

Inspired Minds:
An Exploration of a Creative Writing Classroom
at Saskatoon Correctional Centre

A Thesis Submitted to the
College of Graduate Studies and Research
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Arts
In the Department of Native Studies
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Allison Piché

Permission to Use

In presenting this thesis/dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Postgraduate degree from the University of Saskatchewan, I agree that the Libraries of this University may make it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for copying of this thesis/dissertation in any manner, in whole or in part, for scholarly purposes may be granted by the professor or professors who supervised my thesis/dissertation work or, in their absence, by the Head of the Department or the Dean of the College in which my thesis work was done. It is understood that any copying or publication or use of this thesis/dissertation or parts thereof for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission. It is also understood that due recognition shall be given to me and to the University of Saskatchewan in any scholarly use which may be made of any material in my thesis/dissertation.

Requests for permission to copy or to make other uses of materials in this thesis/dissertation in whole or part should be addressed to:

Head of the Department of Native Studies
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
S7N 5A2
Canada

OR

Dean College of Graduate Studies and Research
University of Saskatchewan
107 Administration Place
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
S7N 5A2
Canada

Abstract

It is widely known that Aboriginal men and women are overrepresented in the Canadian prison system. A long history of colonial violence and its contemporary manifestations has placed a disproportionate number of Canadian Aboriginal peoples at the bottom of the socioeconomic scale. In many ways, Canadian prisons have become the means through which society has chosen to respond to this history. Examining Indigenous men's experiences and creative writing in a provincial correctional institution provides an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of how these men consider and respond to the very real impact colonialism has on their lives. Through participant interviews I analyze the Inspired Minds: All Nations Creative Writing program at Saskatoon Correctional Centre and the way in which it has informed, challenged and changed participant experiences and relationships.

Indigenous masculinity and transformative learning theory are utilized to better understand and interpret the experiences of program participants. Indigenous masculinity presents a lens which highlights how their lives have been impacted and shaped through community experiences with ongoing colonialism. Further it allows for a nuanced understanding of how heteropatriarchal masculinity is reinforced and perpetuated within the prison and how the classroom works to challenge these representations. Transformative learning theory allows for a deep understanding of the way in which the prison classroom can challenge the above norms by providing a contested learning environment.

Inspired Minds: All Nations Creative Writing provides evidence that arts and education based programs can challenge the toxic, hegemonically masculine institution of the prison by creating a classroom space wherein participants are able to become active learners through the utilization of transformative learning principles.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the participants of this thesis, I feel privileged that you chose to share your experience and knowledge with me so that this research could be possible. I am in your debt.

A sincere thank you to the Ministry of Corrections, Community and Policing, for allowing me to undertake this research. A special thank you to Diann Block, for all the wonderful and important work you do at Saskatoon Correctional Centre to create and sustain unique programming and for all your support and friendship over the past four years.

Thank you to my committee, James Waldram, Nancy Van Styvendale and to my external examiner, Colleen Dell whose unique and differing perspectives have provided me with much needed insight and guidance. A special thank you to Nancy Van Styvendale for inviting me to join you in co-teaching Inspired Minds in the summer of 2011. Then and now your expertise and openness continue to inform and inspire me.

I am grateful to have Robert Innes as my supervisor and for all of the opportunities that have come my way as a result of this partnership over the last few years. Thank you for challenging me and for having faith that I could rise to the occasion. I have valued all of our ongoing conversations whenever and wherever we could find the time to have them, whether on the road to a research community, meeting, or a quick word in the hallway.

To Michelle Jarvin, with gratitude, for your emotional and technical support in all things.

Thank you to my friends for supporting and loving me throughout this adventure, you have made this city home. Especially to Tanya and Swapna for talking me through all of my questions and providing some much needed perspective.

Most of all thank you to my family, for always letting me know I am loved and for being a constant source of encouragement. To my parents, Kendall and Gina Piché who nurtured in me a love of education and for being my first and best teachers.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	iv
Prologue	1
Chapter 1: Introduction	6
Chapter 2: Writing as Resistance: Transformative Learning Theory and Inspired Minds	36
2.1 Beyond Recidivism	37
2.2 Transformative Learning Theory Behind Bars	39
Chapter 3: Inside Inspired Minds: Classroom Dynamics.....	52
3.1 An Active Learning Environment.....	53
3.2 Autobiography and Sharing One’s Story.....	62
3.3 Debate.....	64
3.4 Peer Editing and Solutions	66
3.5 Keeping it Cultural – Finding a Balance.....	68
Chapter 4: Constructing Healthy Masculinities in a Toxic Environment.....	74
4.0 Masculinities in the Prison Context	74
4.1 Incarceration: An Overview	74
4.2 Understanding Masculinity	78
4.3 Multiple Masculinities.....	79
4.4 A Toxic Environment.....	82
4.5 Re-conceptualizing Warriorhood.....	87
Chapter 5: Building Community Beyond Incarceration	93
5.1 Research Contribution	93
5.2 Lessons Learned	94
5.3 Recommendations: Capacity Building & Corrections Policy	95
5.4 Conclusion	98
Appendix 1: Letter of Invitation to Participate & Project Information.....	100
Appendix 2: Informed Consent: Participant.....	102
Appendix 3: Satisfaction with Transcript Form.....	103
Appendix 4: Request to Make Changes to Transcript Form.....	104

Appendix 5: Participant Questions.....	105
Appendix 6: Information about Limits to Confidentiality	106
Appendix 7: Informed Consent: Staff.....	107
Appendix 8: Letter of Invitation to Participate & Project Information (Staff)	108
Appendix 9: Correctional Staff Interviews	110
Appendix 10: Creative Writing.....	111
Works Cited.....	117

Table of Figures

Figure 1	54
Figure 2	54

Prologue

Many scholars discuss the need to situate oneself in one's research, particularly when conducting research with Indigenous communities. Stuart Hall (1997) summarizes this idea stating, "We give objects, people and events meaning by the frameworks of interpretation which we bring to them."¹ As such, I hope that the following provides the context necessary for understanding the way in which my background influences and informs my interpretation of the data.

I grew up in southeastern Ontario with my parents and younger sister. I know little about my father's side of our family, other than that my grandfather met my grandmother while stationed in New Brunswick as a member of the RCMP and they married, forcing him to leave the force as at that time you had to serve for a minimum of five years before you could marry. After leaving the RCMP my grandfather's primary occupation was as a prison guard. He was stationed at Kingston Penitentiary and later Joyceville and Warkworth institutions. Though I never knew my grandfather (he died while my father was in University) I have thought of him often in the last four years of working on this project. In the time since my grandfather was a prison guard a lot has changed in the correctional system. My desk growing up was constructed in the woodworking shop at Joyceville Institution, and my father used to play hockey and basketball at Joyceville with inmates. Now, most of the vocational training within these facilities has been done away with and there has not been much effort to replace these programs with ones relevant to the 21st century.

My mother's side of the family were farmers in the Kingston, Ontario area. My grandmother, like my own parents, was a teacher. I consider myself fortunate to have been raised in a family of educators who valued not only traditional learning approaches, but also in developing skill sets through interactive and experiential learning as well. It is with this background that I feel I have come to think critically about the role arts and education programming can play in correctional institutions. I first became aware of the problem of

¹ Stuart Hall, "Introduction," *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, (London: SAGE Publications, 1997), 3.

overrepresentation of First Nations, Métis and Inuit offenders in Canada's correctional system in my last year of my bachelor's degree. I was taking a fourth year English seminar, "Decolonization and Cultural Politics," and wrote my final paper on the subject. In researching and writing that essay, I became acutely aware of how little I knew or had been taught about Indigenous peoples in Canada. The knowledge I had acquired as a result of my public schooling in Ontario was biased and unrepresentative of contemporary Indigenous issues in the Canadian context.

My studies over the past five years have been an attempt further my knowledge and learn how to do research in a reciprocal way in order to better understand the complexities of the disproportionate representation of First Nations, Métis and Inuit offenders and contribute to meaningful research that can work to challenge current approaches to rehabilitative programming and community reintegration of offenders. As a Native Studies/settler scholar, I hope I have been and continue to be conscientious in my work with Aboriginal populations and colleagues. Although I am a relative newcomer to the field of Native Studies, I am encouraged by Robert Young (2001), who states, "the difference is less a matter of geography (referring to working from the 'Western perspective') than where individuals locate themselves as speaking from, epistemologically, culturally and politically, who they are speaking to, and how they define their own enunciative space."² I am very much aware of my position as an outsider in this field and of the loaded history 'outsider' researchers have in working with Indigenous communities, but believe that I am still able to make an ethical, respectful and reciprocal contribution to the community I have researched and to the academic Indigenous and Native Studies community. Margaret Kovach (2009) is explicit in her description of the ways in which non-Indigenous scholars need to engage in research, two aspects of which I feel important to highlight:

- Partnering relationships and the redefining of traditional roles – through mentorship, co-partnerships, and community projects
- Participating in relational work; the building and maintenance of relationships with scholars and community members.³

² Robert Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 62.

³ Margaret Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations and Contexts*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 169-173.

While Kovach's research explicitly states that these techniques pertain specifically to non-Indigenous scholars, they should be applied broadly by all scholars conducting community-based research of this kind. In light of Kovach's advice, I aim to maintain the relationships I have built over the course of my research and further, that the program that is this thesis' focus remains active and sustainable long after my degree is complete.

I recognize that as a non-Indigenous, university educated female conducting research among Aboriginal male inmates or 'captive' subjects I am in a position of privilege. However, through establishing a rapport with the participants of this study and engaging with them throughout the research process, I hope to be able to mitigate this differential in finding common ground. As Willie Ermine (2007) articulates, ethical space "can become a refuge of possibility in cross-cultural relations and the legal order of society, for the effect of shifting the status quo of an asymmetrical social order to a partnership model between world communities."⁴ It was my intention that in creating a partnership, this work will aid in the bridging of differences between communities and also create tangible and positive results for those involved in the research process. Through their help and guidance both during the research itself and throughout the writing process, Inspired Minds: All Nations Creative Writing participants have informed and shaped the end product.

As stated above, this study seeks to provide both direct and indirect benefits to the First Nations and Métis community in Saskatoon. In working with inmates through the creative writing program I believe that we help to build a healthy and supportive learning environment for these men (participants) to express themselves through their writing, an idea this paper explores in detail. My goal is not only that this personal background helps provide an understanding of my subjective position, but that I continue to engage with this positioning as it informs my understanding and interpretation of the research.

⁴ Willie Ermine, "The Ethical Space of Engagement," *Indigenous Law Journal* 6.1 (2007), 203.

Definitions & Abbreviations used in the study

CBO	Community Based Organization
CCRA	Corrections and Conditional Release Act
CSC	Correctional Service of Canada
IM	Inspired Minds: All Nations Creative Writing Program
OCI	Office of the Correctional Investigator
SCC	Saskatoon Correctional Centre

EQUALITY MASCULINITY: explained by Messerschmidt as “those [representations of masculinity] that legitimate an egalitarian relationship between men and women, between masculinity and femininity, and among men.”⁵

HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY: describes the type of masculinity embodied by some men in positions of power – elite/CEO’s (transnational business masculinity). This masculinity doesn’t carry the same physical and violent representations as hypermasculinity, but is just as problematic. It refers to “the current most honored way of being a man,”⁶ and as Connell and Messerschmidt articulate, fundamental to hegemonic masculinity is the idea “that women exist as potential sexual objects for men while men are negated as sexual objects for men.” It relies on the subordination of women to men and of marginalized men/other identities to those in power.

HYPERMASCULINITY: refers to sets of behaviours and beliefs “characterized by unusually highly developed masculine forms as defined by existing cultural values.”⁷

LIVING UNIT: the building(s) located within a correctional centre which house groups of inmates in individual cells or dormitories with shared common space.

⁵ James W. Messerschmidt, *Crime as Structured Action: Doing Masculinities, Race, Class, Sexuality and Crime*, (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), 40.

⁶ Raewyn Connell and James Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept,” *Gender & Society*, 19.6, (2005), 832.

⁷ Kirby Schroeder, “Hypermasculinity,” in *Men and Masculinities: A Social, Cultural and Historical Encyclopedia*, eds. Michael Kimmel and Amy Aronson (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO Inc., 2004), 418.

RECIDIVISM: the tendency of an individual released from prison to reoffend/relapse back to criminal behavior. Rates of recidivism are often used as a measurement for whether an offender has been successfully reintegrated into society or whether a program they participated in can be deemed effective.

REMAND: refers to individuals who are being held in custody until their trial and/or sentencing. Also refers to one of the areas at Saskatoon Correctional Centre where Remanded offenders are held.

STR8 UP: a local organization that works with men and women interested in exiting the gang lifestyle. Weekly meetings are held both at the Saskatoon Correctional Centre and in the community.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The racial imbalance in the Canadian prison system has continual and pervasive effects on contemporary Aboriginal communities. Rates of overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in corrections have been increasing since the 1980s, and the trend is predicted to continue.¹ The current federal government has implemented more punitive measures, such as Bill C-10: Safe Streets and Communities Act, which was predicted to have a particularly negative impact on First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples in Canada.² Though there have been significant changes in programming directed specifically at the needs of Indigenous offenders in the last twenty years, rates of incarceration continue to climb. Aboriginal spiritual programming has been made more available since the push for its inclusion in the 1980s and 1990s.³ The first Healing Lodge opened in 1995,⁴ as part of the changes brought about by the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women, and is now one of four CSC managed lodges across Canada. However, even considering these changes, the Office of the Correctional Investigator (OCI) continues to press for more to be done to combat these rates of overrepresentation, an argument which is echoed in numerous reports looking specifically at the issue, namely: The Mann Report – “Good Intentions, Disappointing Results: A Progress Report on Federal Aboriginal Corrections” and “Spirit Matters: Aboriginal People and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act.”⁵

Howard Sapers, the Correctional Investigator of Canada, has highlighted the lack of response or acknowledgement of the concerns presented in these reports on the part of CSC and the Federal government⁶ – which is indicative of the overall attitude that plagues much of the correctional system. Though provisions have been made, the frequency of their use is limited.

¹ Jonathan Rudin, “Aboriginal Over-Representation and R. v. Gladue: Where We Were, Where We Are and Where We Might Be Going,” *Supreme Court Law Review* [0228-0108] 40, (2008), 687-688.

² John Howard Society of Canada, Brief to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice, Human Rights, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness 39th Parliament Regarding Bill C-10, (2006), 3 - 4. <http://www.johnhoward.ca/document/billC-10/billC10.pdf>

³ James Waldram, *The Way of the Pipe: Aboriginal Spirituality and Symbolic Healing in Canadian Prisons*, (Peterborough: Broadview Press: 1997), 3.

⁴ Stephanie Hayman, *Imprisoning Our Sisters: The New Federal Women’s Prisons in Canada*, (Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2006), 211.

⁵ Michelle M. Mann, “Good Intentions, Disappointing Results: A Progress Report on Federal Aboriginal Corrections,” (Ottawa: Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2009); *Spirit Matters: Aboriginal People and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act*, (Ottawa: Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2012)

⁶ Howard Sapers, Annual Report of the Office of the Correctional Investigator of Canada, 2012-2013, (Ottawa: Office of the Correctional Investigator OCI Annual Report, 2013)

CSC faces many constraints in terms of budget;⁷ even so, the seeming lack of meaningful opportunities for offenders is discouraging. Both the Office of the Correctional Investigator and Correctional Services Canada (CSC) deal with federal correctional institutions rather than provincial; I rely on information, studies and statistics from these federal departments as there is so little available from provincial governments regarding provincial correctional institutions. This limits our understanding of provincial institutions because conclusions are being drawn based on data that is not wholly relevant to them; however, the little information that is available does indicate that these facilities are plagued by similar concerns and constraints. As Mann states in her report, though corrections is currently ill-equipped to meet the needs of the populations they house, they are in a unique position to be able to provide support services to individuals who otherwise might not have access or seek access to such supports.⁸

It is this unique position to provide support services that this study explores in detail. Rather than examining programming across federal institutions, I have chosen to focus on the Inspired Minds: All Nations Creative Writing Program at Saskatoon Correctional Centre (SCC), a provincial men's facility located in Saskatoon. There is a lack of research at the provincial level that examines programs based on community-corrections partnerships in Canada. Most institutional programming is considered "core-correctional," or "core-intervention," meaning that the programs address specific areas of need such as substance abuse and anger management.⁹ Though these programs are integral to a rehabilitative agenda, they have significant waiting lists and many individuals, particularly those serving provincial time, complete their sentences without ever being able to participate.¹⁰ These programs are often offered to those nearing the

⁷ According to the 2013-2014 Annual Report of the Office of the Correctional Investigator, the budget for correctional re-integration programs makes up 4.7% of the total CSC budget. Howard Sapers, Annual Report of the Office of the Correctional Investigator of Canada 2013-2014, (Ottawa: Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2014)

⁸ Mann, 4.

⁹ Howard Sapers, Annual Report of the Office of the Correctional Investigator of Canada, 2011-2012 (Ottawa: Office of the Correctional Investigator), 37. <http://www.oci-bec.gc.ca/cnt/rpt/annrpt/annrpt20112012-eng.aspx#sV>

¹⁰ See Howard Sapers, Speaking Notes for Mr. Howard Sapers and Dr. Ivan Zinger, Appearance before the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, 2009. <<http://www.oci-bec.gc.ca/cnt/comm/sp-all/sp-all20090602-eng.aspx> >

"For now, offenders have to contend with long waiting list for programs, cancelled programs because of insufficient funding or lack of trained facilitators; delayed conditional release because of the Service's inability to provide timely programs they require to complete their correctional plans; and longer time served before parole consideration. The situation is becoming critical as more and more offenders are released later in their sentences, and too often having not received the necessary programs and treatment to increase their chance of success in the community."

end of their sentence,¹¹ and they are not open to those individuals on Remand.¹² This means that a significant portion of the provincial population has little to no access to programs from which they would benefit. As a result of these limitations, community-corrections programs can work to fill some of these gaps. Community-corrections programs,¹³ because they are externally funded or reliant on volunteer services, are often open to a wider range of participants, such as those on remand, and are available throughout one's sentence instead of mainly to those closer to their release date. The high rates of inmate interest and participation¹⁴ in these partnership programs show that there is significant demand for increased access to programs and that CSC and the province need to be doing more to address the rehabilitative needs of offenders.

This study examines how and to what degree the Inspired Minds: All Nations Creative Writing Program, which has been operating at Saskatoon Correctional Centre for the last four years, has impacted participants. Initially, because of my background in English Literature, I was interested in analyzing the writing of inmate participants in the program; however, it became clear once the program had begun that there was much more than creative writing and literacy skill development occurring in the classroom. It became evident that the inclusive nature of the program built positive relationships between participants and with community members. Former student-volunteer instructor with the IM program and University of Saskatchewan student, Katherine Starks, chose to write a final term paper explaining the relevancy of creative writing programming for First Nations and Métis offenders and how the program works to meet SCC's cultural programming goals. She states:

IM achieves [a] balance between community-based education and the needs of individuals by offering an inclusive program that is oriented around Aboriginal cultures but attentive to the interests and needs of each group of participants. It also draws in the participation of the

Howard Sapers, "Section V: Access to Programs," in the Annual Report of the Office of the Correctional Investigator of Canada, 2011-2012 (Ottawa: Office of the Correctional Investigator <<http://www.oci-bec.gc.ca/cnt/rpt/annrpt/annrpt20112012-eng.aspx#sV>>

¹¹ Anonymous, Personal Interview, March 18, 2013(S)

¹² Anonymous, Personal Interview, March 18, 2013 (S)

¹³ I use the term community-corrections programs or partnerships rather than Community Based Organization (CBO) as the latter is partially defined by its status as a recognized non-profit organization. Inspired Minds does not have non-profit status, though it operates under a similar model.

¹⁴ See Heather A. Kitchin, "Needing Treatment: A Snapshot of Provincially Incarcerated Adult Offenders in Nova Scotia with a View Towards Substance Abuse and Population Health" *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 2005; Many interviewees also spoke to lack of access to programs - Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, May 1, 2013: "I think we need more teachers. We also need more classroom space. As far as liberal arts education we probably need a lot more opportunities for the inmates and a lot more arts education program periods."

wider community through the involvement of volunteer facilitators. *Inspired Minds* uses a community-based model of education that is consistent with First Nations and Métis cultural values.¹⁵

This thesis highlights the connection transformative learning theory and notions of masculinity and how these play out in the Inspired Minds classroom.

Not only will this thesis further the argument that creative writing and education programming more broadly is beneficial in the correctional environment, but that its benefits extend beyond transmission of knowledge from instructor to participant. The learning that happens in the classroom is not bound by the texts (books) used, but occurs in a much broader sense. I will argue that *Inspired Minds: All Nations Creative Writing* provides evidence that arts and education based programs can transform the toxic, hegemonically masculine institution of the prison by creating a classroom space wherein participants are able to become active learners through utilizing transformative learning principles. It provides a “contested space,” which is defined by Ludlow as “a space that is not necessarily defined by conflict, but which includes room for conflict.”¹⁶ This means that there is room to challenge individual ideas and understandings of the world, a central component to transformative learning theory. Thus, this space acts in contradiction to that of a “safe” space by instead acknowledging that “no space is free from domination, so we examine the effects of power and privilege in our classroom environment” and further that “‘safety’ is a privilege” and it is “only from privileged perspectives that neutral or safe environments are viable and from empowered positions that protecting others is possible.”¹⁷ This idea will be explored further in chapter two in which I underscore IM creates a space wherein First Nations and Métis inmates, with all inmates, can utilize creative writing as a tool for decolonization in a neo-colonial space. According to Sium et al., “the decolonizing project seeks to reimagine and rearticulate power, change, and knowledge through a multiplicity of epistemologies, ontologies, and andaxiologies. Decolonization cannot take place without contestation. It must necessarily push back against the colonial relations of

¹⁵ Katherine Starks For Nancy Van Styvendale *Inspired Minds: All Nations Creative Writing A Vital Part of First Nations and Métis Cultural Programming at the Saskatoon Correctional Centre*, Unpublished term paper for Dynamics of Community Involvement, (University of Saskatchewan, 2013), 3.

