

The examination of prison practice starts with what may be considered a bold assertion: 'Given that respect is, almost without exception, one of the first values to emerge in conversations with inmates about what matters in prisons, one could be forgiven for assuming that scholars had given the issue thorough attention. This is not the case' (p.97). Watson acknowledges the exception provided by the Howard League's Journal in 2007, 'Reconsidering Respect. Its role in the Prison Service' by Michelle Butler and Deborah H. Drake<sup>1</sup> before exploring the institutional sociology of 'six landmark contributions to the genre' (p. 99): Sparks, Bottoms and Hays *Prisons and the Problem of Order*<sup>2</sup>; Bosworth's *Engendering Respect*<sup>3</sup>; Liebling's *Prisons and their Moral Performance*<sup>4</sup>; Crewe's *The Prisoner Society*<sup>5</sup>; Phillip's *The Multicultural Prison*<sup>6</sup>; and Bennett's *The Working Lives of Prison Managers*<sup>7</sup>. These texts are acknowledged as an exception to the indifference to the respect deficit in the direction of penal policy in the decades after the publication of the Woolf report. Watson adds that penal policy has remained indifferent to such analysis, with the exception of Liebling's work developing the Measuring the Quality of Prison Life (MQPL) and Staff Quality of Life (SQL) instruments.

The critique of prison practice in the serving of meals includes an analysis of the Prison Service Instruction on Catering. Watson sees this as inculcating at best 'a form of respect towards prisoners and their dietary needs that is deeply procedural' (p.141). She

argues for a change of vocabulary as well as for a change of approach. Commenting on the report of HM Inspectorate's unannounced inspection of Grendon in 2013, Watson remarks that 'while it is encouraging that the Inspectorate has designated respect as one of four key conditions for a 'healthy prison', its preference for the terminology of 'respect outcomes' provides an important hint that its work is merely constrained and not characterised by respect' (p. 153). She goes on to draw the conclusion from the Inspectorate's Annual Report in 2018 that 'vast disparities in 'respect scores' from one year to the next raises questions as to whether the current approach to measuring respect is problematic' (p. 154).

This theme of the language used being wanting is referenced in Watson's conclusion (apropos the adoption of MQPL and SQL) that prisons are more interested in trying to measure respect that embed it culturally; and in reference to Crewe's discussion of the 'definitional ambiguities of respect'. She concludes that Crewe's attempt to add a third to Darwall's two definitions of respect, isn't entirely successful, and that instead of refining it, 'we might take the view that such rigid categorisations of respect are best avoided.' This leads Watson to her recommendation for a move away from the 'misguided' assumption to frame an ethical standard as a rule or to seek to 'proceduralise' respect.

Watson argues for the inculcation of an ethical standard 'which unlike rule-following...does not specify the precise means to cultivate respect' (p. 189); and sees

'scope to clarify and embed respect from the ground-up, not only through quiet introspection—as described above—but through dialogue and consensus' (p. 189). How practical adopting such an approach would be may be questioned. In a therapeutic milieu it might have more mileage than in other less reflective operational contexts. However, the challenge this book presents to operational practitioners is a fair one even if the critique of other learned critics of criminal justice practice appears harsh in places.

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### Prisoners on Prison Films

By Bennett, J. and Knight, V.  
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There is a sequence in *The Shawshank Redemption* that sees the film's two imprisoned protagonists — Tim Robbins' Andy and Morgan Freeman's Red — watching *Gilda*. Their faces are bathed in the reflected glow of the film's screen. The appearance of Rita Hayworth as Gilda elicits broad grins from both men, whilst also offering a pleasing foreshadowing of the importance of Hayworth (or, at least, the poster of her on the wall of Andy's cell), as well as a nod to the title of Stephen King's original novella. I mention this scene because it speaks to the power of film. *The Shawshank*

1. Butler, M. and Drake, D. (2007) Reconsidering respect: It's role in Her Majesty's Prison Service. *Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, 46(2), 115-127.
2. Sparks, Bottoms and Hay (1996) *Prisons and the Problem of Order*. Oxford: OUP.
3. Bosworth, M. (1999) *Engendering Resistance: Agency and Power in Women's Prisons*. Ashgate.
4. Liebling, A. (2004) *Prisons and their Moral Performance: A Study of Values, Quality, and Prison Life*. OUP.
5. Crewe, B. (2009) *The Prisoner Society: Power, Adaptation and Social Life in an English Prison*. Oxford: OUP.
6. Phillips, C. (2012) *The multi-cultural prison: ethnicity masculinity and social relations among prisoners*. Oxford: OUP.
7. Bennett, J. (2016) *The Working Lives of Prison Managers: Global Change, Local Culture and Individual Agency in the Late Modern Prison*. London: Palgrave MacMillan.

