themselves in the realm of thought—a story of themselves that has a beginning and will progress. The idea, which has been promulgated by a number of researchers Maruna references, focuses on lifestyle differences between offenders and ex offenders as interpretation of one's story rather than deeds done (Maruna, 2000, p.32). The former offender is now a scribe and can begin to provide commentary on his own life,

writing in the margins of his own text so to speak, in the type of therapeutic dissociation that Richard Sterba first described (1934).

Power as discipline of the body is also viewed as a version of the maternal metaphor and a characteristic of early relating. In a "whose life is it anyway" scenario, the various refusals, passive aggressions, emboldened altercations, life and death demands, some suicidalities, hunger strikes, health neglectings, staff regressions, and institutionalized fatalism seem to both sabotage and fix the early primitive attachment which determines to keep father, the law, language, mentalization, and creativity out of the picture and seeks to have "Mom" all to oneself. This is a perverse mother-child exchange, albeit an attachment nonetheless. Reflection is discouraged as it might bring forth the awareness of the murderousness that is the parent and possibly the reenactment of attempted infanticide. Freedom from this state of affairs and a potential for growth would seem to come from an editorial recognition of the nature of the attachment, a looking away and a positioning of self-other awareness that is located from a promontory outside the fused relationship. This goes beyond creating artificial institutional items of education, law, or procedure to attenuate intense emotions and into a remodeling based on untried alternative states of being internally. However, creative containment or management should not be subordinated to behavioral control but be built alongside it. One of Foucault's biographers, Colin Gordon (1989), calls our attention to the idea that:

> Power and freedom are not seen as incompatible. Power, or our capacity to act on others, is not an intrinsic evil, but an ineluctable social fact. Freedom is a practice which can never be made safe by institutional guarantees. Our task is to invent modes of living which avert the risk of domination, the one-sided rigidification of power-relations. (p. 112)

A love and a desire to know the unknown about the self and other and our nonintentional world, the pursuit and apprehension of the unconscious world seems a worthwhile objective for the imprisoned as well as those who believe themselves to be free. The importance of acknowledging this transcendent entity is represented in Lacan's discussion of Freud's seminal dream and his great discovery: "And precisely to the extent that I desired it too much, that I partook in this action, that I wanted to be, myself, the creator, I am not the creator. The creator is someone greater than I. It is my unconscious; it is this voice which speaks in me, beyond me" (1991/1978, p. 170–171).

Here Maruna's (2000) studies offer some support. The former offender does not disown the offending self. He and she merely recognize that, underneath it all, lies a truer self that was, temporarily, disowned. He really did not change. She was a "good" person all along. Somehow this "good" self has gone unacknowledged and disallowed and now must regain the upper hand. The individual's life is given understanding, meaning, words. There are justifications for the past, but for the future, there are resolves. The offender develops a model of mind that gives virtue and credence to the operations of the unconscious. As in other modern social theaters, self disclosure is no longer tightly linked with self renunciation but with self renewal (Martin, Gutman, & Hutton, 1988). Now he and she must elaborate an enduring language which is more suited to the identity of knowledge, recreation, and hope than to that of deception, destruction, and despair.

The "other," the keeper, is not without some obligation in this effort. As the prisoner reenters the social arena, some ritualized form of public "redemption" may also be necessary in order to reestablish the self which the court's pronouncement has degraded. Maruna offers that the British system recognizes authentic reformation by allowing a former offender to formally deny a criminal history after a certain amount of time in a

crime free state of behavior. Such "rebiographing" is echoed in the U.S. laws related to juvenile records and bankruptcy. Otherwise, continued unceremonious disenfranchisement determines the scar of deviance. Current emphasis in public policy has been focusing on community reentry for the offender. Reentry "projects" which support "stake holders" having an interest in seeing that the former offender does not relapse are blossoming around the country. "Get tough" punitive approaches founded on notions of retributive justice are giving way to what might be considered the more civilized (and possibly more effective) restorative justice solutions. Still, without an American cultural attitude which mirrors an atmosphere of inclusion, such undertakings may not flourish.

At the basis of such ideas and programs lies the notion that an individual who has violated the laws of the community is not essentially unlike anyone else in the population. It would seem that there is a recognition process we all must undertake in order to reduce the crime statistic. This awareness acknowledges the human demeanor of criminal behavior, the accidents of birth and upbringing that determine offenders and victims and the reflection of antisocial in the social and anti self in the self. Such recognitions will likely necessitate a surrender of the senses of superiority and entitlement which would establish and maintain the status quo.

The alternative outcome is echoed in familiar sentiments from Phil Ochs, the Albatrossian folk singer of seventies' pop culture and his song, "There But For Fortune." There is an implicit warning here concerning the failure to observe, make visible and to own the most abhorrent among us as ourselves:

> Show me a prison, show me a jail,
> Show me a prisoner whose face is growing pale,
> And I'll show you a young man with many reasons why,
> And there but for fortune,
> May go you or I, you or I.

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