¹⁶ Jeannie Ludlow, “From Safe Space to Contested Space in the Feminist Classroom,” *Transformations*. 15.1 (2004), 6.

¹⁷ Ludlow, 4, 5, 7.

power that threaten Indigenous ways of being.”¹⁸ While the program itself is not decolonizing the prison, participation in the program creates the potential of participating in a process of decolonization. Participation for some is prefaced on a certain level of resistance to the institutional structures imposed on inmates. As Duguid argues, “The liberal arts were not seen as a panacea, a magic bullet that would defeat the lure of crime, but rather as providing the first steps into a new way of thinking about oneself in relation to others and to society.”¹⁹ Similarly, Inspired Minds does not purport to decolonize the prison, but instead to act as a gateway through which participants are able to engage in a process of decolonization.

1.1 Historical and Research Context

The overrepresentation of First Nations, Métis and Inuit men and women in the Canadian Correctional System has its roots in the colonial history and policies of the Canadian government. Deena Rymhs refers to prison as the next step on a carceral continuum that began with the reserve system, continued with residential schools and the Sixties Scoop, and now is represented by disproportionate rates of incarceration.²⁰ In speaking about mass incarceration in the United States, Angela Davis argues that the prison “relieves us of the responsibility of seriously engaging with the problems of our society, especially those produced by racism and, increasingly, global capitalism.”²¹ This sentiment rings true in the Canadian context as well if we think about Rymhs’ notion of a continuum – that prisons are the next logical step for pushing aside problems produced by racism and colonialism.

In particular, the repercussions of the reserve system and residential schooling are the most well-known and well-documented examples of colonization’s impact on Aboriginal peoples in Canada.²² The seminal works of Memmi (1965), Freire (1970), and Fanon (1963, 1967)²³

¹⁸ Aman Sium, Chandni Desai, and Eric Ritskes, “Towards the ‘Tangible Unknown’: Decolonization and the Indigenous Future, *Decolonization, Indigeneity, Education and Society*, 1.1 (2012): III.

¹⁹ Stephen Duguid, *Can Prisons Work? The Prisoner as Object and Subject in Modern Corrections*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 131.

²⁰ Deena Rymhs, (2008) *From the Iron House: Imprisonment in First Nations Writing*, (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press): 3.

²¹ Davis, 16.

²² See Harold Cardinal, *The Unjust Society*, (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1969); Howard Adams, *Prison of Grass: Canada from a Native Point of View*, (Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers, 1975); and George Manuel & Michael Posluns, *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality*, (Don Mills: Collier-Macmillan Canada, 1974)

²³ Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965); Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970); Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (Toronto: Vintage Books, Random House, 1979); Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Trans Richard Philcox,

explore the relationship between colonizer and colonized in further detail and much of their discussion can be applied to the Canadian context. Critical works by African American writers can, to some extent, be applied similarly (see Dubois, 1903; Davis, 2003, 2005; Alexander, 2010).²⁴ Alexander argues in *The New Jim Crow* that the United States system of mass incarceration is just the newest in an ongoing system of racial oppression, stating, “The stigma of criminality functions in much the same way the stigma of race once did. It justifies a legal, social, and economic boundary between “us” and “them.”²⁵ These same attitudes and social institutions exist in Canada, resulting in a similar system, a comparable stigma on First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. Harold Cardinal, in *The Unjust Society*, echoes Dubois’ discussion of the veil in his explanation of the Buckskin Curtain, in that “Generations of Indians have grown up behind a buckskin curtain of indifference, ignorance and, all too often, plain bigotry.”²⁶ In the 21st century, the disproportionate rates of incarceration speak to the ways in which this Buckskin Curtain is an ever-present reality.

Aboriginal peoples’ overrepresentation in Canada’s prison system is well documented²⁷ and while this study does not seek to equate offender with victim, nor lessen the reality that participants have engaged in illicit activities, it does wish to draw attention to the big-picture social factors contributing to the frequency of these acts among particular populations. It will also highlight how arts-based programming can work to challenge and combat the misconceptions people have about incarcerated subjects.

Angela Y. Davis, a well-known political activist, scholar and former incarcerated subject herself was once listed on the FBI’s most wanted fugitive list. She is an advocate of prison reform, or more accurately, prison abolition, and though her research focuses on the American Prison-Industrial Complex,²⁸ her arguments are applicable to the Canadian context and she has

(New York: Grove Press, 1963), *Black Skin, White Masks*, Trans Charles Lam Markman, (New York: Grove Press, 1967)

²⁴ W.E.B. Dubois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1994); Angela Davis, *Abolition Democracy: Beyond Empire, Prisons and Torture*, (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2005); *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003)

²⁵Michelle Alexander. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, (New York: The New Press, 2010), 18.

²⁶ Harold Cardinal, *The Unjust Society*, (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1969): 1.

²⁷ “Aboriginal Corrections” *Correctional Service of Canada* 2007 <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/prgrm/abinit/who-eng.shtml>

²⁸ The Prison Industrial Complex refers to the American prison boom which saw growth in both the number of prisons being built and the number of Americans incarcerated. It is also paired with growth in the private prison

published extensively on the subject.²⁹ She recognizes the power of writing for self-transformation, but highlights the repressive trend within institutions, attributable in part to the “official disregard for rehabilitative strategies, particularly those that encourage individual prisoners to acquire autonomy of the mind.”³⁰ This sentiment rings true particularly in the provincial context. Saskatchewan’s Ministry of Justice’s Annual Plan for 2014-2015 section entitled *Reoffending Following a Custodial Sentence* states:

Rehabilitative programming is a key component of the Ministry’s approach to reducing re-offending behaviour. Elements of the rehabilitative approach include addressing the main criminogenic factors that contribute to re-offending behavior, including antisocial thoughts and attitudes, low levels of education, lack of stable employment, family issues and addictions.

In 2012-13, the percentage of sentenced offenders not readmitted to any adult correctional program within 24 months of completing custody was 50 per cent, remaining relatively stable over the past ten years. The Ministry recognizes that it is difficult to significantly increase this percentage given that the rate of violent crime remains high, offender counts in adult facilities have continued to rise, and a large proportion of offenders are medium to high-risk.³¹

Though they are correct to highlight in this plan the difficulty of reducing recidivism, the report quickly dismisses the crucial role and I would argue, responsibility, corrections has in providing diverse support to inmates. They justify ten years’ worth of no change to rates of re-offense. It would be much more productive and economically beneficial in the long term to bolster support for existing programs (to reduce wait lists, increase staff in these areas) and to add new programs that can help to lower these rates. Additionally, many of the limitations they highlight are problematic. Medium to high risk inmates often have less access to programming, though research shows and recommendations maintain that this should not be the case³² and corrections

industry which is based on a for-profit model of incarceration and has been widely criticized. See Angela Davis *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003); and Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Era of Colorblindness*, (New York: The New Press, 2010)

²⁹ Angela Davis, *Abolition Democracy: Beyond Empire, Prisons and Torture*, (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2005); *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003).

³⁰ *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003): 57.

³¹ Ministry of Justice: Plan for 2014-2015, (Regina: Government of Saskatchewan): 18. <http://www.finance.gov.sk.ca/PlanningAndReporting/2013-14/JusticePlan1314.pdf>

³² Howard Sapers, Annual Report of the Office of the Correctional Investigator of Canada, 2011-2012 (Ottawa: Office of the Correctional Investigator), 37. <http://www.oci-bec.gc.ca/cnt/rpt/annrpt/annrpt20112012-eng.aspx#sV>

policy also reflects the need for offenders at all risk levels to have access to programming.³³ In his Annual Report for 2013-2014, Correctional Investigator Howard Sapers comments:

The needs of the inmate population are extensive and multiple with health, education, employment and substance abuse among the more prevalent areas of concern. High needs often go hand in hand with higher levels of risk. These offenders stay longer and are incarcerated at higher security levels, and ironically, have the most limited access to programs.³⁴

Furthermore, First Nations and Métis inmates are disproportionately labeled as higher risk, meaning they are significantly impacted by the limitations on programming due to their over-classification.³⁵

Even with all of the challenges at the institutional and policy level, the prison can still be understood as a space that provides society with the opportunity to consider issues of racism, global capitalism and colonization.³⁶ It can become a discursive space in which ‘we’--academics, correctional staff, and inmates--can begin to consider and address these challenges. While the scope of this study does not allow for an in-depth analysis of the history of colonial violence against Canada’s First Nations, Métis, and Inuit populations, it is an important history to acknowledge and highlight as it informs present day issues facing the Canadian justice system and correctional services that result in Aboriginal peoples’ overrepresentation and over-classification in correctional institutions.

In 2007, Aboriginal persons made up 2.7% of the population of Canada and represented 17% of those incarcerated.³⁷ In 2014, this increased to 4% of the general population and 22.8% of those incarcerated.³⁸ This overrepresentation is even more visible in Saskatchewan, where in 2012, 66% or 650 (of 986) of the daily sentence count identified as Métis or Status. The daily

³³ Ibid, 37.

³⁴ Howard Sapers, Annual Report of the Office of the Correctional Investigator of Canada 2013-2014, (Ottawa: Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2014): 7.

³⁵ Speaking Notes for Mr. Howard Sapers, Correctional Investigator, 33rd Annual Report to Parliament, (2006) <http://www.oci-bec.gc.ca/cnt/comm/sp-all/sp-all20061016-eng.aspx>

³⁶ Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete*, 16.

³⁷ “Aboriginal Initiatives,” *Correctional Service of Canada* (February 2, 2011): <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/prgrm/abinit/who-eng.html>

³⁸ Howard Sapers, Annual Report of the Office of the Correctional Investigator of Canada 2013-2014, (Ottawa: Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2014): 44.

average combined sentenced and remand count (all ethnicities and genders) was 1621.³⁹

However, these numbers alone do not paint a complete picture of this overrepresentation at the provincial level. In 2012, there were 3535 new admissions to provincial sentence, 2778 of whom were Aboriginal.⁴⁰ These kinds of figures are unavailable for those on Remand or on ‘Other Hold,’⁴¹ warrants, but it is clear that First Nations and Métis offenders are overrepresented in Canada and these numbers are substantially more pronounced in Saskatchewan. Resultantly, Saskatoon, as the fastest growing urban environment in Canada,⁴² with its high percentage of First Nations and Métis residents, presents a unique opportunity to explore the relationship between Aboriginal incarceration, creative-arts based programming, and education in prison.

Inmates are able to access chaplaincy services, partake in traditional ceremonies, and can speak with Elders and other support workers if they so choose. They are able to complete their high school equivalency through GED programming, but if interested in pursuing post-secondary education typically need to fund it themselves.⁴³ This is similar to the case in the United States where in 1994, inmates were denied access to Pell Grants (educational grants for low-income citizens) and thus it became increasingly difficult to participate in post-secondary education behind bars.⁴⁴ Additionally, there are a number of organizations in the city of Saskatoon that work with former inmates, helping in their transition post-incarceration, such as the John Howard & Elizabeth Fry Societies.

Saskatchewan is home to three Provincial Correctional Centers (Prince Albert, Saskatoon, & Regina); two Community Correctional Centers (Battlefords & Buffalo Narrows); two Correctional Camps (Besnard Lakes & Saskatoon Urban); one facility for women (Pine Grove

³⁹ This number “Includes inmates serving intermittent sentences, straight provincial sentences, a fine default warrant and a federal sentence while waiting transfer to a federal penitentiary. It also includes an inmate being held on remand, parole suspension or immigration hold.” From *Facility Operations Government of Saskatchewan, Corrections and Policing*, <<http://www.justice.gov.sk.ca/Default.aspx?DN=e75de182-1c7a-4e60-8755-f186dd7b063c>>

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ “Some accused are held in remand centers under the “other hold” category. These include: Immigration Hold warrants, Parole Suspension warrants and, Other Parole warrants,” From *Facility Operations Government of Saskatchewan, Corrections and Policing*. <<http://www.justice.gov.sk.ca/Default.aspx?DN=e75de182-1c7a-4e60-8755-f186dd7b063c>>

⁴² “Saskatoon the Fastest Growing City in Canada” *National Post – Postmedia News*, July 20, 2011.

⁴³ “Correctional Programs: Education and Employment Programs” *Correctional Service of Canada* (November 22, 2011): <http://www.csc.scc.gc.ca/text/prgrm/educ-eng.shtml>

⁴⁴ Kerri Russo-Mercer “The Importance of Funding Postsecondary Correctional Education Programs.” *Community College Review*, 37. 2 (2009): 159.

Correctional Centre); and three Healing Lodges; Prince Albert Healing Lodge & Willow Cree Healing Lodge (both men's facilities) and Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge for women.⁴⁵ These institutions house a large number of Aboriginal offenders and working with inmates is a means through which to understand how experiences with these institutions impact community and individual identities.

In order to better understand the relevancy of the IM program to its participants, interviews were conducted so as to gain a more complete picture of the program's failures and successes and to offer recommendations based on these responses. As this program continues to grow and develop, critical reflection is necessary to ensure that the partnership between Correctional Services, program volunteers, and inmates remains beneficial for all parties. Arts-based, non-therapeutic programs offered in correctional services are, to a large extent, grass-roots based; these are built out of partnerships between Correctional Services staff and community organizations and individuals. This means that cohesiveness between program offerings within centers and across provinces is difficult to ascertain, further prioritizing the need for program assessments. Scholarly review and assessment of program participation, delivery, and effectiveness offer concrete conclusions regarding future direction and development with the hopes of impacting policy on a wider (provincial, federal) scale.

1.2 An Overview – The Inspired Minds: All Nations Creative Writing Program

In July 2011, Nancy Van Styvendale and I began to offer creative writing classes to two groups of inmates at Saskatoon Provincial Correctional Centre (SPCC) under the guidance of Diann Block, SCC First Nations and Métis Cultural Coordinator. The program “was conceived after the success of a large group writing workshop held at SCC in early 2011 [...] organized by Dr. Kathleen James-Cavan (Department of English) and Honours English student Dorian Geiger in partnership with Diann Block.”⁴⁶ While I was not involved in this initial session, it inspired Nancy, Diann and I to create an ongoing program based on the same ideas. Nancy and I co-

⁴⁵ “Aboriginal Corrections[b]; Working Together” *Correctional Service of Canada* (August 15, 2013): <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/prgrm/abinit/challenge/11-eng.shtml>

⁴⁶ Nancy Van Styvendale, “Program Description: Overview of Principles, Activities, and Goals,” Personal Communication, (2011).

taught the first two sessions of the course that summer. This gave us a chance to iron out issues together as they arose and work with Diann to ensure the course worked well in both units. Following these initial sessions, I continued to teach the Inspired Minds program on my own, on and off, over the next few years and also assisted with bringing in student volunteers and helping with information sessions when I was able. During this same time, the organization Str8 Up decided to work with men at the correctional to put together the book, *Str8 Up and Gangs* which was to work as a community youth gang-prevention resource.

Some Inspired Minds participants contributed to this book and both Nancy and I helped with the brainstorming sessions and assisted contributors in editing their work. As this book had a specific goal – to deglamorize the gang lifestyle for young people who might be attracted to it by sharing autobiographical life stories - some of the texts needed to be revised to remove explicit violence or to ensure the narrative worked to meet the book’s goals of dissuading youth from being attracted to gang life. We met regularly over the course of a few months with contributors, the publisher and the organization Str8 Up to work on this project and once published helped to develop a teaching tool so that the book could easily be used in local elementary and high school classes.

On a yearly basis, beginning in 2010, Diann Block also gathers submissions for *Creative Escape: Inmate Stories and Art*, a small, informal publication of art, short stories, and creative writing that student volunteers have helped put together. It is open to submissions from any inmates at Saskatoon Correctional Centre and Inspired Minds participants are frequent contributors.

I have been slightly less active with the Inspired Minds program in the past two years but have still maintained arms-length involvement. This has included recruiting volunteers, helping at fundraisers, and working to build a program website. A lot has changed from the first summer of developing the program with Nancy and Diann but many of the core elements have remained the same.

In the initial summer of Inspired Minds, the group met once a week for one hour sessions in Remand and Echo units over an eight week period, during which students were taught in various

genres of literature, including poetry, autobiography, short stories, traditional Aboriginal storytelling, and songs. As Inspired Minds' mandate states:

The workshops introduce students to basic literary terminology; develop their literacy through in- and out-of-class reading and discussion of literary texts; and enlarge their writing and editing skills. Students are given homework each week, and ample opportunity is given the following week to share and discuss this work with peers and instructors. Generally, workshops consist of sharing writing done over the week; introducing terminology and providing sample texts for discussion; guiding students through in-class writing exercises; and assigning homework for the following week's class.⁴⁷

Participation occurs on a volunteer basis, all literacy levels are welcome, and inmates are provided with a certificate of completion if they attend any six of the eight sessions. Since the first summer of the project, the course has been offered nineteen times, with thirty-two student and faculty facilitators delivering the program (often co-teaching) to over one hundred-fourteen participants across the correctional facility. Some of these students are drawn from the University of Saskatchewan Honours English internship program, from Community Service Learning classes, while others have heard about the program and volunteered either after attending an information session or by contacting Nancy Van Styvendale or myself.

These subsequent sessions follow the program structure as laid out in the first sessions, though topics chosen are based on both the participants' interest and the facilitator's expertise. Guest speakers are also brought in to cover specific genres: Cree Storyteller Simon Moccasin closed out the first workshop series, Hip-Hop artist/lyricist Lindsay 'Eekwol' Knight ran a lyric writing workshop for both units during the fall session, and in October 2011, renowned Canadian author and playwright Tomson Highway convened a workshop with the Remand participants in addition to the regular workshop hours. Many of the participants have found the inclusion of guest speakers valuable to their overall experience with the course.

Involved volunteers and staff are also continually looking into ways the program can be offered on an ongoing basis and the inclusion of internship and Community Service Learning students present a step towards future development and expansion. The program has thus far received positive feedback from participants and SPCC staff; however, an examination of the specific ways in which IM impacts participant experiences and how structure, content, and

⁴⁷ Van Styvendale, 2011.

facilitation contribute to its reception or lack thereof may facilitate an improvement in program reception and delivery. While there is a significant body of literature examining current social conditions of First Nations, Métis and Inuit populations (both urban and otherwise) and the way these impact high rates of incarceration,⁴⁸ there is little research focusing on the programs and opportunities offered to these same men and women once incarcerated. Aboriginal peoples and all offenders in correctional institutions are subjected to a Western model of ‘Corrections,’⁴⁹ which focuses on exacting punitive justice and which fails to adequately meet the needs of offenders. This results in high rates of recidivism⁵⁰ and has aptly been titled, “Canada’s moral failure”.⁵¹ As noted earlier, Saskatchewan’s rates of recidivism have been steady for the past ten years at about 50% after two years after an individual’s release date.⁵² In contrast to the prison as a place of punishment, isolation, and silence, this study hopes to give voice to some of the individuals who have participated in the IM program.

In the past few decades, much of the vocational work inmates previously engaged in has been removed for reasons ranging from safety and security to funding issues.⁵³ The changing trend in rehabilitative and other programming in corrections can be explicitly linked to populist understandings of crime and to changes in scholarship as Duguid illustrates in *Can Prisons Work?* He argues that while Robert Martinson’s “Nothing Works” theory⁵⁴ problematized then current (1974) approaches to corrections programming, the response to this article was a move away from institutionally driven programming altogether and an increasing reliance on community-corrections partnerships.⁵⁵ Martinson had called for de-carceration of low-risk offenders, removing forced program participation (i.e. to qualify for parole), and an abandoning the idea of crime as ‘disease,’ the concept that informed the ‘medical model’ of corrections programming.⁵⁶ He forwarded the now more widely accepted understanding that criminal

⁴⁸ “Aboriginal Peoples and the Criminal Justice System: Part IV” in *Canadian Criminal Justice Association* (Ottawa: May 15, 2000) <http://www.ccja-acjp.ca/en/abori4.html>

⁴⁹ “Aboriginal Peoples and the Criminal Justice System,” 2000.

⁵⁰ Michelle Mann, “Good Intentions, Disappointing Results: A Progress Report on Federal Aboriginal Corrections.” 2009

⁵¹ Richard Gwyn, “Maybe Canada’s National Unity Problem Not Meant to be Solved,” *Toronto Star*, June 10, 1998.

⁵² Ministry of Justice: Plan for 2013-2014, Government of Saskatchewan, 18.

⁵³ Duguid, 2000.

⁵⁴ See Martinson, Robert (1974). What works? Questions and answers about prison reform. *The Public Interest*, 35, 22–54.

⁵⁵ Duguid, 71.

⁵⁶ Martinson.

activity is a normal response to poverty. However, as a result of the “nothing works” theory, the nature of correctional programming in Canada shifted to what Duguid calls the “Opportunities Model.”⁵⁷ This saw a decrease in corrections-driven programming and instead an influx of community programming and the positioning of participant as decision maker. Responsibility shifted from the prison to rehabilitate to the inmate to make decisions that would contribute to his rehabilitation.⁵⁸ While there has been a shift away from the “Opportunities Model” (1972-1992), with the move to core correctional programs, many of the challenges highlighted by Duguid are still relevant when discussing current concerns regarding community-corrections partnerships. These programs still work to fill the programming gap left by financial and personnel limitations which constrain institutional ability to provide programming to growing inmate populations.

Community driven education and arts programming can, to an extent, fill this gap. One of the challenges to studying such programs is that they are often local in nature and dependent on volunteers or short-term funding as evidenced by other studies on such programs. There are a variety of arts in corrections programs across facilities internationally which include, but are not limited to the creative arts (drama, visual art, writing, music), yoga (which is now also happening at Saskatoon Correctional Centre), horticulture, pet therapy and/or training dogs for re-adoption, and dance.⁵⁹ Most of these programs are locally driven and contingent on the support of the particular institution(s) and/or an advocate for such programs on the inside as well as administrative support. Inspired Minds is lucky to have administration at Saskatoon Correctional Centre support the continuation of the program through Diann Block’s role as Cultural Coordinator.

⁵⁷ Duguid, 93.

⁵⁸ Duguid, 126.