*Redemption* is itself a love letter to cinema. It is littered with allusions to the 'Golden Age' of Hollywood and beyond. These 'Easter eggs' are manna to film obsessives such as myself, but this particular sequence speaks to something that rests at the core of the film viewing experience: there is a power to watching with others and reflecting upon what has been seen. Film can be more than simply transporting. It can be transformative.

This takes us to Bennett and Knight's new volume titled *Prisoners on Prison Films*. This builds upon work that has sought to explore prisoners' response to media. Knights' earlier work<sup>1</sup>, for example, looked at the role of the television in the prison. Jewkes' *Captive Audience*<sup>2</sup> examined the use of various types of media by prisoners to shape identity and cope with the experience of imprisonment. Here, Bennett and Knight narrow their focus to prisoners' responses to screenings of five prison-themed films. The scope of the research is, however, broad. It seeks to view the films as texts within a 'macro-level of political economy and dominant values' whilst also — through accessing the responses of the participants — situating them within a meso-level of 'organisational and community practices' and a micro-level of the lived experience of the everyday (p.7). The conceit of the study, then, was to explore 'how the context of imprisonment shapes media consumption' (p.2). This reception analysis allows the authors to use these representations of imprisonment to unpack core themes of race, carceral power, rehabilitation and family relations, to provide a partial list. As such, the text fits with trends in visual criminology by using visual

representations as research tools<sup>3</sup>. The screenings themselves were held in a prison that exclusively holds men serving indeterminate and life sentences. There was a core of ten participants who attended screenings. The following researcher-led group discussions were then supported by semi-structured interviews with individual participants. With their focus upon individual films, each chapter acts as a point of departure to particular themes or topics. The authors provide a concise summary of the film before unpacking the participants' responses whilst also situating the discussion within both classic and contemporary penological literature. To provide an example, the authors first outline the romanticised celebration of 'heroic resistance' in Winding Refn's *Bronson* (p.34). This then leads into a discussion of Crewe's (2009) analysis of carceral power<sup>4</sup>, as well as efforts made to contest it. This is interwoven with comments from the participants and their diverse readings of the film.

The films selected for the screenings were all British dramas released since 2008. They range from the gritty realism of 2013's *Starred Up* (dir. D. MacKenzie) to the more impressionistic *Bronson* (2008, dir. N Winding Refn), as well as the formally experimental *Everyday* (2012, dir. M. Winterbottom). The authors highlight in their introduction that the films also 'assert some 'truth claims''' (p.14). *Screwed* (2011, dir. R. Traviss), for example, is based on the experiences of a former prison officer, whereas *We Are Monster* (2014, dir. A. Petrou) is an examination of the murder of Zahid Mubarek at Feltham YOI (albeit with a focus upon his attacker). It is important to briefly note the ethical

concerns relating to a study such as this. The films that were selected feature graphic scenes of violence, violent racist language and sequences involving domestic abuse. As Bennett and Knight (p.17) state, '[t]here were [...] times when the emotional strain became overwhelming' and participants left the screenings. As they note, they followed-up with the affected men to discuss the troubling material. As I touch upon below, I will certainly be adopting the text as a teaching tool. These observations highlight the importance of contextualising the films for viewers and providing relevant trigger warnings.

In the conclusion, the authors point to avenues yet to be explored. For example, each of the films focuses upon men's experiences of imprisonment. Similarly, these representations predominantly feature the experiences of younger or middle-aged prisoners. A follow-up study that attends to incarcerated women's responses to representations of imprisonment, as well as those of an ageing prison population, would certainly be welcome. Further, a curiosity of the prison film genre is its tendency toward critical success, but commercial failure. In stark contrast, recent years have seen a marked increase in popular prison documentaries. A second volume that sees incarcerated men and women respond to these representations of lived experiences would, likewise, be fascinating. This text remains, however, a valuable contribution and will likely be a mainstay on reading lists for some time. Indeed, this is a text that could be the centre piece of a penology-focussed taught course that leads students through difficult and sensitive topics. The individual chapters themselves could act as

1. Knight, V. (2016). *Remote Control: television in prison*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

2. Jewkes, Y. (2002). *Captive Audience: media, masculinity and power in prisons*. Cullompton: Willan.

3. Pauwels, L. (2017). Key methods of visual criminology: an overview of different approaches and their affordances. In M. Brown and E. Carrabine (eds.) *Routledge International Handbook of Visual Criminology*. London: Routledge.

