

authentic dialogue and experiences. Better, if lesser known illustrations would be the work of the Amber collective in Newcastle, who have for over 40 years used photography, film and documentary to represent the lives and changing communities of the North East of England⁴; or Peter Watkins, who in films such as the six hour long *La Commune* (2000) mixes recreation, mock documentary and back stage material in order to radicalize the actors and technicians as well as the viewer. In contrast, a film such as *Billy Elliot* (UK 2000: dir Stephen Daldry) is dismissed by O'Neill for its representation of working class culture as an obstacle to the title character fulfilling his potential as a ballet dancer. Such a dismissal ignores that the film reveals some of the tensions between the intersection of class with masculine identity and sexual orientation. *Billy Elliott* is about more than simply a narrow concept of class and O'Neill's reading reveals a dogmatism in her approach: a film is either an acceptable Marxist text or it is nothing. Further, O'Neill describes how she viewed and discussed *The Green Mile* (US, 1999: dir Frank Darabont) with a group of students. While they were positive towards the film and its representation of the unjust sufferings of the main black character, O'Neill is insistent that her more critical reading is correct and that the alternative is simply the product of false consciousness on behalf of a group of people indoctrinated into dominant ideas and values. Such a stubborn and reductionist view again reveals the dogmatism at work.

This book is both fascinating and infuriating. O'Neill's work

with *Inside Film* offers a distinctive and particular approach to art in prisons. Arts have often been promoted on the basis that they humanise the prison experience, but have also been criticised for lending prisons an air of legitimacy for an elite audience.⁵ *Inside Film* seeks no such cosy accommodations, but instead intends to induce discomfort and resistance. The frustration comes from the narrow Marxist perspective, trenchantly expressed and inflexibly applied. Class is not the only lens through which to view the world and there is more than one perspective. Having said all of that, this book is to be applauded for being provocative, for stimulating a reaction and wanting to make some noise. Whether O'Neill is right or wrong, she certainly couldn't be accused of being bland.

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Opening the Doors: a prison chaplain's life on the inside

By Paul Gill

Publisher: Waterside Press (2018)

ISBN: 978-1-909976-60-3

Price: £19.95 (paperback)

It is first important to say something about the format of this book. It is published in A4 and on each of the pages, a different design (sometimes a photograph) in colour provides the background of the text. The images are often of prison or objects commonly associated with crime and street life. The text itself is set in different typefaces and font sizes,

and the layout of the pages varies a great deal. This design is suited to its content which is divided into nine chapters (with titles such as 'On The Inside', 'In the Nick', 'Justice', and 'Finding God in Captivity'), each of which is subdivided into sections that are rarely longer than a page and frequently only a short paragraph. There are 167 of these sections in a book of just 154 pages (including the frontispiece, the 'Author's Note', 'A Word of Thanks', a foreword, the Contents and a short note on the author).

Although the book's sub-title indicates it is a prison chaplain's life, it is less an autobiography than an anthology of the experiences of the author's ministry in prisons (he served in prisons in Australia and latterly in England, before he recently retired). Much of its content can be described as a series of 'snapshot' contributions (sometimes with quotations) from prisoners, victims (and the families of both prisoners and victims) and staff. Accompanying almost every contribution is a brief reflection or religious commentary, sometimes a prayer or quotation from the Bible.

Some of the images used in the design are powerful, as are some of the insights the contributors have provided. For someone who has worked in a prison, however, few of either the images or the contributions will be new. That doesn't mean that they may not be meaningful: it is salutary to be reminded of the difficulties faced by those who live and work in prison, and those faced by their families and their victims. There is, for example, a poem about crystal meths written by a woman who was imprisoned

5. Cheliotis, L. (Ed) (2012) *The arts of imprisonment: Control, resistance and empowerment* Farnham: Ashgate

for drugs offences. The poem tells of the fateful control this drug has, and a footnote informs us that the woman took her own life shortly after her release. Another contribution is from a man who was executed after having spent 22 years on death row (some contributions are, with footnoted acknowledgements, taken from other books).

However, for all the poignancy of some of the content, the absence of any fuller contextualisation of the experiences depicted — and without too some extended commentary on some of the complexities these experiences reveal — something is missed. The reader who knows prisons well with most likely think this. Without it, someone with less knowledge of prisons may be misled or at least less fully informed. The contextualisation and commentary that is provided is that of a sincere man of faith, whose faith is explicitly evangelical. This will deter some because not everyone will find scriptural quotations, prayers and the offer of spiritual redemption helpful or even relevant. The very succinct references to criminology will frustrate the knowledgeable reader. The less knowledgeable reader will need the discipline to use this book to research elsewhere the issues that arise.

It is therefore likely that book will be picked up and read more frequently by those who know little of prison. However, it is not an 'introduction to prisons' or even a vade mecum for prospective or new chaplains. It is, to coin a phrase, towards the 'kaleidoscopic' rather than 'encyclopaedic' end of the information continuum. As such, it is a book that will probably be dipped into rather than read straight through — which the

clearly detailed 'contents' enables. It is first and foremost the reflections of a life spent working in prisons as a chaplain. It provides a reflection of the witness this man of faith has borne and his evangelical convictions.

William Payne, former Prison Governor

The Maze Prison: A hidden story of chaos, anarchy and politics

By Tom Murtagh OBE

Publisher: Waterside Press

ISBN: 978-1-909976-50-4

Price: £40.00

The tensions over the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in early 2019, have highlighted how fragile and complex the political situation is in the province. Whilst the Troubles are over, an unsteady peace was forged that still simmers with conflict beneath the surface. During the period of time labelled 'The Troubles' very few places or institutions were more synonymous with the chaotic political manoeuvres, violence and fatalities of the time, than the Maze Prison.

Tom Murtagh has brilliantly captured the culture and tactics of the often opposing factions of prisoners, who over a period of 29 years completely undermined the authority of the prison staff and managers who were attempting to provide a decent custodial environment for them. He has also managed to detail perceptions of the political wrangling that the Northern Irish Prison Service HQ and Ministers were engaged in with these factions in custody and

the community. Their aim was to try to assist attempts at a peace process in the province by offering concessions to prisoners as the Maze, unlike many prisons, was not isolated from the rest of Northern Irish society but was in fact a social pawn in various propaganda campaigns by all sides. Murtagh describes in epic detail (at times on a day by day basis) how this further undermined managers and staff already dealing with an almost impossible situation.

Murtagh worked in prisons in Northern Ireland and England for almost 40 years, including governing various prisons in both jurisdictions and ending his career as Area Manager in the English Prison Service. Crucially, he was Head of Security and Deputy Governor of the Maze, which provides the uniqueness of this book; although many accounts have been written of life inside the Maze by former Republican and Loyalist prisoners little has been offered from the perspective of those working there. Murtagh spent ten years researching documents and interviewing people with experience of the Maze and has produced a fascinating and well evidenced tome that runs to almost 800 pages covering the 29 years of the Maze largely in chronological order. The book can be read cover to cover as a historical account but also be used for academic reference following the extensive research Murtagh has undertaken.

The story of the Maze is full of extreme experiences and incidents. This book describes how staff witnessed the hunger strikers being pressurised by those powerful in the Provisional IRA to continue to the point of death even when they knew they would not achieve their aims. It includes elaborate mass escape attempts,