⁵⁹Examples of this include: Argue, Julie. et al. “Transformation through negotiation: Initiating the Inmate Mural Arts Program” *The Arts in Psychotherapy* 36.5 (2009), 313-319; Cohen, M. L. “Choral Singing and Prison Inmates: Influences of Performing in a Prison Choir” *Journal of Correctional Education*, 60.1 (2009), 52-65; Delshadian, Suzanne, “Playing with Fire: Art therapy in a Prison Setting,” *Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy*, 17.1 (2003), 68-84; Djurichkovic, Alexandra, “Art in Prisons: A Literature Review of the Philosophies and Impacts of Visual Arts Programs for Correctional Populations,” *Studies in Human Society, Report for Art Access Australia*, University of Technology Sydney, (2011); Lindley, Lorinda. “A Critical Race Theory Analysis of Academic Attainment: A Qualitative Study of Sixteen Northern Arapaho Women Who Earned Degrees at the University of Wyoming.” Ph.D. Diss. University of Wyoming, 2009; Persons, Roy W. “Art Therapy with Serious Juvenile Offenders: A Phenomenological Analysis” *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*. 53.4 (2009), 433-453.

Arts-based programming facilitated by external organizations in conjunction with Correctional Services provides new opportunities and outlets for inmates. More than filling up otherwise empty time, creative writing programs provide constructive environments wherein participants' work "is evaluated from an artistic point of view only, not in terms of their psyches."⁶⁰ In this way, the program is not therapy or considered therapeutic and instead focuses on creative expression and critical thinking. It provides a contested space in which participants can learn from one another, the instructors, and themselves without being subjected to formal evaluative measures.

The problem of over-representation is multi-faceted and it is necessary to recognize that programming alone will not stem the flow of youth entering the system. Rather, the 'problem' per se is one that needs to be addressed by the community as a whole – the social system that has created and perpetuates exclusionary politics and policies that have disenfranchised First Nations, Métis and Inuit populations in Canada in an attempt to assimilate and absorb them into the body politic. I believe that challenging the above can occur from the inside-out. Confronting injustices from within the correctional system is a step towards confronting injustices elsewhere and building communities that care about *all* of their members. As Alexander states, "the topic of conversation should be how *us* can come to include *all of us*. Accomplishing this degree of unity may mean giving up fierce defense of policies and strategies that exacerbate racial tensions and produce for racially defined groups primarily psychological or cosmetic racial benefits."⁶¹ Instead, support for research driven programming and policies that work toward building relationships between corrections and community begin to allow for the participation of incarcerated or formerly incarcerated individuals in these communities. This then works to repair and build new relationships based on inclusion and mutual respect.

1.3 Reevaluating "Success"

This qualitative study was undertaken in order to challenge the standard notions and assessments of program success, which are based on rates of recidivism. Currently, there are few programs, particularly at the provincial level, that provide ongoing support – not throughout

⁶⁰ Lawrence Brewster, "An Evaluation of the Arts-in-Corrections Program of the California Department of Corrections" Prepared for the William James Association Santa Cruz, CA & California Department of Corrections 95132, (San Jose: San Jose State University, 1983).

⁶¹ Alexander, 244.

one's term of incarceration, and especially not when one is released into the community. The need for continuity between these spaces has been well documented⁶² if an offender is to 'successfully' reintegrate. Thus, this thesis is a call for a widening of how 'success' is defined – so much financial support for programs is dependent on proving impact on recidivism; however, unless access to programs expands to meet the demand and become holistic in nature, the impact of a single program though usually positive, will not return overwhelming results. Developing meaningful programs with, rather than *for*, offenders offers an alternative approach to programming that could have more effective results. Thus, this study examines one such grassroots program – with a ground-up approach that tries to put adult educational theory into practice in order to make the case for the support, financial and otherwise, of arts and education programs and community partnerships.

1.4 Goals and Objectives

This study examines the impact of the Inspired Minds: All Nations Creative Writing Program from the perspective of program participants and staff affiliated (in an in-direct way) with the program. Their perspectives were sought through semi-structured interviews that took place in early 2013. This study will provide an in depth look at the Inspired Minds program in hopes to gain a thorough understanding of one arts based education program operating at the provincial level. Though the scope of the research is narrow, many of the findings can be understood and applied in the broader context of considering approaches to developing effective programs that meet both institutional and individual needs.

The goal of this project is to mete out the indirect impacts of a creative arts and education program at Saskatoon Correctional Centre. The most obvious/straightforward program objective is improved literacy skills, though it is not the focus of this study. Instead, this study seeks to understand the peripheral impacts of the program, those that cannot be directly observed or understood through an examination of recidivism rates or literary analysis alone. Goals include:

1. To understand if and to what degree the Inspired Minds program has changed participants' understanding of social relations.

⁶² Lois M. Davis, et al., *Evaluating the Effectiveness of Correctional Education: A Meta-Analysis of Programs that Provide Education to Incarcerated Adults*, (Washington, DC: RAND Corporation, 2013), 36.

2. To gain knowledge regarding how community-corrections partnerships can operate at the provincial level and to sort out the challenges to delivering such a program.
3. To provide concrete recommendations for program development so as to better meet the needs of both the participants and the institution.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

For the purposes of this analysis I use masculinity theory as it became clear throughout the research process that issues of masculinity weigh heavily on one's involvement in the IM program and experiences leading to and with incarceration, as will be explained below. The second framework I use in my analysis is Transformative Learning Theory – as all IM participants have voluntarily returned to learning after some sort of break in their education.

1.5.1 Understanding Masculinity

Questions about masculinity were not asked during the interviews; however, because the prison is a patriarchal institution that works to reify gender norms through heteronormative patriarchy,⁶³ issues relating to masculinity arose throughout the research process. In furthering my understanding and analysis of the program itself, and of transformative learning theory more generally, it became clear that notions of masculinity weigh heavily on one's involvement with and reception to the Inspired Minds program. This is evident in the interviews, creative writing samples, and throughout the literature. While this is a turn I had not anticipated, I believe it provides new insight into understanding the impact arts and education programming can have on identity and relationship construction.

As the creative writing workshops are offered at a men's facility, where the majority of men are of First Nations and Métis heritage, it is necessary to highlight the emerging field of Indigenous masculinities. While Indigenous feminism has been a field embraced, rejected and

⁶³ *The Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories* defines heteropatriarchy and heteronormativity as follows:

Heteropatriarchy: "ensures male right of access to women. Women's relations – personal, social, economic - are defined by the ideology that woman is for man. Heteropatriarchy normalizes the domination of one person and the subordination of another.

Heteronormativity: an instrument perpetuating power. Lesbian and queer theorists address the compulsory nature of heterosexuality. Lorraine Code, *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*, (New York: Routledge, 2000): 347.

From this, *heteronormative patriarchy* can then be understood as a system of power that reinforces male heterosexuality and continues the oppression of women and gender queer persons in order to maintain this position of dominance.

critiqued by scholars;⁶⁴ and the place of contemporary women in Aboriginal and American Indian communities has been explored extensively in scholarly work, the same cannot be said for Indigenous men and masculinities. The ways in which colonialism has impacted Indigenous men remains a developing but understudied field.⁶⁵ The field is, informed by Indigenous feminism and the study of Indigenous masculinity can be considered part of feminist praxis. As Joyce Green states:

Feminists in all patriarchal societies are denigrated, for they question the common understanding of what it means to be a good woman (and a good man), they challenge the social, political, economic and cultural practices that validate, perpetuate and enforce these roles.⁶⁶

From this, it can be understood that Indigenous masculinities is a critical examination of what it means to be a good man in Indigenous communities. The study of Indigenous men's experiences with colonialism and heteronormative patriarchal gender norms in Canadian correctional institutions thus challenges these common understandings of masculinity from a feminist lens.⁶⁷ Similar to Indigenous feminism, definitions of Indigenous masculinity are varied, given the diversity among Indigenous peoples across the globe, within nations and between individuals.⁶⁸

Scholars in the field have argued that Indigenous men's notions of masculinity have been greatly influenced by sources external to Indigenous communities.⁶⁹ As Brendan Hokowhitu argues, "Māori masculinity cannot be analyzed merely from a contemporary snapshot; masculinity is a historical construction."⁷⁰ Thus, the factors that interplay have been influenced by the ongoing colonialism and the construction of the Indigenous male body as 'Other'. He

⁶⁴ Mishuana R. Goeman and Jennifer Nez Denetdale, "Native Feminisms: Legacies, Interventions, and Indigenous Sovereignities," *Wicazo Sa Review*, 24.2 (2009): 9-13; Shari M. Hundorf and Cheryl Suzack, "Indigenous Feminism: Theorizing the Issues," ed. Suzack et al., in *Indigenous Women and Feminism: Politics, Activism, Culture*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 2-3; Joyce Green (ed) *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*, (Black Point, NS: Fernwood Press, 2007), 14-15, 17, 20 .

⁶⁵ Kim Anderson, Robert Alexander Innes, and John Swift, "Indigenous Masculinities: Carrying the Bones of Our Ancestors," in *Canadian Men and Masculinities: Historical and Contemporary Perspective*, ed. Christopher J. Greig and Wayne J. Martino, (Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press, 2012), 279.

⁶⁶ Joyce Green, "Taking Account of Aboriginal Feminism," in *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*, (Black Point, NS: Fernwood Press, 2007), 22.

⁶⁷ Anderson, Innes, and Swift, 267.

⁶⁸ Warriors, Healers, Lovers, and Leaders: Colonial Impositions on Indigenous Male Roles and Responsibilities," In *Canadian Perspectives on Men and Masculinities: An Interdisciplinary Reader*, ed. Laker, J. A., (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2011), 242-243.

⁶⁹ Sam McKegey, "Warriors, Healers, Lovers, and Leaders," 243.

⁷⁰ Brendan Hokowhitu, "Tackling Māori Masculinity: A Colonial Genealogy of Savagery and Sport," *The Contemporary Pacific*, 16.2 (2004,) 264.

articulates that, “Dominant racial ideals and other social constructions are powerful because they are disciplined norms that one willingly acts out or obeys.”⁷¹ Participating in these dominant constructions of masculinity is extremely problematic for Indigenous and non-Indigenous men alike. For Indigenous men, access to Western hegemonic masculinity has been limited by colonial constructions of a masculine ‘Other’. So instead, the essentializing representations are often taken up by Indigenous men themselves; as in New Zealand, where Hokowhitu finds, “many Māori men to be contemptuous of academe, buying into the hegemonic notion that tāne should demonstrate their masculinity through physical pursuits such as manual labor and sports,” even though, “many aspects now regarded as traditional were merely selected qualities of British colonial masculinity.”⁷² In Canada, this is true in the variety of Aboriginal gangs that have emerged across the prairies wherein members make use of the violent imagery and culturally constructed stereotypes to intimidate and illicit fear.⁷³ In Saskatoon, and other prairie cities, Aboriginal gangs’ illegal activities are a contributor to violent crime and the high rate of Aboriginal incarceration in the prairies. According to Statistics Canada, “Saskatchewan, despite recording declines, had both the highest CSI and the highest crime rate among the province in 2013 (125.7 and 10,644 per 100,000, respectively).”⁷⁴ Gangs adopt the use of this imagery in their names - like Red Alert, Terror Squad, Indian Posse, Native Syndicate and the Manitoba/Saskatchewan/Alberta Warriors - which works to bolster an intimidating image, persona and reputation as well as valorize criminal acts.

The literature links high crime rates in Saskatchewan to the history and reality of colonial violence, a component of which is a relationship between masculinity and violence. bell hooks attributes this relationship to patriarchy, which she says only accepts and values the expression of anger in men.⁷⁵ Nakata (in Davey 2008) articulates that the question must be “not how colonialism has affected the lives of Indigenous men, but rather how colonialism manifests in the

⁷¹ Brendan Hokowhitu, “‘Physical Beings’: Stereotypes, Sport and the ‘Physical Education’ of Māori”, *Sport in Society*, 6 (2003), 193.

⁷² Hokowhitu, 261, 269.

⁷³ See Sam McKegney, “Warriors, Healers, Lovers, and Leaders,” 269; Robert Alexander Innes, “Moose on the Loose: Indigenous Men, Violence, and the Colonial Excuse,” *Aboriginal Policy Studies*, 4.1 (2015), 46-56.

⁷⁴ Boyce, Jillian et al., 7.

2013 <http://www.justice.gov.sk.ca/adx/asp/adxGetMedia.aspx?DocID=3633,13,1,Documents&MediaID=0788c8d5-e813-415d-a945-ddcf649ab4ac&Filename=police-reported-crime-statistics-canada-2013.pdf>

⁷⁵ bell hooks, *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity and Love*. (Toronto: Atria Books, 2004): 7.

ways Indigenous men respond to ongoing issues.”⁷⁶ Sam McKegney (2011) further articulates this idea, linking the common Indigenous male stereotypes of ‘noble savage,’ ‘blood thirsty warrior,’ and ‘drunken absentee’ under the umbrella term “*masculindian*.”⁷⁷ He argues these stereotypes “bear genuine consequences for Indigenous men and Indigenous communities because they saturate popular culture [...] the images of hypermasculinity [...] become potentially attractive to Indigenous men in terms of the power they display.”⁷⁸ This is evident in the names of the above-mentioned Aboriginal gangs prominent in the prairies and problematizes the notion of Indigenous masculinity. As these authors note, masculinity itself needs to be reclaimed and decolonized by Indigenous men and communities themselves, in order to combat the appropriation of negative representations of Indigenous men in popular (and also street) culture. This concept of Indigenous masculinity is one lens I will use in my analysis of participant interviews and creative writing submitted to the publications *Creative Escape* and *Str8Up and Gangs*, both of which have developed out of creative and autobiographical writing at Saskatoon Correctional Centre. As the majority of participants in the IM program identify as First Nations or Métis and many have histories of gang involvement, masculinity studies presents a unique way in which to understand and explore Indigenous male identity in the context of the prison classroom.

1.5.2 Transformative Learning Theory

As developed by Mezirow (2000), Transformative Learning Theory posits that adult learners make a choice to engage in an educative process through which they become open to new ideas and knowledge.⁷⁹ In some of Mezirow’s earliest studies of this theory, he focused on middle aged, lesser-educated women, returning to the academy of their own accord.⁸⁰ Oftentimes, a necessary component of the ability to return to school is a level of affluence that makes this return possible. As noted earlier, pursuing education behind bars is often futile due to financial constraints, lack of programming and limited access to resources. The development of

⁷⁶ Nakata in Linda Davey and Andrew Day “Chapter 6: Researching Anger in Indigenous Men in Prison: A Perspective from Non-Indigenous Researchers” In *Doing Cross Cultural Research: Ethical and Methodological Perspectives*, ed. Pranee Liamputtong (2008), 83.

⁷⁷ McKegney, “Warriors Healers, Lovers, and Leaders,” 29.

⁷⁸ McKegney, “Warriors, Healers, Lovers, and Leaders,” 36.

⁷⁹ Jack Mezirow, “Transformative Learning: Theory to Practice,” In *Transformative Learning in Action: Insights from Practice. New Directions for Adult Continuing Education* ed. Patricia Cranton (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1997), 74.

⁸⁰ Cranton, 42.

educational programs based on the transformative learning framework presents a viable opportunity for inmates in Correctional Services – representing some of Canadian society’s most marginalized peoples - racially, socially and economically – to reengage in the learning process. The quantitative impact of such educative undertakings is difficult to measure, but collecting and reviewing data from participants and stakeholders of such programs nonetheless offers insight into the ways in which transformative learning theory can assist individuals who may previously have been disillusioned by the standard system of schooling or who may have had other barriers to involvement.

Sixty-five per cent of incarcerated individuals in Canada test at less than a grade 8 education level and eighty-two per cent at less than grade ten.⁸¹ As these numbers indicate, inmate education needs to be a central aspect of correctional services programming and needs to present a variety of opportunities for inmates to reengage in educative processes. Education in non-traditional spaces presents a unique opportunity to explore the ways in which adult learners’ needs can be met in ways that include them as participants in the learning process, rather than create distance between learner and instructor. Transformative learning theory has its roots in post-colonial theory, specifically in Paulo Freire’s seminal text, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970). In this text, Freire differentiates between learning as ‘banking’ in which knowledge is deposited into students, and ‘problem-posing,’ in which teacher and student partake in a dual exchange of knowledge and learning.⁸² As Mezirow (1997) states, “transformative learning develops autonomous thinking;”⁸³ furthermore, it focuses on self-reflection and critical engagement. According to Brookfield (in Clements, 2004), creative writing, group discussions and self-reflexivity - all of which question individual and group perspectives - foster the process of transformative learning.⁸⁴ For Mezirow (1997), transformative learning, as the goal of adult education, means helping individuals foster their own critical lens with which to understand (and

⁸¹ “Correctional Programs: Education and Employment Programs,” Correctional Service of Canada, 2011. <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/prgrm/educ-eng.shtml>

⁸² Paulo Friere, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 66.

⁸³ Mezirow "Transformative Learning: Theory to Practice." In *Transformative Learning in Action: Insights from Practice. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* edited by Patricia Cranton, 74 (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1997), 5.

⁸⁴ Brookfield in Paul Clements, “The Rehabilitative Role of Arts Education in Prison: Education or Enlightenment?” *International Journal of Art and Design Education*, 23.2 (2004), 199.

also question) the world, rather than relying on the interpretations of others.⁸⁵ This essentially means that the student comes to develop a relationship with learning and critical thinking.

Patricia Cranton (1994) argues that adult learning is often *voluntary, self-directed, practical, participatory*, and involves *sharing of experience and resources*.⁸⁶ Many arts based programs in correctional services meet these criteria and as such, adult and transformative learning theory provide the best fit for this analysis. The works of Freire (1970), Mezirow (1997; 2000; 2009), Habermas (1981), and Cranton (1994) are foundational to the study of transformative learning theory and will act as a guide in my attempt to understand the context in which inmates are motivated to participate in creative arts programming.⁸⁷ This theory holds the adult learner central, viewing these individuals as self-guided and active in the learning process. Creative arts education allows for critical engagement, group discussion, and depends on the commitment of the individual and collective (comprised of the teacher/instructor and other participants) and as such, program objectives, directives and course content can be modified to meet the variety of needs and learning styles found in the correctional environment. While transformative learning theory cannot explain or account for all variables in this study, it provides enough flexibility to incorporate alternate perspectives, theories, and ways of knowing. As Freire argues, “problem-posing education bases itself on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality, thereby responding to the vocation of men as beings who are authentic only when engaged in inquiry and creative transformation.”⁸⁸ Transformative learning theory, with this close connection to post-colonial theory, presents the link through which education, and more specifically, arts-based programming in Correctional Services and its participants, can participate in a process of decolonization through actively engaging in an alternative learning process.

1.6 Methodology

As discussed earlier, rates of recidivism are most often used as a measurement of whether or not correctional programming is effective. The lower the rate of recidivism, the more successful a program is considered. Though this certainly gives one perspective on creating

⁸⁵ Mezirow, 11.

⁸⁶ Cranton, 7.

⁸⁷ Freire, 1970; Mezirow 1997; 2000; 2009; Jurgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action. Vol. 1: Reason and the Realization of Society*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1981); Cranton.

⁸⁸ Freire, 71.

effective programs, it is limiting for many reasons. In particular, it takes into account only those participants who have been released over the course of the study; the impact on those who remain incarcerated or those who may have participated while on remand is omitted. Evaluations based solely on recidivism lack the valuable insight program participants can provide on the specific ways in which a program has impacted their lives, whether positively or negatively. Developing programs that meet inmate needs should take into account the perspectives of those directly involved in the program. As such, I have chosen to interview men who participated in the creative writing program about their experiences. Additionally, staff members who were involved in the program in some capacity – even through peripheral involvement – were asked to participate in interviews. This was done in order to get a well-rounded picture of the program.

Former or active participants in the Inspired Minds Program were approached to see if they would be interested in participating. Information packets on the research project were handed out and explained to interested parties. If individuals agreed verbally to be interviewed, dates were arranged in coordination with the team leader or guards on the unit for the interview to take place. This was necessary because the interviews were often conducted on each unit in the classroom and we had to ensure that the space was available during the requested times.

Participants were solicited from all living units at the centre where the class had been conducted. Additionally, some individuals who had been transferred to other units, or had been released and readmitted due to parole violations or re-offense, but who had previously taken part in the class were interviewed as well. Interviewees came from the following living units: Alpha, Beta, Delta, Echo, Overflow 2 and Remand. Because of the high turnover rate at SCC and the reality that some individuals might be transferred to a federal facility, participants were given the option of approving transcripts at the conclusion of the interview and waiving their right to review (see Appendixes 3 and 4).

Fourteen participants and three staff members were interviewed between February and May 2013. I transcribed these interviews and they were returned to participants for approval if they had so requested. All staff members and about half (six) participants reviewed their transcripts. The last transcriptions were finalized and approved January 2014. Interviews were conducted in English, audio-recorded, and ranged in length from fifteen minutes to one hour. The interviews were coded and any identifying details were removed. They are referred to in this

thesis by the date the interview occurred and by an alphabetized letter to differentiate between participant interviews that occurred on the same day. Staff interviews are marked by the date they took place and 'S.' Different sets of questions were used to guide the inmate and staff interviews, though both sets had a similar focus on the impact of creative writing programming on participants (see appendixes 5 and 6). The interviews were semi-structured in nature in order to keep the interview conversational.

The research questions helped to guide the thematic analysis of the interview transcripts, as did ongoing conversations with other researchers. In reviewing transcripts I pulled out main ideas from each and looked for themes which repeated themselves through both the participant and staff interviews. Many discussed their motivations for participating, reasons for sticking with the class based around it being a positive use of time and a healing and learning process. Both staff and participants touched on the way IM positively influenced their relationships with those in and outside of IM, while others discussed the way in which it sometimes strained relationships if they happened to be gang involved. Many also spoke to the challenges of doing such a program in a provincial facility with regard to class turnover and the limited amount of time available for the class itself and how this impacted participants' ability to engage with the instructors and the program.