4. Crewe, B. (2009). *The Prisoner Society: power, adaptation and social life in an English prison*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

jumping off points for classroom discussion.

*Prisoners on Prison Films* provides both a powerful analysis and analytical framework. This brings me back to the transformative power of cinema that I alluded to above. In the acknowledgments to the text, one of the authors mentions the thrill of first encountering Scorsese's (1976) *Taxi Driver* as a teenager and being exposed to its heretofore unseen world. I can point to 1986's *The Mission* (dir. R Joffé) as similarly starting me on my own cinéaste's journey. Without being too grand (and I realise that this is somewhat difficult having just referred to myself as a cinéaste), this is what art does. It challenges us. It introduces us to new ways of thinking or offers new perspectives on the familiar. To emphasise a point that the authors make in their introduction, the research participants 'are the people who are least heard [and yet] most directly affected by the consequences of representation' (p.3). In accessing the participants' insights, we are exposed to fresh readings of cinematic texts and new light is thrown upon familiar penological literature. In sharing in that collective experience of the film screenings — albeit at a slight remove — our own thinking about the lived experience of imprisonment can be transformed.

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## **The Big Issue # 1454**

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Special Edition 'Locked Up in Lockdown'

The subtitle of this special edition of *The Big Issue* is 'a unique look at life behind the bars when

the world closed, by people who were there' (page 1). Unlike frequent uses of the word 'unique', here it is accurately employed and not as hyperbole. There are 15 articles in the edition which range from thoughtful opinion pieces to insights into the personal experience of the pandemic of five prisoners. It also includes reflections of some of those, not prison staff, who have sought to help alleviate the additional burden the pandemic has imposed on prisoners. Jonathan Aitken's description, with detail of specific operational changes which made positive differences, of how uniformed staff at Pentonville prison have responded ensures some consideration of the unsung work of this group of frontline workers. As the part-time chaplain at the prison and a former prisoner himself his perspective is unique. Together the varied pieces amplify some important messages — about the purpose of imprisonment and the potential of those imprisoned as well as the skill and imagination of many who work with them.

The series of articles which highlight initiatives to relieve some of the added stress lockdown in the pandemic has caused are very brief, sometimes just a few paragraphs. They serve to shine a light on what may well be less widely known initiatives and energy. They include, the 'Making it Up' project which enables prisoners who are parents to make a story book for their children; "InHouse Records", which before the pandemic provided workshops across the spectrum of music making skills and which in lockdown has provided 50,000 copies of a magazine, *AUX*, to prisons in the South-east of England and in the East of the USA; the 'Penned Up' project at Lewes prison which encouraged prisoners to write; and a prison

librarian who reached in to provide books remotely ordered (Amor Towles' *A Gentleman in Moscow*, Delia Owens' *Where the Crawdads Sing* and Art Spiegelman's *Maus* have been favourites). It also includes the recipe of a Bangladeshi chicken curry which the charity 'Food Behind Bars' sponsored and which proved a hit at Brixton prison.

The five prisoners' experiences of COVID inside highlight the impact of lockdown on mental health. Two of these accounts are provided by women who were prisoners (one from the perspective of being an imprisoned mother). They emphasise the hardship (and the mental health implications) which little contact with other prisoners as well as visitors caused. One of the other former prisoners, a man recalled to prison having had his licence revoked for eight months in 2020, describes the quarantining of new receptions and interestingly asks whether the reduction in assaults and drug taking will justify much more restricted regimes once the pandemic is made manageable. Another male prisoner picks up a theme of the edition's opinion pieces, commenting 'We allow our thinking about our justice system to be driven by populism and vindictiveness...We recognise that morality is not always black and white and laud complex characters in fiction, yet are sanctimonious, judgemental, and vengeful in reality' (page 16). That's a neat way of highlighting the inconsistencies in society's value system. The piece goes on to mention that prisoners also 'clapped for carers' and donated to charities.

The editorial draws attention to the tiny proportion of prisoners who will not be released as a means of underscoring the importance of rehabilitation. It focusses on the importance of helping the high proportion of