At the time of the interviews and after, the field of Indigenous masculinities was quickly growing from there being very little literature to a small swell of scholars exploring identity and Indigenous men in Canada. Unfortunately, questions regarding masculinity were not included in the interviews and this presents a limitation to understanding participants' relationship to ideas and articulations of masculinity. This is, in part, why I undertook a thematic analysis of contributions to both *Str8 Up and Gangs: The Untold Stories* and *Creative Escape: Inmate Stories and Art*. Examining Indigenous masculinities research and speaking with scholars conducting this work helped to frame my understanding of the interviews and secondary data (creative writing).

Some study participants I knew personally through having facilitated the course in which they participated or from having sat in on a session facilitated by another instructor. The fact that I was asking for a critique of a program I help to facilitate might have prevented some from sharing stronger ideas or objections, but I believe that at least some of those who I had developed

a rapport with were comfortable enough during the sessions to provide constructive feedback regardless of my position/prior relationship with them, as will be evidenced through interview excerpts in the following chapters. This development of rapport is complex. It is informed by a variety of factors which determine both how the participants were able to relate to me, and I to them.

The insider-outsider debate is particularly relevant here as it speaks to conflicting notions about the nature of what constitutes scholarly research and of researcher objectivity and subjectivity. In many ways I could not be further removed from the lives and experiences of most interviewees and Inspired Minds participants. As a middle-class, university educated, white, non-Indigenous, cisgendered⁸⁹ woman, my family and cultural background have little overlap with the life experiences of First Nations and Métis male inmates at a provincial correctional facility. In this way I am clearly an outsider. However, as a facilitator of IM and volunteer at the correctional centre, my experience certainly informs my understanding of corrections and community corrections programming. As Innes articulates in ““Wait a Second. Who Are You Anyways? The Insider/Outsider Debate and American Indian Studies,” the role of insider can provide benefits inaccessible to a researcher less familiar with the community under study: “insiders pose questions that challenge preconceived notions of their communities and expand scholarly knowledge [...] Insider scholars, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, challenge the research conducted by outsiders for its colonial nature, which ignores, silences, and/or diminishes insider perspectives.”⁹⁰ In the case of the IM program I am both an insider and an outsider and the divisions between these, though important, are much more complex than the insider/outsider binary would indicate. My role and relationship to the program, participants, and the field of Native Studies, does inform my approach to and interpretation of the research. However, unlike the advocate anthropologist who “seems to know relatively more about the

⁸⁹ Evan Taylor, in “Cisgender Privilege: On the Privileges of Performing Normative Gender,” defines cisgender as follows: “Cisgender people are those whose gender identity, role, or expression is considered to match their assigned gender by societal standards.” (268) There is some debate whether cisgender is the most appropriate term to use as it supports rather than disrupts gender binaries, among other concerns, as discussed by Anne Finn Enke, in “The Education of Little Cis: Cisgender and the Discipline of Opposing Bodies,” in *Transfeminist Perspectives in and Beyond Transgender and Gender Studies*, Edited by Anne Enke. See pages 63 – 70.

⁹⁰ Robert Alexander Innes, ““Wait a Second. Who Are You Anyways?’ The Insider/Outsider Debate and American Indian Studies,” *American Indian Quarterly*, 33. 4. (2009), 440-442.

power structures that affect local life, and who is accessible and seems willing to help,”⁹¹ I do not purport to know more about these systems than my research participants who have too frequently grown up in them. As the interview and creative writing excerpts show, many participants are very aware of the systems at play in their lives. The variety of factors that influence my status as an insider/outsider are described in further detail below.

Being both an outsider and an insider may have worked to increase trust level and accessibility with the interview participants. For example, many of the IM participants are young men, many of whom are around my own age, and so there was certainly some generational cultural overlap. Though I am a woman, some of the men, given the discussion about masculinity and a need to assert power in the spaces of prison and community, may have found me less threatening than a man conducting himself similarly in the same space. Nonetheless, as a middleclass woman, following staff suggestion, throughout my involvement with IM and the research, I did my best to “dress down” on any visit to the correctional centre. This meant wearing loose fitting, plain clothing that downplayed my gender and class, rather than professional or even casual dress. I am not sure how or if this impacted my interactions with participants, though given they are dressed in cotton shirts and sweats or hospital-style pants, the hope was that doing so made me more relatable and accessible. Due to the limitations of this study this question of dress and the influence of my gender as an interviewer and facilitator will not be examined further.

One of the most critical distinctions between myself and corrections staff was my role as IM program facilitator, and like McCorkel, I understand this as the definitive factor in the receptiveness of participants and interviewees. As she argues, “The decision not to participate in the program’s disciplinary structure was critical and, in many ways, facilitated my intermediary position within the prison hierarchy.”⁹² Had I been a guard or a staff member employed by CSC, my relationship to the program and its participants would likely have been quite different. Just as McCorkel posits that her “emphasis on similarity and the intermediary role [she] assumed in the

⁹¹ James B. Waldram, “Chapter Twelve: Some Limits to Anthropology in the Native Canadian Context,” *Anthropology, Public Policy and Native Peoples in Canada*, Eds Noel Dyck and James B. Waldram, (Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1993), 297.

⁹² Jill A. McCorkel and Kristin Myers. “What Difference Does Difference Make? Position and Privilege in the Field.” *Qualitative Sociology*. 26.2 (2003), 214.

prison community contributed to a sense of identification and, ultimately, respect,”⁹³ I believe that the same factors contributed to the interviewee’s openness and acceptance of me.

A prior relationship with some of the research participants certainly helped in the interview process, though this was not always the case. In some instances, interviews with those who had taken an IM class I facilitated did not elicit much depth of response, though participation in the interview was at the discretion of the participant. In other instances, detailed conversations about the program were had with individuals with whom I had little to no contact with previously. This could be a reflection on the individual’s willingness to contribute to a discourse on the role of arts in corrections, the positive experience they had taking the program, or the relationship they had with their own facilitator. Along this same vein, had the interviews been conducted by someone with no prior involvement in the program, because participants (by agreeing to be interviewed) showed a vested interest in the program, an external interviewer may have received comparable responses.

The ethics process for this research included both university ethics approval as well as approval from the Province of Saskatchewan’s Ministry of Justice, Corrections, and Policing. Ethics approval from the University needed to be obtained before submitting an application to the Province. Provincial ethics had to go through a number of stages including receiving approval from the Executive Director of Clinical and Rehabilitative Services at the Ministry of Justice, Corrections and Policing before the ethics proposal could be reviewed by the Privacy and Information Officer. I was also required to sign an Oath/Declaration of Confidentiality which was provided to the Planning & Priorities Branch for Corrections and Policing. The Provincial Ethics approval process took approximately nine months and was contingent on the following factors:

- Participants must sign a ‘Limits of Confidentiality Form’ (Appendix 6)
- Interviewees on remand could not discuss their charges or the events leading to their charge.
- All participants must remain anonymous, with any identifying statements omitted from transcripts and other documentation
- Staff interviews were to take place on staff’s own time.
- That I, as the researcher, would be the only person with access to consent forms and related documents that would contain any identifying information about

⁹³ Ibid, 221.

participants and that these documents would be destroyed once transcripts were completed.

The 'Limits of Confidentiality Form' (Appendix 6) is standard practice for correctional institutions, and outlines what should not be discussed in the interview or that which would need to be reported to staff. Though the above limitations are not really relevant to the discussion of the class, some individuals may have felt constrained in their ability to share their opinion while it may have precluded others from participating in the study altogether. The three staff interviewees had to remain anonymous as well, but were drawn from those who had more extensive involvement with the program or who worked on units which had hosted the program on multiple occasions.

I did not interview program facilitators for a variety of reasons. This was done in order to keep the insights of program participants the central focus of this study as well as to ensure that the scope of the research stayed manageable. Interviewing facilitators would have provided another valuable perspective on course structure and impact. It also could be useful for future research on how gender of participants/facilitators influences reception of the program.

Organization of the thesis

The thesis is organized into six chapters, including this introduction. In **Chapter Two: Writing as Resistance: Transformative Learning Theory and Inspired Minds**, I examine how Transformative Learning Theory can be applied in the correctional context. The section opens with an examination of the issues surrounding recidivism as a measurement for program success and the call of researchers for there to be further qualitative analysis of existing programs to help determine what it is about education and vocational programs in prison that makes them successful. Transformative Learning theories and strategies are analyzed as they relate to the prison environment and the problems this environment poses to both the learner and facilitator. I examine the ways in which programming has the potential to become a decolonial practice in which institutional norms and boundaries are challenged by participants becoming active and autonomous learners. This process of transformation is also examined through creative writing contributions to *Str8 Up and Gangs* and *Creative Escape*, the subjects of which are often drawn from personal understandings of community and masculinity.

In **Chapter Three: Inside Inspired Minds: Classroom Dynamics** I engage in a content analysis of common genres and activities in the IM program in order to gain a better understanding of how transformative learning is enacted in the classroom. This section also explores the challenges to utilizing this framework, possible solutions to these challenges, and how the course structure works to facilitate the active involvement of participants for whom creative writing might be an intimidating endeavor. It examines ways in which cultural practices have been incorporated into the IM program and the openness of participants to creating diverse course content and methods that meet their goals and needs.

In **Chapter Four: Constructing Healthy Masculinities in a Toxic Environment**, I explore the ways in which the IM program works to challenge the toxic masculine values that are ever-present in the correctional environment. This examination incorporates nascent scholarship in the field of Indigenous Masculinities research. It is an attempt to understand the context in which Indigenous men experience incarceration and their return to the community thereafter.

Chapter 5: In the Conclusion, I extrapolate on earlier ideas to formulate ways in which corrections policy/institutions can work to better support community-corrections collaborations in order to reduce the high rates of re-offense plaguing the system and by extension, create healthier communities. I underscore the challenges to such work in the current social and political climate and the role the IM programs and other community-corrections partnerships play in swaying public opinion in favour of these initiatives. Further, I reiterate the ways in which IM participants are motivated to contribute to bettering their communities through sharing and learning from their experiences and how this constitutes a form of resistance and resiliency in the face of oppression.

1.7 Summary

This research will contribute to the understudied field of arts-based programming in Canadian Corrections and seeks to draw conclusions between carceral experiences, life writing, and community and individual Aboriginal identities – and the ways in which these are developed and informed through the creative writing/educative process. At a local level it seeks to provide a framework for program development and expansion, including further linkages with post-secondary institutions and community arts organizations. It shows the way in which a toxic

prison culture, one which values very limiting representations of manhood, can be combatted from within the institution. This has implications that can reach beyond SCC to other institutions. At a regional/provincial level it has the potential to be the basis for Correctional policy changes wherein higher liberal arts education could become an important aspect of Correctional Services programming. Additionally, with Inspired Minds' focus on remanded (unsentenced) offenders, who make up nearly half of the total incarcerated population, this study also has the potential to make the case for program expansion to the individuals who have the least access to programming opportunities while incarcerated.

This study is intertwined with my involvement in the program and though I am not currently volunteering with the program, I continue to assist in whatever ways I can and feel this ongoing relationship speaks to my engagement in a reciprocal research process. The program continues to provide tangible and immediate benefits for those involved. The study itself keeps in perspective the ways in which such a program could have lasting effects both through program development and expansion, and by effecting positive changes in provincial programming policy, thus reaching other correctional institutions.

Chapter 2: Writing as Resistance: Transformative Learning Theory and Inspired Minds

By its very nature, the prison is a space that makes it difficult for individual and collective voices to be heard. There is a hierarchy between staff and inmates at most prisons; however, the entrance of volunteers, educators and facilitators in correctional facilities works to blur this line. The boundaries that normally exist in these facilities are stretched in order to make space for forms of self-expression and discourse that work in opposition to the standard prison narrative. If creative writing acts as a gateway through which individuals re-engage in the learning process, then transformative learning theory provides a framework for understanding how arts in corrections programming allows participants to become the agents of change. Measurements of success of arts and education programs based on recidivism are problematic because they do not take into account the nuances of such arts in corrections programs and how important it is for participants to be invested in and have control of their own learning.

This chapter explores the way in which transformative learning occurs through examining the IM program from multiple perspectives. First, I underscore the reasons why a qualitative study was chosen rather than one that focuses on recidivism. I highlight findings from studies focusing on program participation and rates of recidivism and how this can help to inform our understanding of programs and the justification of these initiatives for policy purposes. Next, I take a closer look at Transformative Learning Theory as it applies to the Inspired Minds: All Nations Creative Learning Program. Through interview excerpts and analyzing inmate poetry, creative writing is connected to a process of individual and collective transformative learning. Due to the limitations placed on the study with regard to participant anonymity, the poems and songs analyzed are taken from *Creative Escape*, an annual publication of inmate stories and art, and *Str8Up and Gangs*, a book of autobiographical accounts of gang life by former gang members. This chapter concludes by problematizing the unrealistic expectations corrections and the community has for offenders as there is very little in the way of support networks or positive programming for individuals once released.

2.1 Beyond Recidivism

A detailed examination of the IM program is included in this chapter; however, it is necessary to touch on the measurement of recidivism regarding participants of educational and vocational programming before undertaking this analysis as it is the standard by which corrections programs are determined to be effective. Assessments of recidivism are useful, but need to be complemented by qualitative analysis which can provide a detailed look at program impacts. In looking only at one outcome, such evaluations fail to see the many layers of influence and impact arts and education programs can have. The need for more research of this nature was highlighted in the Research and Development Corporation's (RAND) study, "Evaluating the Effectiveness of Correctional Education," where the authors undertook a meta-analysis focusing on studies of correctional education and recidivism receiving a level 4 or 5 rating on the Maryland Scientific Methods Scale.¹ They discovered that there were very few studies which examined both recidivism and program details, as this would be a large undertaking both financially and time-wise. Measurements for recidivism were also inconsistent amongst the studies they examined, and across most others in the United States and Canada.² There is little agreement on the amount of time that must pass in order for a released individual to be considered successfully reintegrated into the community (6 months, one year, two years, or longer). There is also a lack of consistency regarding what counts as re-offense – breaking parole, arrest, or re-incarceration.³ Additionally, because this study examines a provincial facility with a high remand count and the IM program is offered in these areas as well, measuring recidivism would be impractical. Remanded inmates may be released back into the community after being found not guilty, having served enough of their sentence while waiting on Remand, or they could be sentenced to federal time. These outcomes make quantifying this program's impact based on recidivism impossible.

For these reasons, this study does not look at rates of recidivism amongst program participants. However, it should be noted that in their comprehensive review of education and

¹ Davis et al., 61.

² Alfred Blumstein and Richard C Larson, "Problems in Modeling and Measuring Recidivism." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 8.2 (1971), 124-132.

³ Shakoor A Ward, "Career and Technical Education in United States Prisons: What Have We Learned?" *The Journal of Correctional Education* 60.3 (2009), 191-200.

vocational programs, the RAND study found that inmates who participated in programs were less likely to recidivate than their non-participating peers.⁴ Specifically, they discovered that “correctional education would reduce reincarceration rates by 12.9 percentage points on average, though effectiveness does appear to differ by program.”⁵ This is significant given that in Saskatchewan recidivism rates have remained virtually unchanged in the past ten years.⁶ Additionally, like other scholars have articulated,⁷ the RAND study found that courses taught by instructors external to the facility “may be the most effective in preventing recidivism when the program connects inmates with the community outside the correctional facility.”⁸ This is congruent with IM participant comments about the value of having instructors who are not ‘institutionalized’ and speaks to the need to sustain community-corrections partnerships.⁹

Another important aspect of the RAND study, which relates to, but could not be analyzed in terms of the IM program, is the financial impact of correctional education programming. In their cost-benefit analysis, the study authors found that “...correctional education programs appear to far exceed the break-even point in reducing the risk of reincarceration.”¹⁰ The cost of these programs is less than the cost incurred as a result of higher rates of recidivism, making these programs economically worthwhile. They found that reincarceration costs are \$870,000 to \$970,000 less for those who receive correctional education.¹¹ Their cost-benefit analysis also noted that the savings could be even greater when other factors are taken into account, for example: policing, judicial, and community savings given that those who participate are more likely to find gainful employment and less likely to re-offend.¹² Though their study focused on rates of recidivism as a measurement of program effectiveness, the authors highlight the need for a more nuanced understanding of why these programs are effective.

⁴ Davis et al., 39.

⁵ Davis et al., 39.

⁶ Ministry of Justice: Plan for 2014-2015, (Regina: Government of Saskatchewan): 18.
<http://www.finance.gov.sk.ca/PlanningAndReporting/2013-14/JusticePlan1314.pdf>

⁷ James Thompson, “Chapter Three: Doubtful Principles in Arts in Prisons,” in *Teaching the Arts Behind Bars*, ed. Rachel Marie-Crane Williams, (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2003) 50.

⁸ Davis et al., 36.

⁹ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 18 2013, (A).

¹⁰ Davis et al., 59.

¹¹ Davis et al., 40.

¹² Davis et al., 59.

The RAND authors refer to research examining the specifics of an educational or vocational program as looking ‘inside the black box’ – finding out what works and what does not, which programs are the most effective and why, and in what ways such programs impact participants and the corrections community.¹³ In this and the following chapter, I further explore the nuances of the Inspired Minds program and how its structure, teaching methodology, and delivery impact its reception by participants and staff at Saskatoon Correctional Centre. How are the activities conducted in the classroom received? What challenges does the program face? How does the prison setting and related environmental factors create difficulties both in and outside of the classroom? Taking these a step further, I examine possible ways of addressing these challenges through creating a dynamic classroom space, using examples from the IM program.

2.2 Transformative Learning Theory Behind Bars

I use transformative learning theory as my framework for approaching this analysis as it best represents the approach to learning taken up by both facilitator and participant of the IM program. However, there are many challenges to understanding and enacting an environment where transformative learning can take place in the correctional environment. As Davidson states, “Schooling in prison cannot avoid being caught up in the power and politics of crime and control [...] everything about schooling in prison is political.”¹⁴ In working to create a counter narrative in prison education, facilitators and participants must walk a fine line between adhering to institutional expectations and rules, while also working to challenge these structures in the classroom. In many ways, the IM program fits well into the framework of adult transformative learning. This section explores aspects of transformative learning as explained by Cranton, Friere and Mezirow, and Habermas (as introduced in section 1.5.2) and relates Transformative Learning Theory to the prison classroom, while at the same time stressing the ways in which this process is complicated by external factors and pressures. In the introduction to *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Richard Shaull writes:

There is no such thing as a *neutral* education process. Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the

¹³ Davis et al., 61.

¹⁴ Howard S. Davidson, “Possibilities for Critical Pedagogy in a “Total Institution”: An Introduction to Critical Perspectives on Prison Education,” in *Schooling in a “Total Institution” Critical Perspectives on Prison Education*, ed. Howard S. Davidson, (Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey, 1995), 60.

logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, *or* it becomes “the practice of freedom,” the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.”¹⁵

In this way transformative education becomes a decolonial activity. Shaull’s comments align well with Habermas’ understanding of transformative learning theory which speaks to this idea of “the practice of freedom” in that transformative learning is representative of what he calls emancipatory learning: a self-awareness that frees us from constraints, and is a product of critical reflection and critical self-reflection and which is often a goal of adult education.¹⁶ Habermas further argues that the acquisition of emancipatory knowledge is transformative.¹⁷ While transformative learning does not always take place in the IM program, one of the goals of both the contested classroom¹⁸ and adult learning more generally is to establish an environment where participants can engage in this process.

Many IM participants have had a break in their education – by virtue of their incarceration or having been out of the school system for many years. As the program is voluntary for inmates, those who participate choose to be there from week to week and can be considered self-motivated learners. Some interviewees noted that they intended to pursue education following their release from the facility, but others expressed that this was not necessarily what drove them to join the program. This is consistent with Shauna McKinnon’s findings in “Healing the Spirit First,” where she observes that “Most of the adult learners described their training experience as part of a bigger journey toward personal development, rather than simply a means of entering the labour market. The majority of individuals placed greater emphasis on the relationships they built, the healing they experienced and the life lessons they learned.”¹⁹ These observations are consistent with the comments made by participants of the IM program and are particularly salient as unlike other adult-education or core-correctional

¹⁵ Richard Shaull introduction to *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, by Paulo Freire, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), 15.

¹⁶ Habermas (1971), 64.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ The contested classroom is one which leaves room for conflict, Jeannie Ludlow argues that if “contested” means “both disputed and collaborative, then the contested classroom should include space for an identity politics that honors coalition building. As this understanding aligns well with both Transformative Learning Theory and the challenges of the prison classroom, I use the term “contested space” throughout this thesis. See Jeannie Ludlow, “From Safe Space to Contested Space in the Feminist Classroom,” *Transformations*, 15.1 (2004), 6.

¹⁹ Shauna McKinnon, “Healing the Spirit First: Aboriginal Second-Chance Learners in Three Inner City Programs,” in *Moving Forward, Giving Back: Transformative Aboriginal Adult Education*, Edited by Jim Silver (Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2013), 55.

programs, the IM program does not have academic credits, wages, or employment outcomes attached to it. Many participants valued this and thought that it contributed to bringing together participants who were self-motivated rather than those looking to make money:

...you have to get up and attend it, but in one regard, you don't get paid for it. It's voluntary. So it's all based on a person's willingness to learn, develop new skills.²⁰

I imagine if you got paid for it, there would be a lot more people signing up! Then you'd have everybody signing up and just going through the motions. But whereas you're doing it on your own, then it's people that want to write, that want that. Because we don't get paid for it and so it's something to do and it's good.²¹

The volunteer-participation structure of IM works because of the limited opportunities for both paying jobs and any kind of programming in many areas of the correctional centre. This could change if institutional dynamics and access to work and programming changed; however, because many expressed a desire to learn without these other incentives, it suggests that many are motivated by other factors.

In particular, once involved in the program, participants saw the transformative potential of the course for both themselves and their classmates:

Creative writing is a good healing tool that is beneficial to the inmates that take pride in their work. The writing program helps to educate inmates and helps them grow. The inmates take on new ideas and a new way of learning that is a way of healing through writing.²²

Writing opened my memory... so it's a form of healing.²³

Oh, but I will tell you this, after this program, like I said, it makes you think, you know? You want to write, you want to be a good writer, you're motivated to do that. So me taking this program was very helpful, it was very inspiring. It was one of the best things I've ever done in prison actually.²⁴

For these participants, though the program does not directly facilitate further secondary or post-secondary education, it can still act as a positive source of healing, learning, and creating community connections. These responses echo sentiments expressed by other interviewees – that the class is a positive learning environment.

²⁰ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 28, 2013.

²¹ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 14, 2015 (A).

²² Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 14, 2013 (A).

²³ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 14, 2013 (A).

²⁴ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 1, 2013 (A).

Unfortunately, maintaining these connections outside of the correctional environment is still difficult as the course is currently only offered intermittently at the facility and many former participants would be unable to participate once released as they have relocated to their home community, or are busy earning a living. As one participant stated:

*The writing class is good for jail here, plus it's good for the guys, there're a lot that don't have that opportunity. Like when I was on the outside, I never had a chance to write, I never wrote anything. I wrote my name and that was it. Because I was working two jobs, so you know it's hard when you work two jobs, you've got no time to be sitting down and writing.*²⁵

This comment highlights the challenges former offenders face in furthering their education or continuing to write creatively upon their return to the community. The need to earn a living often trumps the desire to further one's education or to pursue the help needed to treat addictions or other concerns that lead to the initial or subsequent offense and incarceration. Ideally, there would be a network that could be drawn on by those released to the community for external support, follow up, and continued programming. There are many challenges to building this ongoing system of support. One issue is continuity within the correctional institution, as a staff member observed:

*We sometimes get a good program in and what happens is that the specific person who has created the program or deals with the program moves on. The program either ceases to exist or it's run by someone else and becomes diluted and loses its effectiveness or its appropriateness. [This happens] both within the centre and within the community. Unfortunately, one of the things we lack is commitment from the community.*²⁶

Another issue is that the home community may not have the resources to aid in the transition home. The provincial system may not even inform the community that an offender is being released so that they know to offer support.²⁷

Parole officers may be the only contact formerly incarcerated individuals have with the system after their release. This is problematic as oftentimes the resources that exist through one's parole officer are looked at with suspicion because of the officer's close affiliation with the

²⁵ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 14, 2013 (A).

²⁶ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 1, 2013 (A).

²⁷ Ibid, From interview with same staff member: *One of the struggles with the federal system is that if you have an offender going to a community, that community may not have the resources to be able to provide the supports. The provincial system would not inform the community that a certain person is being released.*

system and their duty to report on the parolee. Furthermore, parole officers do not have the time to be able to provide the dynamic support many parolees need. A comprehensive external support network would certainly begin to address many of the above concerns and limitations, though this remains outside of the IM program's capacity and mandate for the time being.

Transformative approaches to adult learning in the corrections environment can have a significant impact on the positive reception of these programs by the community at hand, as participants are sometimes skeptical of the motivations of outsiders.²⁸ When facilitators approach the classroom with a positive mindset they help to create an atmosphere wherein participants feel more comfortable expressing themselves and their vulnerabilities, which could include, but are not limited to: sharing personal (sometimes traumatic) experiences, asking for help with literacy, discussing challenges related to incarceration and release to community, and being critical of corrections and other social policy without fear of judgment or having their stories used as ammunition against them. Other studies have similarly found that having facilitators external to the centre makes for a more positive learning environment, even positing that sometimes the success of a program is dependent on an external facilitator.²⁹ One IM student commented the following on his course's facilitators:

Nancy's very open minded, Victoria's very open-minded, and their open-mindedness and their willingness to bend a little bit, but I mean without going so far off that inmates have taken over kind of thing. They still maintain the structure that they came in to facilitate. It's still there, but it's not written in gold so that there's just a big battle. They say, well if that's the way it's going today, they let it go that way. And I think it opens doors for guys to actually share.³⁰

Having experienced and adaptable facilitators can make a difference in the classroom environment. It is crucial to establish a space wherein participants trust the facilitator and one another to as much a degree as possible. Like any classroom, participants tend to push boundaries in an effort to gain a better understanding of how they and the facilitator fit in such a space.

²⁸ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 11, 2014.

²⁹ See Thompson, 50. And Stephen Duguid, "Chapter Three: Rehabilitation through Education: A Canadian Model," in *On Prison Education*, Edited by Lucien Morin, (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1981): 51.

³⁰ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 11, 2014.

Some of this testing occurs in order to determine an instructor's motivations and ideas about participants and working in the space of the prison classroom. As Freire notes, "Whereas the violence of the oppressors prevents the oppressed from being fully human, the response of the latter to this violence is grounded in the desire to pursue the right to be human."³¹ The participants want a better understanding of how the facilitator views them before committing to the class and becoming a full participant in it. They want to see if the instructor views them as 'fully human'. This is an understandable desire given the dehumanizing nature of the prison system. As one staff interviewee stated:

One of my theories is that there's only one place in the jail where the inmates are people not inmates, and that's in the classroom. You're dealing with them as people. So when we talk about issues in the real world, we're talking about them as members of society, not as members of a jail and not as offenders within society, but as members of society. And I think that makes a huge difference. They become accustomed to picturing themselves as being included within society, as being part of what's going on, rather than being excluded or segregated which they are now.³²

For most participants the marginalization they face is magnified by their cultural background and their incarceration. Many participants have grown up in the 'system,' moving from foster care to juvenile detention to adult facilities and have, in many ways, been excluded from full participation in their communities. Including participants in a conversation about the structural issues contributing to this marginalization can help to contextualize their experience. MacKinnon found "that adult learners who participated in programs that helped them to understand the history of colonization and its continued collective effects were better able to move forward."³³ This conversation does not always happen in such a clear way in the creative writing classroom; however, because of IM and creative writing's flexibility, facilitators are easily able to incorporate discussions of pertinent social issues such as racism, the Idle No More movement, the mascot controversy, the relationship between poverty and crime, and others. Additionally, topics of students' work are often their experiences and struggles, which leads to a wider conversation about such experiences and relates directly to the subject matter above.

³¹ Freire, 42.

³² Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, May 1, 2013 (S).

³³ Shauna MacKinnon, "Healing the Spirit First: Aboriginal Second-Chance Learners in Three Inner City Programs," in *Moving Forward Giving Back: Transformative Aboriginal Adult Education*, ed Jim Silver (Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2013), 57.

This finding is consistent with theories of emancipatory adult learning, which is understood “as a process of freeing ourselves from forces that limit our options and control our lives, forces that have been taken for granted or seen as beyond our control.”³⁴ Further, these ideas align well with other research on education in corrections. Davidson, for example, not only dismisses the recidivism-education connection because of the “the reductionism implied by positing that relationship,” but also argues “that the conditions that produce the most criminal activity are eliminated not by the domestication of individuals, but by their politicalization: by individuals becoming conscious of themselves as historical beings who demand to create social forms that are conducive to genuine social justice.”³⁵ This is an important sentiment to keep in mind as many of the participants and staff speak to the relationship and behavioral changes that take place as a result of program participation. These comments appear to speak to the program’s ability to placate participants by keeping them on their best behaviour, but I argue it does so knowingly, while using the classroom space to actually encourage the opposite – what Davidson calls, “politicalization.”³⁶

Though there are no guarantees that transformative or emancipatory learning will occur, the facilitator can work to create an environment and program that helps to facilitate this process for learners who are open to engaging in it. In the context of Aboriginal adult learning, Silver argues that through critical analysis, students (in the Inner City Social Work Program (ICSWP) at the Winnipeg Education Centre):

[...] come to a more complex understanding of societies that have encouraged residential schools, cultural and religious persecution, torture, poverty and inequality. [...] Exposure to anti-oppressive social work helps students understand that social problems are symptoms of wider structural issues rather than personal deficiencies, a reality important to their own identity and comprehension of personal problems.³⁷

In the case of IM participants, creative writing opens the door for this understanding to take place. It allows for the reflection on one’s own experiences, the experiences of others in the group, and how these experiences exist within a larger colonial structure. Many participants in IM and contributors to the publications *Creative Escape* and *Str8Up and Gangs* contextualize

³⁴ Cranton, 16.

³⁵ Davidson, 11.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Kim Clare, “It’s the WEC Way: Transformative Social Work Education,” in *Moving Forward Giving Back: Transformative Aboriginal Adult Education*, ed Jim Silver, (Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2013), 72.

their experiences with colonialism, while also highlighting the way in which masculinity informs patterns of behavior. While masculinity was not discussed in the interviews, it became evident while transcribing, reading participant poetry, and conducting research for this thesis, that masculinity constituted an important recurring theme. Comments made in interviews and in creative writing were echoed in scholarly literature on masculinity studies and in the emerging field of Indigenous masculinity which I explore in more detail in chapter four. The following examples provide evidence of the reflexivity that takes place in inmate creative writing and that this writing is situated in the lived experiences of interpersonal and institutional racism, colonialism and heteronormative patriarchy. This critical thinking constitutes engagement with transformative learning, whether in the IM classroom or on one's own.

These poems and songs are representative of the kind of awareness and reflexivity IM participants and contributors to *Creative Escape* and *Str8Up and Gangs* engage in on an ongoing basis. They show a much deeper understanding of their circumstances than the general public might expect and in doing so show resiliency and resistance in the face of continued oppression. I have included excerpts from these works in the following analysis; however, the complete pieces can be found in Appendix Ten.

In Charles Phillip Bear Morin's song, "Hear Us Too," he recognizes the relationship we all have to colonial history and its impact not only on First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, but on all Canadians when he states, "Hear us too!/ It doesn't matter who you are/ We're all affected from the residential schools/ Open up your eyes and you will see the truth."³⁸ He recognizes that the impact of the residential school system affect all Canadians, particularly through presenting a deep understanding of the context in which his incarceration occurs and the ongoing colonialism and racism which impact his daily life, both in and outside the correctional facility. He states, "I see the evil discrimination/ Amongst all our First Nations,/ we're struggling with gang affiliation, have no education, / cause they got us locked up, and isolated on our home reservations." Like Rymhs, he makes the connection between various forms of incarceration – that the prison is a continuation of a colonial government isolating and containing Indigenous peoples. He recognizes the willful ignorance of Canadians and asks us to try and understand his

³⁸ Phillip Charles Bear Morin, "Hear Us Too," *Str8Up and Gangs: The Untold Stories*, (Saskatoon: Hear My Heart Books, 2012), 9.

perspective: “For those of you who don’t know what it’s like/ To not always have your family by your side every night/ I suggest that you open up your eyes, and try to realize/ That we all live in a world where it’s hard to survive.” This is an acknowledgment that the world can be a difficult place to live in, but that through increasing awareness and understanding of those who are struggling, one can see that most people are working towards similar goals. Freire argues that “knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through restless, impatient, continuing hopeful inquiry men pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other.”³⁹ It is this same knowledge to which Phillip alludes. He asks for those “who don’t know what it’s like [...] to open up your eyes,” so that everyone comes to a more complete understanding of the community in which we live and how it is impacted by colonialism. Phillip also calls into question non-Indigenous peoples’ understanding of social institutions, the “so-called justice system.” For Phillip, prison is a place of continued oppression where he “Suffered in silence.” He makes strong links throughout this song between community violence and addiction to ongoing colonial violence and intergenerational trauma, hoping that if Canadians try to see through First Nations’ eyes, it will be evident what is at the root of these issues.

Other authors pick up on this theme as well. In Jayvin Mooswa’s poem, “Survivors,” he writes: “Being teased as an Indian/ Forced to be more like our settlers/ Now we teach what has been taught/ Education, diseases, racism, sexual abuse and addiction/ By far we survived the worst.” Here he connects assimilatory policy – “forced to be more like our settlers”—to contemporary issues facing Indigenous communities in Canada and attributes this negative learned behavior as transmitting directly from colonial influence. He concludes by stating, “In their eyes we were uncivilized/ What was so wrong from the way we once lived?/ Now... they break their word.”⁴⁰ This is a recognition that the promises made by the Canadian government are not being fulfilled and Indigenous communities are suffering as a result. This is particularly relevant in the context of Canadian prisons. Mooswa writes: “Where have my roots gone/ Lost in the wind like my fellow inmates.”⁴¹ Here he connects his incarceration to his distance from community values; he, like his fellow inmates, is not rooted in community, which has led to his current situation.

³⁹ Freire, 58.

⁴⁰ Jayvin Mooswa, “Survivors,” *Creative Escape*, 2012.

⁴¹ Mooswa.

The reality of the urban environment is linked by a number of authors to issues of masculinity. In “Systematic,” Robin D. Wuttunee recognizes how this environment taught him how to be a man: “Born and raised in the ghetto/ So how am I supposed to let go/ It’s a vital part of me/ A vital artery/ Never had a dad/ So it fathered me and made me a man.” While one certainly does not have to be raised ‘in the ghetto’ to ascribe to this kind of toxic masculinity, being ‘fathered’ by the streets speaks to the valuing of toxic masculinity as necessary for survival. Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche, in *We Should All Be Feminists*, argues that “We teach boys to be afraid of fear, of weakness, of vulnerability. We teach them to mask their true selves because they have to be, in Nigerian-speak, a *hard man*.”⁴² In this way, being ‘hard’ becomes a necessity for survival, both on the streets and while serving time in prison.

It is interesting to note that a number of authors acknowledge that a move away from a toxic lifestyle makes one a ‘better man.’ There is a recognition that this view of masculinity and manhood contribute to the lifestyle which has led to their incarceration. In “Change,” Rocky C. Bird aligns being a ‘better man’ with leaving behind his destructive lifestyle:

*I have to continue to learn to be a better man
I have to follow up on change, which is my game plan
My destructive lifestyle is a thing of the past
My constructive lifestyle, it will be a blast*⁴³

His positive notion of masculinity is associated with creating and following through on building a better life for himself.

In “The Years,” Mike Demers moves from “playing the big man,” who “[built] things up inside/ true feelings and emotions I tried to hide,” to a “gentle loving man,” after recognizing that he needs to learn who he really is: “Now starting from scratch, being through and true/ Of who I really was I didn’t have clue/ but I’m slowly learning and I like what I see.” For Demers, being a big man meant hiding his emotions and feelings and he needed to deconstruct this image in order to be true to himself and become a gentle, loving man.

These authors recognize that their relationship with masculinity thus far has been problematized and has led to the reality of their imprisonment. However, these poems, in acknowledging how their home environment contributed to their need to be a ‘big man’

⁴² Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *We Should All Be Feminists*, (New York: Anchor Books, 2012), 26.

⁴³ Rocky C Bird, “Change,” *Creative Escape*, 2012.

underscores the complexity of creating change and following through on it once released from prison where oftentimes it is this same environment they are returning to.

The resources that for many Canadians would be positive and supportive influences on one's life – family, friends, community --reinforce a negative lifestyle rather than offering an alternative. If corrections and community are to tell offenders that they must make such substantial changes in their lives, ongoing and comprehensive support needs to be provided to help navigate and facilitate this change. The classroom creates the beginnings of a positive space and network but because of the temporality of this program and institutional constructs, these positive aspects can be fleeting. If the partnership was able to continue beyond the classroom, this network of support could be a useful community resource and support network.

The process of reflection in the classroom can act as a catalyst for rebuilding personal and community relationships. In their study of Transformative Aboriginal Adult Education, Silver et al. found that many students focused more on the importance of the process of healing first and academic or employment achievements second, and that this needs to be taken into consideration when conducting program assessments:

Limiting measurement to quantifiable employment outcomes does not tell us all that we need to know about the impact that adult education has on people's lives. Narrow measures fail to capture how powerful a decolonization learning experience can be for individuals who have experienced the kind of exclusion that many Aboriginal people have experienced as a result of systemic forces that keep them poor and marginalized.⁴⁴

This is true too for education in prison: limiting our understanding of success to employment outcomes or recidivism fails to acknowledge the significance of the opportunity for inmate participants to think about and discuss issues of power, marginalization and incarceration from the perspective of their own experiences. In the case of IM, creative writing provides an entry point for these conversations and for participating in a 'decolonizing learning experience' explained above. Furthermore, because a central goal of IM is to provide programming to inmates with less access to core correctional programming, including those on Remand who may be released without conviction or convicted and sentenced to a federal facility, it would be quite difficult to do follow up in these instances. One staff interviewee spoke to the problematic nature

⁴⁴ MacKinnon, 56.

of corrections and community expectations of the changes an offender must go through in order to achieve the Justice and Correctional system's version of 'success':

Sometimes I believe we expect way too much from these offenders. [...] We're telling you to change your whole family. We're telling you that we've put you through treatment so why haven't you changed? We don't allow relapse here, a problem that we do not recognize well. We don't do relapse prevention in our programs, we sit back and look at the fact that we expect people to change. We are very good at understanding you're uneducated, so not only are you going to quit drinking and doing drugs, you're going to quit hanging around with your friends and family. How do you tell offenders that: you know what, you can't hang around with your brothers and your sisters and your parents because they're not healthy for you. We expect you to get a job, we expect you to get a better education. We expect you to do all those things and the reality is that anyone knows, if you've tried to quit smoking, or tried to lose weight, that it's not that easy. We don't give a lot of, I guess I would say, respect to people, knowing that that's a huge amount to change.⁴⁵

Here we have a clear recognition of the magnitude of the challenges many inmates face. Not only is there a lack of support for those with multiple risk factors, but there is also an absence of understanding of how difficult each and every one of these factors can be to mitigate once released from custody. This is echoed in Phillip Charles Bear Morin's song, where he articulates that many First Nations people are just trying to survive but both do not have support networks and are continually confronted with ignorance and racism. Even if one is able to access support programs while incarcerated, many of these run for a specified period of time and access once released can be challenging. The positive support network that may have existed erodes.

One of the many challenges to engaging in a process of transformative education in prison is the pressure of the external environment on participants. Cranton and other transformative learning theorists articulate the need for the learner to be autonomous and that this autonomy is directly linked to the likelihood of individual engagement with transformative learning.⁴⁶ Autonomy is difficult to come by in a 'total institution' but positive classroom experiences can encourage participants, even in other areas. As one staff member at SCC noted:

Along with the motivation comes a whole different attitude. They're in the classroom with a purpose, knowing what they want to do. They're independent learners, they're sitting down, they've got a goal, there's no external motivation from [the instructor], there's no

⁴⁵ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 1, 2013 (S).

⁴⁶ Cranton, 60.

*need to deal with behaviour issues because they're there for a reason, they know what they're doing and they do it.*⁴⁷

Finding a sense of autonomy and self-worth works to build a sense of purpose and drive in participants. The motivation was likely there all along; however, it becomes affirmed through involvement in the creative writing/transformational learning classroom.

This drive is what creates participants as agents of change. By providing a space in which they can be autonomous learners, Inspired Minds allows for participants to open themselves up to transformational learning. Unlike some other spaces in prison, the classroom counters the hegemonic and heteronormative masculinity that dictates men should not express or discuss feelings or emotions, let alone articulate them in a group setting. It is this kind of positive learning environment, where participants become agents of their own learning process that should be fostered. As evidenced earlier, positive networks of support can be difficult to come by and IM, like other education and arts programs, aids in beginning to connect participants to their own learning, as well as to community partners and resources.

⁴⁷ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 8, 2013 (B).

Chapter 3: Inside Inspired Minds: Classroom Dynamics

In order to gain a complete understanding of the IM program and its impact, it is necessary to take a detailed look at the program and what makes it distinct. As noted earlier, there are very few peer-reviewed studies examining provincial corrections programming, and very little in the way of provincial corrections programs themselves. This is partially attributable to the difficulty providing programming at facilities that have high rates of turnover and movement within them. However, there are ways to provide effective and meaningful programs in such spaces and this chapter seeks to contribute to a discussion of how to mitigate the many stumbling blocks that can occur at a provincial facility. The flexibility of community-corrections creative arts programs is central to IM's ability to respond to institutional and participant needs. IM's unique structure creates a contested space which facilitates creative writing that works to create the potential for transformative learning. This space is established through engaging participants in the program from the very beginning and continuing to build this involvement as the program progresses through dynamic classroom activities.

This chapter opens with an examination of how IM creates active learners through participant-driven development of course curriculum. Sample syllabi are provided to give the reader a better understanding of what this looks like in practice and how though no two syllabi are exactly the same, there is quite a bit of overlap from course to course. The challenges to maintaining the contested space of the classroom are highlighted as this corresponds directly to participants' reception of the program. This notion of space is also impacted by the program's influence on the living unit and the living unit's influence on IM. An analysis of autobiography will be provided to show how sharing one's story facilitates individual reflection and group relationship building. Debate as a teaching tool will be investigated as it relates both to conflict resolution and to the challenges of working in units with high rates of turnover. Peer editing is considered as it provides a valuable tool for building self-esteem. However, it can also pose a challenge if participants are not receptive to critical feedback. This chapter concludes by delving into participants' thoughts about the inclusion of culturally relevant content and their openness to

creating programming that is inclusive. This speaks to a desire to learn about and from both one's own culture and those of the group, through literature, creative writing and one another.

3.1 An Active Learning Environment

At the outset of each IM course, students are asked to brainstorm topics they are interested in learning more about for the course syllabus. This discussion is done deliberately so that the participants become active in the process of their own learning and invested in the course material. As Michael Collins argues, "It is through participatory literary practices in community-based settings and some educational institutions that the closest approximation of Freirean pedagogy have emerged. A central tenet of participatory literacy initiatives is that students, together with their teachers, will have a say in the formation of curriculum and the selection of relevant texts."¹ This is particularly imperative in the correctional environment where participants have very little control over the rest of their time. Thompson recommends that prisoners should be understood as subjects, rather than objects of the arts in prison, stating that by virtue of imprisonment you become, "the object of a process that seeks to inflict punishment on you and perhaps release you reformed into the community."² By including participants in the creation of the syllabus, IM hopes to challenge this notion of prisoner as object and instead, aid students in becoming active learners. The outcome of this ground up process is that there is variety in each course's syllabus – both based on participants' needs and the education and ability of the facilitator to prepare materials and activities pertaining to the chosen topics. As a result, resources are frequently pulled together once this initial class has taken place. However, there are a number of topics that come up regularly and a few activities that instructors try and work into each schedule that can fit well, regardless of the chosen topics. Some of these topics and activities are explored in the next few pages in order to provide a more detailed analysis of the program and of respondents' suggestions and comments regarding its specific aspects.

Two sample syllabi are included in order to provide a better idea of class schedule and structure:

¹ Michael Collins, "Chapter Four: Shades of the Prison House: Adult Literacy and the Correctional Ethos," in *Schooling in a "Total Institution" Critical Perspectives on Prison Education*. Edited by Howard S. Davidson, (Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey, 1995): 60.

² Thompson, 50.

Figure 1:

Workshop Schedule for Summer 2011:

July 13: Introduction

- Brainstorming topics of interest for workshops
- Discussion of genre
- Freewriting exercise

July 20: Poetry

- Poems by William Blake, Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams, and George Elliot Clarke
- Discussion of Lyric poetry and Imagism
- Discussion of metaphor
- Companion poem exercise and Imagist poem exercise

July 27: Poetry cont.

- Guest lecture on rhythm and rhyme in poetry
- Discussion of poetry and song-writing
- Exercise on meter

August 3: Autobiography

- Discussion of purpose and structure in autobiography
- Chronology, *in medias res*, flashback
- Discussion of structure in various autobiographies. Analysis of first pages of autobiographies by Richard Wagamese, Janet Campbell Hale, Maria Campbell, Yvonne Johnson and Rudy Wiebe, Barack Obama, James Tyman, Frederick Douglass, and Randy Paush.
- Exercise on description in autobiography (person and place)

August 10: Editing and Feedback

- Discussion of editing and peer feedback
- In-class peer editing

August 17: Short Stories

- Intro to short stories: character, narrator, and narrative voice
- Short story writing exercise with visual prompts
- Exercise on character development

August 24: Short Stories cont.

- Plot structure
- Narrative perspective
- Discussion of sample short stories (Kafka, Robert Louis Stevenson, Thomas King, Maria Campbell)

August 31: Final Class

- Storytelling with Simon Moccasin (guest speaker)
- Reading of student writing
- Special invited guests to attend ceremony (Formal letters acknowledging program completion will be handed out to students who complete at least 6 out of 8 sessions. Certificates to follow)

Figure 2

Workshop Schedule for Winter 2013:

Week 1

Introductions

February 8 th	Decide on topics/genres to cover Homework: Free write on <i>camping</i>
Week 2	Autobiography
February 15 th	Read through Autobiography ‘first pages’ Develop timeline & decide where to begin Start writing!
Week 3	History
February 22 nd	Read – Got status? By <i>âpihtawikosisân</i> Answer questions
Week 4	Debate
March 1 st	Debate & public speaking skills Teamwork & preparation Mini-debate (opening statements, rebuttal, closing statements)
Week 5	Satire
March 8 th	Reading (to be handed out in previous week) Terms to know Answer questions + class discussion
Week 6	Academic/Professional Writing
March 15 th	Writing skills, self-editing
Week 7	Poetry
March 22 nd	Terms to know

A look at poetic genres (imagism, etc.)

Writing exercise

Week 8

Song Writing

March 29th

Lyric writing workshop with guest speaker (if possible)

Writing to beats (if approved)

Initially, the program opened with participants discussing what parameters they wanted to set on the classroom space in order to make it “safe enough” to facilitate comfortable participation. Initially this discussion was written down and provided to participants as a ‘learning contract.’ This is now instead referred to as a learning agreement that is more informal. The purpose of this activity is to have a discussion at the outset of the course as to what participants need and expect of themselves, the instructor, and their peers in order to help build a contested learning environment. The term “contested” space acknowledges the restrictions on any space in becoming safe for all participants. In “From Safe Space to Contested Space in the Feminist Classroom,” Jeannie Ludlow cites Bernice Malka Fisher, who states the idea of a safe space for learning:

[...] is a legacy of the Civil Rights movement via second wave feminist political activism; ideally, the feminist classroom is an ideal space free from physical threat in which participants might explore together issues of social injustice, free from judgement of verbal intimidation, and confident in the group members’ honesty and shared values.³

Ludlow problematizes the notion of safe space by arguing that it is actually working in contradiction to feminist pedagogy.⁴ Instead, she used the term “contested space” to better represent the environment she wants to create and foster for her students. She argues that, “safety is a privilege and a safe space is a privileged space, a safe space classroom is counter to the goals of feminist pedagogy.”⁵ This idea of ‘safety’ as a privilege relates directly to the IM classroom. As Glasson argues, “One important aspect of a safe enough space is the ability to leave it – it is

³ Ludlow, 3.

⁴ Ibid, 3.

⁵ Ludlow, 5.

a basic human need to have the power to enter and leave as we choose.”⁶ In some of the classrooms at SCC, students and facilitator are locked into the classroom and need to request permission to exit or have staff open the door at a scheduled time, though this is not the case in all units. However, in most classrooms, activity is monitored remotely by staff, and facilitators must wear a ‘panic alarm,’ providing another level of surveillance and security. Obviously, creating a ‘safe’ environment in the correctional setting is complex given the many competing understandings of what constitutes safety in this context. Ludlow instead says facilitators should be working to create a contested space, “one that is not necessarily defined by conflict, but which includes room for conflict.”⁷ Robert Boost Rom echoes this sentiment in his critique of ‘safe space,’ arguing that it is the teacher’s job “to manage conflict, not prohibit it.”⁸ For Ludlow, “contested space” means, “To affirm another’s witnessing, to testify together.”⁹ This space has provided Ludlow and her students “a conceptual space from which to examine and understand the operations of privilege, oppression, and culture from a locational feminist perspective.”¹⁰ This aligns well with transformative learning theory and Glasson’s idea that a “safe enough” space must “interact with the people who use [it] – their needs, fears, and memories.”¹¹ The hope is that it becomes a place where men engage in scholarly debate, discussion of controversial issues, and the sharing of thoughts and experiences through their writing without needing to play into structures of both hegemonic and toxic masculinity as discussed in Chapter Two. One participant expressed the impact of creating a contested space as follows:

If you give people space and you give them an atmosphere where they’re comfortable and safe, it’s amazing what they can actually write, even if they’re limited in their writing skills.¹²

According to the above interviewee, providing an environment where participants feel they can express themselves comfortably helps in overcoming other barriers, such as a lack of confidence in their own abilities. One of the goals in the IM classroom is to maintain a space where

⁶ Barbara Glasson, *A Spirituality of Survival: Enabling a Response to Trauma and Abuse*, (London: Continuum Books, 2009): 29.

⁷ Ludlow, 6.

⁸ Robert Boost Rom, “‘Safe Spaces’: A Reflection on an Educational Metaphor,” *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 30.4 (1998): 406.

⁹ Ludlow, 6.

¹⁰ Ludlow, 7.

¹¹ Glasson, 30.

¹² Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 11, 2013.

participants can experience this level of comfort and trust. One interviewee stated that participating in the class changed his relationship with other participants, but not with those external to IM:

Well, I'm able to talk to them, they're not so distant anymore. 'Cause there's a certain trust when you come in here and when we read each other's', well we read our own stuff (out loud) and then we're listening to someone else do theirs, we're not out there talking about it and that thing. It becomes a trust as well. We build a trust through that.¹³

It is through the process of sharing one's own work and listening respectfully to others that this trust builds. However, the level of trust in the classroom depends on many factors. Another participant spoke to the way in which a lack of trust also influenced his experience:

It kinda made me look at different inmates in a different light, you know what I mean? [...]and for some people, it's kinda brought us, brought our relationship closer and made us become friends. And then with other people, it kinda seemed like they were criticizing me so it kind of made me take a step back from them, so, not be as open with them because they were more kinda judgmental.¹⁴

This criticism is something that we need to pay close attention to as facilitators and also something that we need to learn to navigate. In section 3.4 Peer Editing, I explore the issue in more detail, but I think it is important to mention here as it speaks to the way in which the classroom dynamic is dependent on many factors – facilitation, composition, and living unit within the facility - all contribute to the ability to establish the classroom as a contested space for participants.

One of the other challenges is the difficulty of extending the space outside the classroom or beyond the allotted class time. Staff interviewees noted that participation impacted other aspects of their time in jail, but the impacts outside the classroom were often noted as limited or dependent on continued participation in the program.

We don't have a real good explanation for the idea that after the program is done that the behaviour reverts back, but I've got a pretty good idea of why it does. I think they no longer have a positive influence, they're no longer part of that group, that social group that helps them continue what they're doing. So now they revert to whatever group they're with. And I also think there's a significant number that leave the program and are frustrated. They may not have completed the program, but they've left it for whatever reason – the gangs or whatever, and are frustrated. I think that's one of the

¹³ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 27, 2013 (B).

¹⁴ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 18, 2013 (A).

reasons we're going to discover why there is this follow-up of inappropriate behaviour again after the programs.¹⁵

But I see, within the institution, that the misconducts are less. I will see that certain people will have no misconducts prior to the program. They may act out afterwards, but they know they'll be able to participate in the program. I think this is mostly because they like the program and they don't want to miss it. So if I'm going to get mad I'll wait until its [the program] is over and then I'll get mad, might do a couple days in my room, but I'm ready for the next program. Programming builds self-worth; it makes people feel as though you recognize them as being normal.¹⁶

Behaviour is certainly influenced by participation in the program, but as noted above, these changes are often dependent on the program as the participant is aware that the privilege of participating can and will be revoked if they act out. Some of the behavioural change during the program can be attributed to the desire for continued participation. These changes can also be attributed to the fact that the class, and the homework associated with it, provides the individual something positive with which to occupy their time. It would be ideal if the positive impact of IM could always extend beyond participation, but as noted above, unfortunately upon concluding the course, participants return to the same toxic space and peer group. This is not to say that participation cannot extend to impact other aspects of their time in prison positively, as noted by the staff interviewee's comments, but that when the class is complete, this becomes much more challenging.

Even if extending this space is difficult, writing can still be an outlet for frustrations. One interviewee stated that he wrote before the course was offered as a means of venting frustrations:

Well you can say things on paper that you can't really tell people in here, because people, everyone has a big persona, like being a gangster and shit in here, you can't really tell people, you can't tell anyone really, the things that you feel. That's why I was doing it mostly.¹⁷

For this participant, writing is an outlet that allows him to be honest with himself, as the front or 'mask' he wears to get by in prison precludes him from being able to be open and honest with others. He used writing as a coping strategy, a space where he could let the wall down. In "My Life Is Ever Changing," Eugene Brady also speaks to building walls as a coping strategy: "I

¹⁵ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, May 1, 2013 (S).

¹⁶ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 1, 2013 (S).

¹⁷ Anonymous, Personal Interview, March 18, 2013 (B)

drank and I smoked to build walls so high/ So I don't face the man I have become;/ Hiding the person I don't want anyone to know/ Angry and sad; I try to pretend I don't know why."¹⁸ In the poem he recognizes that it is time for him to make a change: "I have begun to search and look within myself;/ Understanding what it takes to be a different man."¹⁹ In this way, creative writing itself, and the creative writing classroom combats this representation and valuing of violent masculinity via street and gang culture by establishing an environment where the rules of the "Learning Contract" include, first and foremost, that participants will 'respect themselves and their writing,' and 'respect other workshop participants and their writing.' Respect in the classroom context is a central tenant of the program; participants and facilitators do not need to use other means to attain respect; power in the classroom is shared.

High rates of unit turnover, common in provincial facilities and especially frequent in Remand units, present a significant challenge to the maintenance of a transformative learning environment. And try as the group might, it can be very difficult to rebuild an environment of trust with this kind of classroom turnover. As Rafay states, "A habitus hostile to learning is, in fact, prison's principal educational achievement."²⁰ The hostile environment is perpetuated through the constant re-location of inmates within the facility. This occurs across units at the institution, but is especially common in Remand areas as individuals may leave for court and upon their return (if they return) are shuffled to a different unit or range:

I've seen this unit change over quite a bit, and we've lost a couple of guys. If you were to [offer the program] in A, B, or C, or like the Echo units, those are usually where the people stay for a long period of time. Whereas here, they do stay, but you only get placed here (Remand) for whatever reasons and then you could leave in three weeks. But in A unit, C unit and Echo unit, you could probably get lots of guys that are there for a long period of time that could stay for the whole class.²¹

I've been all over this jail; I think this (B) is one of the more stable units. You've got your single rooms, and Delta's another good one because you've got lots of free time to write, you've got lots of locked up time so you can write.²²

As Remand units have much lower access to programming (because individuals are unsentenced), it is important for the IM program to be offered here. Unfortunately, this means

¹⁸ Eugene Brady, "My Life is Ever Changing," in *Creative Escape*, 2012.

¹⁹ Brady, 2012.

²⁰ Atif Rafay, "An "Impossible Profession"? The Radical University in Prison," *Radical Teacher* 95 (2013), 15.

²¹ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 18, 2013 (B).

²² Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 14, 2013 (A).

that the classroom numbers, already low because of the small classroom space and the allowance of a maximum of six participants, could substantially deplete unless those on the waitlist are allowed to join. There is a push-pull here as allowing new participants throughout the term challenges the environment that has been established, but not including them frequently means they would have no programming to participate in altogether.

Fortunately, some units lend themselves well to educational activities; with each inmate having their own cell, and time to themselves that can be used to work on homework or other activities. Additionally, some group time outside of time in the classroom allows participants to help one another with reading and assignments:

*If I know someone's having trouble with their rhymes and stuff, I'll help them. I'll do my best to help them and they'll do the same with me.*²³

[On homework] *Well it was pretty good, because it gave you something to do, something to consume your time. And for different people you could probably be able to express their feelings so they wouldn't be holed up inside of them and be angry. They'd be able to express themselves, try and make them more calm and more easy to get along with.*²⁴

*Yeah, a lot of us in our class did complete it [(homework)]. And yeah, it's always nice to have something to do, because we're always trying to find - to keep our time occupied.*²⁵

Other units, while there may be larger classrooms, are dorm style – thirty inmates in one large, open space - and can make finding quite time to do homework or reading rather challenging. Each unit presents its own unique challenges that influence the classroom environment and participants' ability to fully and actively engage in and with it.

These are still preliminary reflections on the unit's influence and more research could be done to understand this in more detail, particularly at provincial facilities. It is important to highlight the way in which the contested space of the classroom can be temporal and fleeting. The space of the IM classroom is informed by a wide variety of factors, some of which are difficult to control or accommodate. However, mitigating these challenges by adapting to the unit is necessary in order to maintain a space in which participants can open themselves up to new experiences and understandings through creative writing.

²³ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 27, 2013 (C).

²⁴ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 18, 2013 (A).

²⁵ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 28, 2013.

3.2 Autobiography and Sharing One's Story

An important component of most IM courses is the inclusion of autobiography techniques and exercises. Additionally, because it situates the individual and collective experiences of the group, autobiography provides a hearing which may have been previously unavailable,²⁶ and allows participants to share their truth. Many participants have outlined the importance of sharing their experiences with a wider audience. Their experiences and their understanding of these constitute their truth and many participants have outlined the importance of being able to have this kind of second telling. As Rymhs states, it can be “an opportunity to intervene in their representation in the court and to expose the failings of the criminal justice system.”²⁷ The motivation for this is varied in that some wish to do the above, while others hope their stories will help to inform and influence a younger generation from making the same choices or taking the same path that many of the men state have led to their incarceration. The book *Str8Up and Gangs: The Untold Stories* grew out of this need to share life experiences in a way that would give back, in a positive and constructive way, to the communities from which *Str8Up and Gangs* authors came.

IM participants noted that the sharing of personal experiences in the classroom aided in their understanding of one another – a kind of validation by the community within the class that their stories mattered and that they were heard. Some men expressed how this sharing influenced their perception of one another:

*I got to know people a little bit better. So you get to understand what kind of person they were and what they think about. Most of the time in jail a lot of people close themselves off to each other, trying to put up a front so nobody thinks that they're weak. So yeah, I think that it created some good friendships in terms of doing homework together and understanding each other as people.*²⁸

Staff also noted the importance of sharing one's story as well:

I think the other thing that I notice with the writing is it's also a healing process. People will write about their life and you can understand where they're coming from and what's happening for them. It's also healing in that if you're in a group learning process, by

²⁶ Rymhs, 13.

²⁷ Rymhs, 13.

²⁸ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 28, 2013.

*sharing your work, you come to understand that you're not the only one in any situation. Someone else has had these issues or has gone through the same thing.*²⁹

Both participant and staff member focus on similar impacts of autobiography and sharing one's own story. Doing so allows not only the writer to take a critical look at their own narrative, but the group setting puts the narratives in context with the experiences and stories of other participants. The 'front' that incarcerated individuals put on to manage and survive the experience is removed, at least in part, when the individual takes a risk by sharing their work with the group, and makes themselves vulnerable by sharing their story. In this way, the group is able to relate to one another collectively in that those participating develop a connection based on honesty, understanding, and respect, rather than relying on their mask or persona.

This storytelling environment must be negotiated carefully. As Mezirow articulates, "What is sometimes lacking in discussions about storytelling as part of transformative learning is a careful analysis of how power relations are shaping the telling and the hearing of stories. As adult educators working within our formal educational institutions or in less formal community contexts and social movements, we need to take responsibility for creating conditions for respectful listening as integral to storytelling practices."³⁰ An example of this from the IM program is the need to set parameters about the subject matter and detail in these stories. In one of the earlier classes, a participant went into great detail about his experience using heroin, clearly making classmates uncomfortable, some of whom would have been dealing with addiction themselves. It became clear to the instructors (myself and Nancy Van Styvendale in this case) that facilitators should make clear the limitations on these narratives and why such limitations are necessary. Though this could be seen as restricting an individual's creativity and ability to share their experiences, the group needs to be made aware that some stories can act as a trigger and that maintaining a contested classroom space sometimes takes precedence. Anderson argues that a skilled facilitator can work to build a positive storytelling environment where "everyone in the group know[s] they bring something valuable to the circle. [...] And if he or she can build a framework for the personal stories that offers insight into the past and an opportunity

²⁹ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 1, 2013 (S).

³⁰ Shauna Butterwick and Randee Lipson Lawrence, "Creating Alternative Realities: Arts-Based Approaches to Transformative Learning," In *Transformative Learning in Practice: Insights from Community, Workplace, and Higher Education*, (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 43.

to envision the future, the learning can be transformational.”³¹ This is critical in the context of the prison where it can be easy to fall into a recounting of wrongs that risks triggering others or glorifying illicit activities and experiences. As Thomas King says, stories are medicine.³² Thus, they have in them the potential to cure and the potential to injure.³³ What is important is to provide a space where this storytelling can be done in a constructive way, as Anderson articulates. This space then allows for a positive sharing experience wherein the participant has control of their narrative.

3.3 Debate

In providing an environment where frustrations can be expressed through writing, the classes challenge the valuing of confrontational attitudes. Classroom debate and discussion is encouraged and the students and instructor help to facilitate meaningful discussions about contemporary issues and literary work. In one of the courses, the participants chose debate as a genre/skill they wanted to spend some time developing. The topic chosen for the debate was the Native American mascot controversy. Teams were created a week in advance and sides of the issue – either for or against the use of Native American mascots and/or imagery - were assigned to each group. Basic research material was provided and each team was to develop an argument in support of their assigned position. There was a substantial amount of classroom turnover the week of the debate and so what began as a debate turned into a scholarly discussion of the various positions.

Engaging in a discussion in this manner, where positions on an issue are assigned and do not necessarily reflect one’s own beliefs, can help to remove personal feelings from the argument. Not all participants had the same position on the issue, but the group was able to discuss the pros and cons of each argument. This structure aids in the development of non-confrontational argument skills and that there can be space for healthy disagreement without expressing an opinion or position in a visceral way. This example further speaks to the need for

³¹ Kim Anderson, “Speaking from the Heart: Everyday Storytelling and Adult Learning,” *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 28.1/2 (2004): 127.

³² Thomas King, *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative*, (Toronto: Anansi Press, 2003), 92.

³³ King, 92.

facilitators to be flexible to the dynamics of the classroom. Many units in the facility have high rates of turnover and mobility, making carryover from one week to the next sometimes difficult.

A challenge in Remand units or those with a higher security level is that participants have little time out of their cell. The class sometimes draws participants from different ranges (halls), and in this example, I did not take into consideration that those living on separate ranges would not have time outside their cells together. Preparing for a debate without one's team thus became an exercise in frustration for IM participants. A potential solution to this issue would be to increase classroom time, which many interviewees suggested, in order to allow for preparation and homework in a group setting. This would also allow the facilitator to assist and answer questions. Doing so would aid in fostering a supportive environment where the participants could work with one another and use the facilitator as a resource. In this way participants continue to be active in their own learning, but are doing so with continued guidance and the ability to ask for help when necessary.

Debate also has the potential to become political education. As Davidson, contends, "Political education inside the prison must accomplish two objectives: it must connect the political struggle inside with the struggle taking place outside the prison; and it must expand this struggle by politicizing prisoners who do not recognize the politics of crime and punishment."³⁴ While it is not always a component of the IM program, debate provides an avenue for critically analyzing and discussing contemporary issues. It is evident in the above example that engaging in debate can be difficult on a number of levels, and as Davidson argues, the goals of transformative learning "are thwarted to a greater extent in prisons, where learning is subverted, resources are restricted, imagination and creativity are stifled and critical thinking is suppressed."³⁵ The IM program seeks to provide opportunities for participants to have access to all of these tools that create space for transformative learning to occur. IM, by fostering imagination and creativity, providing resources, and developing critical thinking, allows for the subversion of the hegemonic institution and the toxic masculinity it values.

³⁴ Davidson, 18.

³⁵ Davidson, 26.

3.4 Peer Editing and Solutions

One area that has been both beneficial and challenging to implement in the classroom is the notion of instructor and peer feedback. Students work throughout the course on creative writing exercises, some of which are handed in to the instructor or shared with the group for discussion and feedback. This is obviously necessary in order to engage with participants' ideas, generate class discussion, and provide writing support. Cranton argues that "Feedback from the educator is vital in formal learning contexts, and feedback from co-learners should be built into discussion and activities of the group" and that feedback "play[s] a particularly crucial role during the learner's questioning of underlying assumptions and the exploration of alternatives."³⁶ Many interviewees spoke to the way in which they benefitted from sharing their work with classmates and assisting one another in the writing process.

*When you get feedback it gives you a better understanding of where you made your mistakes and you know what would sound better in there. ... You can't get better without the feedback.*³⁷

However, providing feedback – particularly peer feedback, has proven to be challenging. Earlier I noted that the debate environment distances the individual from feeling personally attacked or responsible as positions are assigned, rather than chosen based on individual ideas and opinions. When an individual shares his work and classmates are asked to discuss or provide feedback, unless this is done in a contested environment and in a constructive and positive way, we can run the risk of hurting the feelings of those that have opened up and made themselves vulnerable. Some interviewees spoke of an incident that occurred in a class wherein offense was taken during one of these activities:

It's better when the instructor gives the feedback, but also, it's also good when the people in the group give the feedback, but then we all live here together... it's a jail, right? So there's going to be negative people, people who don't get along outside [the classroom]. They're in the class, and they can easily use it to manipulate the other person, and that's how people can see it, but if you're just giving honest feedback, and maybe the person

³⁶ Cranton, 89.

³⁷ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 14, 2013 (A).

*has an anger problem [...] and they haven't dealt with it [...] so naturally they're going to feel different about it.*³⁸

The 'honest feedback' in this case was not received as such and the participant whose work was being critiqued did not take kindly to the criticism. The strategy used to help remedy the issue in the classroom was to ask an Elder to join the class the following week in order to help the group work through some of the issues that arose previously. As Freire notes, "Through dialogue, the teacher of the students...the teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow."³⁹ It is the role of the facilitator to negotiate this sometimes rocky terrain so that participants can provide constructive criticism and learn to help this process in such a way that it works to include rather than alienate students. Further, the facilitator also needs to recognize that sometimes issues are best dealt with by bringing in an Elder in order to negotiate the conflict alongside the participants. Though this mediation process did not satisfy all parties involved, it provided an opportunity to discuss and work through conflict cohesively and assisted in refocusing the class. The circle was a constructive and healthy way to work through the disruption within the safe space of the classroom.

The above example illustrates the need for the facilitator to provide guidance to the group before asking for peer contributions. By providing examples of constructive criticism and specifics in terms of the areas in which the writing should be critiqued, the facilitator can lessen the likelihood of such situations arising. As I was not the facilitator of this course, and did not interview the facilitator, it is possible that such guidance and examples were provided. As instructors, we cannot always know the direction that day's class might take, but can work to navigate conflict and present constructive solutions when it does arise.

When done carefully, feedback can boost the confidence of participants in that they may be nervous or apprehensive to share some of their work with their peers and the facilitator. Many participants did not have good experiences with the school system, lack confidence in their writing abilities, or fear that sharing their work will invite or draw criticism because they are not

³⁸ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 14, 2013 (A).

³⁹ Freire, 67.

at a literacy level of which they are proud. Providing positive support and encouragement in the classroom can help participants build the confidence necessary to continue with the program and to consider possibilities for themselves that they might not have previously considered.

*It helps to pass the time, if you've got something to do then it's good, eh. You can make life easier, because when you're in there you've got nothing to do and you're looking out the window and watching a little bit of TV and the mind actually closes to new ideas. It's not creative anymore, you're not actually living, but just surviving.*⁴⁰

This interviewee problematizes the historical perspective of prison terms as time for solitary reflection and repentance. Instead, he believes that the mind becomes closed off, focused on making it through the day-to-day stresses of prison life and maintaining the mask or persona enacted to survive the experience. Creative writing generally and through the IM program, by contrast, allows for the opening of the mind to new ideas, for a movement away from merely surviving the experience. IM challenges the process of institutionalization by encouraging the removal of this mask, instead valuing individual experience and creativity, thereby creating a space in which there is potential for transformative learning and individual agency.

3.5 Keeping it Cultural – Finding a Balance

One of the most important components of the class is the inclusion of contemporary issues, Indigenous literature, literary styles and worldview – and an openness to make space for oral storytelling, among other techniques. Most of the inmates at Saskatoon Correctional centre are First Nations or Métis, though other minority groups are also disproportionately represented in Canadian corrections.⁴¹ Of the total number of interviewees, most identify as First Nations (mainly Cree, Dene or Sauteaux), Métis, or from another minority group (black, Latino). Not all interviewees, though identifying themselves as Métis, Cree, or otherwise, identified with their culture, oftentimes from not having been raised with it. These individuals still expressed that they were interested in learning more about other cultures and backgrounds through the course materials and discussions and that this would be as or more valuable to them than including

⁴⁰ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 14, 2013 (A).

⁴¹ “A Case Study of Diversity in Corrections: The Black Inmate Experience in Federal Penitentiaries Final Report” (Ottawa: Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2013), 3-4; Anonymous, Personal Interview, May 1, 2013 (S).

mainly First Nations or Métis authors. When asking about incorporating Indigenous texts into the IM course, one inmate (who identified as Métis) stated:

I think it'd be all right, for the Aboriginal inmates that are right into their Aboriginal culture. I think it'd be positive for them, but for me, because I wasn't born into that lifestyle, ...I do a little bit of everything, you know. It wouldn't bother me, but I wouldn't really go out of my way to make it a big deal.⁴²

This interviewee is indifferent to the inclusion of Indigenous texts and also distances himself from the culture, even though he self-identifies as Métis. There is also a distancing that separates this individual's experience from that of Aboriginal culture. This is something that came up in a number of ways throughout the interviews: many interviewees when asked about their experience with the course, rather than speaking directly about themselves and their experience, spoke in the abstract, in regards to how they understood others' reception and perception of the program. This, like the above comment, can be partially attributed to the fact that many do not view themselves as experts or knowledge keepers and are hesitant to affiliate themselves as such. This comes through in the way many participants do not see themselves as creative writers, even if they are quite talented and have been engaging in forms of creative writing prior to their participation in the IM program. Many actually are quite knowledgeable in these art forms, but do not have access to a lexicon that would adequately describe their relationship with their writing, or the self-assuredness to refer to themselves as writers or artists. Including fiction from Indigenous authors as part of IM could create an opportunity for participants to connect their experiences and knowledge to those who have made a living from their art.

Many interviewees also noted that having guest speakers come to the class and share their expertise enhanced their learning experience and influenced their perception of themselves and their relationship to their culture. Of note is the fact that this occurred even when the cultural background of the interviewee and the guest speaker were not necessarily the same.

She's really passionate about her culture and she's not shy, you know she doesn't hide it. She's proud to be Native, an Aboriginal woman and that kind of makes me think... oh, I should be proud to be, [Latino] as well, you know what I mean?⁴³

⁴² Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 18, 2013 (A).

⁴³ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 1, 2013.

*To have an author, that had his own books published, that was really, really cool and really positive. That gave me motivation to write more, I thought it was really positive, it was cool and it actually made me look up towards writers.*⁴⁴

Guest speakers have provided tangible examples of individuals who make their living from their art and who can act as role models for course participants. While it is validating for peers and the course facilitator to provide encouragement, when that same encouragement comes from someone participants hold in high esteem, it can be all the more motivating. These individuals are people with whom participants can identify with on a cultural and community level. They are often people who have similar lived experiences to IM participants but who have created positive outlets and communities for themselves. Guest speakers are positive role models because of their agency and ability to articulate their experiences as First Nations and Métis people living in a nation dealing with ongoing colonialism. Through their work they provide positive examples that can help participants think differently about self and self in relation to family, friends, and community, how these relationships are impacted by continuing colonization, and ways to begin to decolonize from the inside out.

An important component of the IM course is the need to create a space that is accessible to a wide variety of literacy levels. Making use of Indigenous storytelling techniques helps in creating pathways for access. Because course participation is voluntary/self-selecting, it is unlikely that those with the lowest literacy levels (or lower confidence in their literacy level) will participate; however, allowing participants to choose how and when they want to contribute can create opportunities for those with lower reading and writing skills to still become involved and to become contributing members of the group.

This openness and flexibility creates a supportive environment that values a variety of literary traditions. The inclusion of techniques and genres works seamlessly in the creative writing classroom. As Thomas King argues in *The Truth About Stories*, “the advent of Native written literature did not, in any way, mark the passing of Native oral literature. In fact, they occupy the same space, the same time. And if you know where to stand, you can hear the two of them talking to each other.”⁴⁵ The IM classroom is one space in which the two interact. Sometimes this is through the utilization of oral storytelling or legend writing, and at other times

⁴⁴ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 18, 2013 (A).

⁴⁵ Thomas King, *101-102*.

it is through making use of contemporary genres like rap and hip hop, as in Phillip Charles Bear Morin's song, as cited earlier, which he uses to explore race and racism in the twenty-first century.

Orality through reading literary texts or one's own work is an important aspect of IM because it gives participants a voice and a collective witnessing and hearing is able to take place. Participants expressed the way in which sharing knowledge orally impacts its reception and can make a mark on the audience. In the following example, the other participants and facilitator were able to learn from one another, not only a new technique, but one of many reasons this form of storytelling is so valued by this particular participant.

I can write it down, but it just loses something. Some connection, and yet for some, if you write it down properly I guess you can still get that connection, but it's not the same as talking to a person face to face or explaining it to them. You can tell a person you care about them on a piece of paper, but when they see it in your eyes and they see it in your tone of voice, your body posture, the handshake, hug, whatever, it's a big difference.⁴⁶

Oral storytelling is connected by this interviewee to emotion; the listener is affected by the storyteller's narrative voice and style. The meaning and weight of the story changes as a result of the relationship the listener has with the storyteller, a relationship the classroom space works to foster. It is because of the relationship in this space that the story is both able to be told and able to be heard. It is in this process that individual and collective change has the potential to occur.

In discussions about ways to improve or amend IM and programming at SCC, a number of participants and staff interviewees highlighted the need for language programming in Cree, Dene and Sauteaux. For some the Indigenous language was their first language and others expressed a desire to refresh and strengthen their skills.

Cause I don't know my language at all and I wish I knew my language. I asked my grandmother to teach me and she said she would do it. But I would like to learn Sauteaux and a little bit of Cree. Like I know a bit of Cree, enough to have a conversation, but I'd like to learn some Sauteaux.⁴⁷

This interviewee desires to be part of a community or to participate in his community on different terms. It represents a need to connect with one's culture and in this case, his family,

⁴⁶ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 11, 2013.

⁴⁷ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 27, 2013 (C).

through speaking the language in a place where this community connection is completely removed.

Other interviewees expressed that including literature from other traditions and backgrounds would aid in their understanding of other cultures:

It's great to learn new and different ways of thinking. If we had it here I'd be able to understand some of these people. Where these people are coming from and what's important to them.⁴⁸

Say we have Cree, Dakota, Métis and you know, if there's white people too and Black people and there's the odd [Asian] in here. So I think that if you diversify based on the demographics I think it would give people a better initial ground. Because it would show everybody exactly what's in the other person's culture.⁴⁹

Clearly, participants are interested and invested in expanding their cultural understanding, not only with respect to their own backgrounds, but to those with whom they spend their time at SCC. Some of the interview excerpts show an openness to learning about other cultures that speaks to participants' experiences with the justice system in Canada disproportionately imprisoning marginalized groups. It also speaks to the desire of some participants to better understand the communities of their peers in and outside of the IM classroom. In doing so, participants are learning to define themselves in relation to other participants, communities, and cultures and to understand how they are impacted by the same overarching social, patriarchal, and hegemonic systems. This awareness acts as a catalyst for transformative learning. As a result, participants begin to redefine themselves through a new understanding of their relationship to these spheres that comes from a position of strength, rather than of deficit.

While the prison classroom presents a number of logistical and social challenges, the flexibility of the IM program, its facilitators and participants helps to work through these issues. In building course curricula together participants develop a vested interest in the program which is reflected in their comments regarding IM's transformative potential. While not all participants are invested in all aspects of the class – whether this is incorporating Indigenous texts or developing language skills – focusing on building and maintaining relationships assists in creating a space where participants feel valued. Important to note is that these relationships are

⁴⁸ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 28, 2013.

⁴⁹ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 28, 2013.

built differently in the IM classroom than on the outside. Because participants are engaged learners who share their creative writing with one another in this space, the same kind of posturing that occurs outside of the classroom is less frequent (or tempered) within it, as will be explored in the following chapter.

Chapter 4: Constructing Healthy Masculinities in a Toxic Environment

4.0 Masculinities in the Prison Context

While it is easy to construe that prisons (especially men’s prisons) can be considered masculine spaces, articulations of masculinity are both complex and multiple within these spaces. As Elizabeth Comack explains, “being kept in prison involves an experience in which men’s identities and behavioural patterns are molded and remolded under conditions of confinement.”¹ Examining gender within the prison system requires examining a multitude of hegemonic and patriarchal structures that operate within these institutions – from the institutions themselves to the interactions and relations that develop between and within staff and inmates. Arts and education programming provides an opportunity to better understand these relationships and how they can be combatted. Particularly, the Inspired Minds: All Nations Creative Writing classroom challenges toxic articulations of Indigenous masculinity by acting as a counterpoint to institutional norms.

At the outset of this chapter I overview the historical relationship prisons have had with masculinity and their treatment of ‘Other’ men. This is a history that informs the present reality of these institutions and how they operate. It examines what were considered masculine ideals and values at a time when prisons began to replace more public forms of punishment and torture. Next, various definitions and understandings of modern masculinities are explored in how these understandings relate to men in prison. The emerging field of Indigenous masculinities is explored as it relates to notions of warriorhood and community building. I highlight how these reconceptualizations of masculinity are central to achieving equality masculinity both in the community and in prison.

4.1 Incarceration: An Overview

Prisons work to emasculate the men they incarcerate by removing individual agency. Mark E. Kann argues that “the dominant norms of manhood” in late eighteenth century America

¹ Elizabeth Comack, *Out There / In Here: Masculinity, Violence and Prisoning*, (Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2008), 111.

“were central to the idea of the penitentiary as an institution of deterrence, punishment, and rehabilitation” and that “a man deprived of his liberty was less than a man.”² Loss of freedom is the punitive response to criminal acts, as power is removed from the individual and their care is placed in the hands of the state. Furthermore, these institutions also mandated a removal of individual and collective voice through the notion that solitary and silent reflection would help to facilitate conversion of the criminal into a law-abiding citizen.³ Both the Auburn and Pennsylvania models⁴ were developed in the 1820s and were premised on forcing incarcerated men to remain silent through the duration of their sentence.⁵ However, this goal of reform was limited to white convicts as black males and other minority groups “were seen as outsiders who lacked the manly ability to discipline their passions and the manly freedom to govern, provision, and protect their families.”⁶ In the American south, where more than seventy-five per cent of inmates were black, prisons “took their inspiration from slavery,” and had “a total disregard for prisoners’ dignity and lives.”⁷ Penitentiaries became places to warehouse “incurable” men – those marginalized by American society as a result of race and socioeconomic status.⁸ Kann asserts that at this time in America’s history, a man’s “worth was measured by his distance from dependency,” and non-whites were viewed as inherently dependent on the state and were thus un-manly.⁹ Thus, incarceration was and continues to be an emasculating act where the individual becomes a ward of the state. This reaffirms the dominant narrative of ‘Other’ men being unable to care for themselves and their families, and perpetuates an ignorance of the fact that the colonizer has rendered them so.

² Mark E. Kann, “Penitence for the Privileged: Manhood, Race, and Penitentiaries in Early America,” in Don Sabo, Terry A. Kupers and Willie London (eds), *Prison Masculinities*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, pp. 21-34. In *Gender and Prisons*, ed. Dana M. Britton (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2005), 9.

³ David J. Rothman, “Perfecting the Prison: United States, 1789-1865” In *The Oxford History of the Prison: The Practice of Punishment in Western Society*, ed. Norval Morris and David J. Rothman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 105-107.

⁴ The Auburn system was developed in at Auburn Prison in Auburn, New York – inmates worked and ate together in silence during the day and returned to solitary confinement for the night. The Pennsylvania System (developed at Pittsburgh Penitentiary and Philadelphia Prison) kept inmates in solitary confinement for the duration of their stay – they worked, ate and slept alone and in silence. (Oxford History of the Prison, 105-106)

⁵ Rothman, 105-107

⁶ Kann, 11.

⁷ Edgardo Rotman, “The Failure of Reform: United States, 1865-1965,” in *The Oxford History of the Prison: The Practice of Punishment in Western Society*. ed Norval Morris and David J. Rothman, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 175.

⁸ Kann, 13.

⁹ Kann 6.

For the most part, Canadian correctional institutions mirrored those south of the border. Kingston Penitentiary was built in 1835, and as Canada took shape over the course of the 19th century, so did our prison system. These first institutions followed the models used in the United States:

All were maximum security institutions, administered by a strict regime – productive labour during the day, solitary confinement during leisure time. A rule of silence was enforced at all times.¹⁰

Though these rules have changed, the values eschewed at their inception continue to inform the operation of twenty-first century institutions. Contemporary prisons still constitute a similar removal of power and voice, through loss of freedom, the continued use of solitary confinement, and the silencing of voices that challenge the status quo within correctional environments.¹¹

At the same time these institutions were being constructed, policies of forced assimilation were enacted by the government on First Nations and Métis communities, impacting the gender balance and disrupting both men’s and women’s roles. In “Indigenous Masculinity: Carrying the Bones of Our Ancestors” Anderson, Innes and Swift describe the way in which the role of “protector” was taken from the men:

A few of the Elders talked about the dispossession of lands in the nineteenth century and how parceling Indigenous peoples onto reserves meant that they had little mobility or power, namely, of the management of their traditional territories. As Wil Campbell (Métis, Alberta) pointed out, “How can he protect if he has nothing to protect?”¹²

This statement exemplifies the way in which gender roles were changed as a result of colonization and how the Canadian government – like the American – rendered the men dependent on the state, and, like prisoners, “un-manly.” As Howard Adams describes in *Prison of Grass*, “all activities of the native community,” after being forced onto reserves, “were completely under the control of colonizing officials, who made all the decisions affecting the daily operations of native people. [...] This grinding paternalism and prison-like authority persisted to this day.”¹³ This removal of control from native communities had significant

¹⁰ Correctional Service of Canada. “Penitentiaries in Canada,” <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/about-us/006-1006-eng.shtml>

¹¹ Rymhs, 23-25.

¹² Anderson, Innes, and Swift, 275.

¹³ Howard Adams, *Prison of Grass: Canada from a Native Point of View*. (Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers), 37.

impacts on community life and livelihood. The reason these policies were so ‘successful’ in their implementation was the belief of the wider populous that First Nations and Métis people were inferior. This lie became convincing as “perverted images were paraded before the public to help justify and legitimize the incarceration of the entire population of native people.”¹⁴ This legitimization continues today through the Othering of Indigenous bodies in mainstream media and in the public consciousness.

Aboriginal male identity formation is undermined by a patriarchal masculine ideal that reinforces this Othering. One of the problems for Indigenous men is a denial of access to this ideal. Indigenous men, like other ‘coloured bodies,’ are vilified in the media and in their communities through disproportionate negative coverage and the discrimination they face on an ongoing basis. This both produces and reproduces prejudice. A useful example of this problem is explained in Gelman et al.’s analysis of New York City’s “Stop and Frisk” policy where they found that blacks and Hispanics were more likely to be stopped than whites, even though, “A related piece of evidence is that stops of blacks and Hispanics were less likely than those of whites to lead to arrest.”¹⁵ Even though the NYPD could argue that these stops are not racially motivated the evidence shows clear discrimination in that blacks and Hispanics are actually less likely to be charged as a result of these stops. In Canada, there is a comparable problem, but one which has been given little attention, as explained by Anderson and Innes: “In many ways, the conditions of Indigenous men, though distinct, are similar to those of Indigenous women but they have not really been acknowledged beyond news reports of their criminal behaviour. Indigenous men also face the same sort of race and gender biases as other men of colour, and this leads to a host of social issues for them and their communities.”¹⁶ This focus on criminality creates a skewed image in the public consciousness, one which does not acknowledge the colonial history that has resulted in the oft-reported violence of Indigenous men.

This is a complex and detailed problem, a result of which is best explained by Foucault, in *Discipline and Punish* (1977), where he states, “The prison is a natural consequence, no more

¹⁴ Adams, 38.

¹⁵ Andrew Gelman, Jeffrey Fagan, and Alex Kiss, “An Analysis of the New York City Police Department’s “Stop-and-Frisk” Policy in the Context of Claims of Racial Bias,” *Journal of the American Statistical Association*. 102. 479 (2007): 821-822.

¹⁶ Kim Anderson and Robert Alexander Innes, “Introduction: Who’s Walking With Our Brothers?” In *Indigenous Men and Masculinities: Identities, Legacies, Regeneration*, ed Kim Anderson and Robert Alexander Innes, (Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press, 2015) Forthcoming.

than a higher degree, of the [social] hierarchy laid down step by step. The delinquent is an institutional product.”¹⁷ Under this framework our social system has a substantial role to play in the overrepresentation of Aboriginal offenders. There is thus a connection between the specific social hierarchy that colonialism has created and the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in Canadian corrections. As Andrea Smith argues, “Heteropatriarchy is the logic that makes social hierarchy seem natural. Just as the patriarchs rule the family, the elites of nation states rule their citizens [...] Patriarchy in turn, rests on a gender binary system; hence it is not a coincidence that colonizers also targeted Indigenous people who did not fit within this binary model.”¹⁸ In this way, incarceration is linked directly to the history of colonization and its continued impact on Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, just as incarceration is also informed by the broad social factors as represented by heteronormative patriarchy which work to reify and justify the power of the elite at the expense of those who do not fulfill this ideal. As Comack et al. explain in *Indians Wear Red*, “While colonialism manifests itself in a variety of ways, at its core is the complex poverty that shapes the lives of Aboriginal people and limits their true potential.”¹⁹ As a result, challenging and confronting colonial and heteronormative patriarchal realities in Canada must occur in concert with confronting and challenging issues of complex poverty and toxic masculinities.

4.2 Understanding Masculinity

Raewyn Connell, in “Change Among the Gatekeepers: Men, Masculinities, and Gender Equality in the Global Arena” (2013) highlights a number of important ideas when discussing the impact of gender studies on men, stating that “In discussions of women’s exclusion from power and decision making, men are implicitly present as the power holders,” and further, that “the men who receive most of the benefits and the men who pay most of the costs are not the same individuals.”²⁰ These ideas are important in examining the context of Indigenous masculinity in

¹⁷ Michele Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977): 301.

¹⁸ Andrea Smith, “Queer Theory and Native Studies: The Heteronormativity of Settler Colonialism,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 16.1 (2010): 61.

¹⁹ Elizabeth Comack, Lawrence Deane, Larry Morrissette, and Jim Silver. *Indians Wear Red: Colonialism, Resistance, and Aboriginal Street Gangs*. (Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2013), 60.

²⁰ Raewyn Connell, “Change Among the Gatekeepers: Men, Masculinities, and Gender Equality in the Global Arena” In *Men’s Lives*, ed Michael S. Kimmel and Michael A. Messner (Toronto: Pearson Education, Inc., 2013) 590, 592.

Canada and the way in which colonization has had varying levels of impact on the masculine experience. Of particular interest is her assertion that those (men) who receive the benefits and those who pay the cost are not the same people – this is especially true among marginalized peoples, in particular First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities in Canada.

I am conscious that in engaging in a discussion of the ways in which hegemonic and other forms of masculinity are supported and contested within the correctional environment I risk falling into the trap of what Connell and Messerschmidt call “usages that imply a fixed character type, or an assemblage of toxic traits.”²¹ I will endeavor not to essentialize masculinity as consisting merely of toxic or negative expressions by defining relevant terminology and its impact before delving into the ways in which these ideas and concepts impact relations among men in prison.

4.3 Multiple Masculinities

Hegemonic masculinity was initially understood as the practice of, “embody[ing] the current most honored way of being a man, [and] it require[s] all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically legitimate[s] the global subordination of women to men.”²² In its reformulation, Connell and Messerschmidt argue that hegemonic masculinity relies on the subordination of non-hegemonic masculinities and the production of masculine ideals, though these might be impossible for boys and men to ever live up to or fully embody.²³ These ideas are central to the understanding of the way in which colonialism has impacted and continues to impact First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples in Canada and the way representations of what Sam McKegney terms the “masculindian” become toxic to Indigenous men and communities.²⁴ Mike Donaldson further argues that “a fundamental element of hegemonic masculinity, then, is that women exist as potential sexual objects for men while men are negated as sexual objects for men.”²⁵ This idea will be explored through an examination of how the gangster lifestyle and image have become attractive to First Nations and Métis men. This image is particularly

²¹ Raewyn Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept,” *Gender & Society*, 19.6 (2005), 854.

²² Connell and Messerschmidt, 832.

²³ Connell and Messerschmidt, 846.

²⁴ McKegney, “Warriors, Healers, Lovers and Leaders,” 255-256.

²⁵ Mike Donaldson, “What is Hegemonic Masculinity?” *Theory and Society* 22 (1993), 645.

pervasive in prison, but does not mean that prison masculinity and gangster masculinity are one and the same, though there is overlap between the two. Additionally, many incarcerated men do not adhere to these articulations as there is a range of masculinities that exist in this space.

Hypermasculinity and toxic masculinity are another means of performing a specific kind of masculine identity. Hypermasculinity is often equated with negative traits and representation as it relies on a specific enactment of the masculine – but it is important to note that this enactment can also be construed in positive ways. A person can be muscular, non-violent *and* a feminist. Violence and muscularity are not necessarily complementary categories. A good example of this is the buffalo hunt, where men (or whole communities) would leave their community to engage in the very physical pursuit of hunting buffalo. In “Real Men Hunt Buffalo,” Vibert examines how Indigenous masculinity is represented in colonial narratives. She states that these texts described Plateau buffalo hunters as “brave, industrious, [and] stoic – in a word – manly.”²⁶ However, Vibert calls into question trader accounts of Indigenous masculinity, arguing that these narratives tell the reader more about British Imperial masculinity than that of the Indigenous hunters the texts describe. She states that there is a “gap between imagined and lived masculine identities,” which speaks to the very limited understanding the traders had of the buffalo hunt and of the men who participated.²⁷ In reality, this masculinity and quest for status, which was achieved “by amassing a war record and wealth, brought responsibilities to the community [...] at every status level there were social responsibilities.”²⁸ The social recognition of these hypermasculine exploits is actually contingent on community contribution which thus reinforces the valuing of and responsibility to all community members.

Today, there has been a break from this link between masculinity and community responsibility. For many, access to the hegemonic masculine ideal is not dependent on body type or shows of power through physical prowess, but instead relies on wealth and status. Those who have these traits may not need to embody the kind of masculine ideal or “tough guise,”²⁹ enacted

²⁶ Elizabeth Vibert, “Real Men Hunt Buffalo: Masculinity, Race, and Class in the British Fur Traders Narratives,” *Gender and History* 8.1 (1996), 4.

²⁷ Vibert, 11.

²⁸ John Milloy, “Our Country”: The Significance of the Buffalo as a Resource for a Plains Cree Sense of Territory,” in *Aboriginal Resource Use in Canada: Historical and Legal Aspects*, Edited by Kerry Abel, (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1991), 61.

²⁹ Jackson Katz, Sut Jhally, Susan Ericsson, Sanjay Talreja, , and Jeremy Earp, *Tough Guise, Violence, Media, and the Crisis in Masculinity*, (Northampton, MA: Media Education Foundation, 1999.)

by many men in prison, but are still in receipt of the power hegemonic masculinity affords. For example, Connell and Messerschmidt point to the way in which there exists a “transnational business masculinity” wherein the elite engage in and articulate a form of hegemonic masculinity without embodying the kind of masculine ideal or “tough guise” that Jackson Katz describes.³⁰ As such, I will use the terms “toxic masculinity” and “misguided masculinity” in referring to the “negative” hypermasculine traits enacted by some First Nations and Métis men in prison and on the street. Finally, Messerschmidt’s concept of “equality masculinity” refers to “those that legitimate an egalitarian relationship between men and women, between masculinity and femininity, and among men.”³¹ It is towards this “equality masculinity” that we must strive – through enacting and promoting it at the local, regional and national levels.

In prisons, the above articulations of masculinity are all the more tenuous and pronounced. As Buchanan argues, “Many men’s prisons are plagued by homophobia, high rates of physical violence, and an institutional culture that requires inmates to prove their masculinity by fighting.”³² Prisons are spaces where men have power over other men, a power that is embedded in the institutional structure and not merely at the individual level. As Comack argues, we cannot lose sight of the relationship between the micro – interpersonal– and macro – structure of prison itself; we must “acknowledge that *the act of imprisonment is itself a form of violence, one backed by the legitimated power of the state.*”³³ This state sanctioned violence complicates the notion of justice, particularly given that, “the decision of what is the lesser form of violence, or the ‘moral’ form of violence, in order to restore ‘peace’ is indeed not one of morality, rather it is marked by privilege, power and control.”³⁴ In their discussion of “Postcolonial Peace,” Hokowhitu and Page argue that identity construction is largely informed by colonial occupation and that the state is constantly and violently defending against the danger of Indigenous alterity, as it threatens their sovereign power.³⁵ The prison, as state apparatus, thus becomes a crucial part of this defense mechanism. It both silences and controls the ‘Other,’ while at the same time

³⁰ Connell and Messerschmidt, 849.

³¹ James Messerschmidt, “Engendering Gendered Knowledge: Assessing the Academic Appropriation of Hegemonic Masculinity,” *Men and Masculinities*, 15 (2012), 73.

³² Kim Shayo Buchanan, “E-race-ing Gender: The Racial Construction of Prison Rape,” in *Masculinities and the Law: A Multidimensional Approach*. ed Frank Rudy Cooper and Ann C. McGinley (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 187.

³³ Comack, *Out There / In Here*, 118.

³⁴ Brendan Hokowhitu and Tiffany Page, “Postcolonial Peace,” *Junctures*, 14 (2011): 22.

³⁵ Hokowhitu and Page, 13, 22.

reinforcing a position of power. As Hokowhitu and Page conclude, challenging this construct might be possible if we can recognize and understand “that what ‘ties us to other people’ is not peace, but the way that we politically navigate and define exclusion.”³⁶ This is an extremely pertinent concern in the context of corrections, where very few are willing to critically examine this question of how we define who belongs to or is excluded from ‘our’ communities and why.

Michelle Alexander highlights the difficulty of bringing issues of race and incarceration into the contemporary public consciousness.³⁷ It is easy for society to write off those who are behind bars – for many, they can be hard people to empathize with. Even civil rights advocates, as Alexander articulates, are hesitant to take on the prison system because it is largely seen as legitimate and just by the populous.³⁸ In a meritocratic society where it is believed we are in control of our choices and actions, few sympathize or empathize with the issues facing the incarcerated. Few wish to acknowledge the role that society plays in creating the conditions for the confinement of disproportionate numbers of minority populations. A number of recent high profile events in Canada and the United States have certainly brought to light the limitations of community policing, corrections and the justice system for those who have been Othered. These issues are much broader than corrections and policing. While it is not in the purview of this study to examine these in detail, it is necessary to highlight the need for public support of research-driven policy initiatives and for public consideration of “the way that we politically navigate and define exclusion.”³⁹ While this thesis contributes to the conversation on effective corrections policy and programming, as community members we have a responsibility to also ensure this discussion includes an examination of social determinants that lead to injustice and incarceration.

4.4 A Toxic Environment

In addition to grappling with hegemonic definitions of manhood, Indigenous men must also negotiate to define themselves against colonized masculinities. In “Warriors, Healers, Lovers and Leaders,” Sam McKegney explores the way in which the imposition of patriarchal values and systems of governance disrupted Indigenous communities. Through the Indian Act,

³⁶ Hokowhitu and Page, 24.

³⁷ Alexander, 214.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Hokowhitu and Page, 24.

“Male power [...] ceased to flow from the dynamic relationship between the genders signified by twinship and complementarity, but rather had to be seized from the other half of gendered society, the women, and exercised to their exclusion.”⁴⁰ Marginalized through colonial experiences and stripped of power and autonomy, male roles have been impacted as a result of these processes. Resultantly, as McKegney argues, popular culture’s toxic images of Indigenous masculinity, “which seek power through domination and violence rather than through communal responsibility and twinship with the feminine,” become appealing to Indigenous men “because they offer relief from the often untenable social conditions as well as a sense of masculine agency that colonization has rendered difficult for many Indigenous men to attain in other ways.”⁴¹ Prison culture reinforces these articulations of masculinity as agency becomes equally tenuous for those serving time.

The ubiquity of these combined hegemonic, racialized, hypermasculine, toxic and colonized definitions of masculinity can be linked directly with the ways in which, for example, Aboriginal gangs choose to present themselves – by playing up and playing into the stereotypical media representations of Indigenous masculinity. Gang names alone highlight the way these forms of toxic masculinity are valued: Indian Posse, Crazy Crees, Terror Squad, Saskatchewan/Manitoba Warriors, Native Syndicate, Red Alert. For youth in the prairie provinces in particular, the “gang acts as, or promises to act as, a substitute family, filling the void left by family backgrounds marked by violence, substance abuse, and crime.”⁴² In their study of Aboriginal Gangs, Grekul and LaBoucane Benson (2009) highlight that for Aboriginal youth and families in the prairies, “gangs are real, youth are being recruited into this lifestyle on the streets and in prisons, leaving school and family behind to take on the gangster identity.”⁴³ There is a fluidity between the prison and the community in this setting, where this gangster image thrives. In their interviews with Elders across Canada, Anderson, Innes and Swift note that a few of the Elders linked absent fathers to misguided masculinities which too often result in gang involvement.⁴⁴ Gangs can serve as a substitute community for men and women whose childhoods have been marked by violence. Though gang involvement can be understood as a

⁴⁰ McKegney, “Warriors, Healers, Lovers and Leaders,” 253.

⁴¹ McKegney, “Warriors, Healers, Lovers and Leaders,” 260, 259.

⁴² Jana Grekul and Patti LaBoucane-Benson, “Aboriginal Gangs and Their (Dis)placement: Contextualizing Recruitment, Membership, and Status,” *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice* 50, no. 1 (2008), 68.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 65, 66.

⁴⁴ Anderson, Innes and Swift, 279.

reaction to and resistance of the imposition of state control through the child welfare system and racialized policing, it is a problematic response in the many ways as it damages individuals involved, their families and their communities. Gang involvement and terms of incarceration are almost synonymous: the gang offers protection on the inside, but involvement in a gang leads to further criminal activity, thus, as Comack et al. state, “prisons have become an important site for the production and reproduction of street gangs.”⁴⁵ While it certainly cannot stop this production/reproduction altogether, IM works to disrupt this cycle.

The fluidity between community and the carceral is echoed in the both *Creative Escape* and *Str8 Up and Gangs: The Untold Stories* (2012), a collection of stories and poems written by former gang members, where John Siwak writes, “Around the time I was 11 years of age (1995), I was officially jumped into the gang [...] Choosing this way, I decided that bein’ scary and threatening gave me a sense of power. So with that, I vowed to be the biggest, baddest gangster I could be.”⁴⁶ Another author, Marty Dustyhorn, writes, “When I was 15 years old, I wanted to join a gang. The reason for this was because all my cousins and brothers were ‘down’ ... I learned that I could not trust anybody and that fast money could be made if you were willing to hurt and manipulate people.”⁴⁷ Siwak and Dustyhorn highlight the way in which one’s gang and family are often synonymous. As Robert Henry discusses in his dissertation (2015), family and community violence is pervasive in the lives of Aboriginal gang members.⁴⁸

Toxic articulations of Indigenous masculinities can be one way to respond to the powerlessness experienced by some Indigenous men. Of note is the fact that gangs provide a sense of power – even though it might be misguided. This idea is articulated by Weitzer and Kubrin in their analysis “Misogyny in Rap Music,” where they state, “...rap’s messages have been incubated and resonate in communities where men have few opportunities for socioeconomic success and dignity and where respect is instead often earned by mistreating young women as well as other men.”⁴⁹ A criminal lifestyle, often marked by drug use, violence and gang affiliation, provides a means for these men to attain “respect” and “power” by finding

⁴⁵ Comack et al., 93.

⁴⁶ John Siwak, *Str8 Up and Gangs: The Untold Stories*, (Saskatoon: Hear My Heart Books Inc., 2012), 59.

⁴⁷ Marty Dustyhorn, *Str8 Up and Gangs: The Untold Stories*, (Saskatoon: Hear My Heart Books Inc., 2012), 19.

⁴⁸ Robert Henry, “Indigenous Lens: Understanding Indigenous Masculinity and Street Gang Involvement,” PhD Diss., University of Saskatchewan, 2015.

⁴⁹ Ronald Weitzer and Charis E. Kubrin, “Misogyny in Rap Music: A Content Analysis of Prevalence and Meanings,” In *Men’s Lives*. ed Michael Kimmel and Michael A. Messner, (2013), 505.

another group to marginalize. In their study of Aboriginal street gangs in Winnipeg, Comack et al. found: “In addition to violence, the men used the proceeds of crime to enhance their masculine capital through conspicuous consumption [...]”⁵⁰ These men create victims in their need to assert power and control in negative and socially unacceptable ways, resulting in a reproduction of their own experiences for others. This reproduction is tied to ideas of masculinity and to the impact of intergenerational trauma. As Zachary Warren writes in “Bottled Up,” “Now you’re a man/ Don’t be like your father/ and put your kids through danger/ But anger builds up and frustration takes over/ So you resort to alcohol/ And drink till you’re sober.”⁵¹ Here the speaker is conscious of trying to avoid repeating the mistakes of his father, but turns to alcohol as a coping mechanism. While the poem does not indicate that the speaker repeated the violence of his father, his alcoholism speaks to the intergenerational trauma that continues to impact his own family through his drinking, and which the speaker continues to struggle with: “As a man you cry in the corner cuddled up/ as that child so innocent/ whose anger got bottled up.”⁵² It is this intergenerational trauma as a result of colonialism that has continued and pervasive effects on Aboriginal communities in Canada. The 2006 study, “Victimization and offending among the Aboriginal population in Canada,” by the Canadian Centre for Justice Studies highlights the ways in which community violence impacts Aboriginal peoples disproportionately. Though the authors do not refer to gang membership in the study, their findings are congruent with the argument that higher rates of lateral violence exist in First Nations and Métis communities, as follows:

- In 2004, Aboriginal people experienced violent victimization at a rate of about three times greater than that of non-Aboriginal people. (5)
- In 2004, violent incidents committed against Aboriginal people were most likely to occur in and around the victim’s home (34%) compared to rates for non-Aboriginal victims (17%) and that this difference can be partly explained by the fact that Aboriginal people are more likely to be victimized by someone they know.
- Aboriginal people experience much higher levels of spousal violence by current and ex-partners than their non-Aboriginal counterparts. This finding supports previous research suggesting that the prevalence of family violence is more extensive within Aboriginal communities.

⁵⁰ Comack et al., 21.

⁵¹ Zachary Warren, “Bottled Up,” *Creative Escape*, 2010.

⁵² Zachary Warren, “Bottled Up,” *Creative Escape*, 2010.

- Aboriginal males had a rate of violent victimization that was almost 3 times higher than that of non-Aboriginal males.⁵³

More recently, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) has confirmed that in cases of spousal violence resulting in the murder of Aboriginal women (representing sixty-two per cent of homicide cases), seventy per cent of the offenders were of Aboriginal descent.⁵⁴ However, these numbers have been called into question as being misleading and unreliable, “when it comes to the identification of Aboriginal people – victims or offenders.”⁵⁵ The letter does caution that, “It is not the ethnicity of the offender that is relevant, but rather the relationship between victim and offender that guides our focus with respect to prevention.”⁵⁶ Acknowledging ethnicity in these cases is also crucial to understanding the context within which this violence occurs. It speaks to the need to understand colonialism’s continued impact on Aboriginal men, women and communities and the importance addressing this as a causal factor in violence against Aboriginal women. However, Pam Palmater cautions that reports such as this work to:

...deflect attention away from Canada’s continued inaction to address this crisis which the United Nations has called a “grave violation” of our basic human rights. The crisis of murdered and missing Indigenous women continues while Canada (through Valcourt) blames the victim and the RCMP fail to live up to their duty to serve and protect everyone in Canada.⁵⁷

According to the above numbers, the offender is of Aboriginal decent in only forty-three per cent of the cases of homicide of Aboriginal women. Palmater is right to call both the calculation of the numbers presented into question as well as the way in which they are represented as contributing to a deflection of both attention and responsibility on the part of the Canadian public and government. As Robert Innes notes, “[The] view of Indigenous men only as victimizers acts to simplify a long history of complex colonial interaction between Indigenous people and

⁵³ Jodi-Anne Brzozowski, Andrea Taylor-Butts and Sara Johnson, “Victimization and Offending Among the Aboriginal Population in Canada,” Statistics Canada – Juristat Catalogue no. 85-002. 26. 3 (2006) <http://publications.gc.ca/Collection-R/Statcan/85-002-XIE/85-002-XIE2006003.pdf>

⁵⁴ Bob Paulson, Royal Canadian Mounted Police Commissioner, “Letter to Grand Chief Bernice Martial,” April 7, 2015, p. 2 <http://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/1815008/2015-04-07-mmaw-rcmp.pdf>

⁵⁵ Pam Palmater, “RCMP report on murdered and missing Aboriginal women is statistically skewed,” *Rabble.ca* April 13, 2015 <http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/pamela-palmater/2015/04/rcmp-report-on-murdered-and-missing-aboriginal-women-statisti>

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 2.

⁵⁷ Palmater, “RCMP Report”

Canadians.”⁵⁸ Instead, this knowledge should inform responses to crime and criminality, including gang-related crime.

Gang members themselves recognize the linkages between colonialism and crime. The autobiographical narratives by First Nations and Métis ex-gang members in the *Str8 Up and Gangs* book, recognize the harm done by Aboriginal gangs to their own people:

“When you look at some of the gang names [...], it is Native people fighting and killing each other for their own land. I find it pretty sad to see this happening.”⁵⁹

- Phillip Charles Bear Morin

“In seeing the outcome of my actions over and over again, I began to see the negativity I was living and causing was killing my people.”⁶⁰

- John Siwak

“What are all the Indian brothers fighting one another for? Respect? Turf? Colours? What for? Because they can, I guess. Silly boys, when are you going to learn? Respect is earned, not taken. Fear is not respect.”⁶¹

- Brendon Jimmy

As noted above, the victims of these crimes are often the families, friends and communities of First Nations and Métis offenders and their removal to correctional facilities complicates the process of “recovering the masculine” through a return to gender balanced family and community roles. The disruption of First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities is perpetuated and compounded by the fact that so many fathers, brothers and sons are behind bars.

4.5 Re-conceptualizing Warriorhood

⁵⁸ Innes, “Moose on the Loose,” 51.

⁵⁹ Phillip Charles Bear Morin, in *Str8 Up and Gangs*, 5.

⁶⁰ John Siwak, 59.

⁶¹ Brendon Jimmy, in *Str8 Up and Gangs: The Untold Stories*, (Saskatoon: Hear My Heart Books Inc., 2012), 37.

One of many remaining questions is how we can work to build and develop “equality masculinities” in the carceral space. The prison classroom is one means of combating both hegemonic and toxic masculinities in that it creates a space wherein participants can engage in discussions regarding power and privilege that could not be engaged in (in the same way) outside the classroom. In an institution where distrust is the norm, the classroom can become an environment where men feel comfortable sharing both their work and experiences with one another and where trust can be built and maintained. It is through the creative arts, writing in the case of the IM program, that many men can find an expressive outlet, as evidenced earlier.

The IM program works to challenge both toxic articulations of masculinity and the emasculation of offenders vis-à-vis incarceration. Prison is understood as a place that removes individual agency and voice, and in many ways creative writing work is able to facilitate the return of this voice. In writing poetry, short fiction, autobiography and exploring a host of other genres, participants have an opportunity to convey their stories and experiences and have these experiences heard and acknowledged. In her study on prison writings of Indigenous men, Deanna Rymhs argues, “the prison also produces authors who may not otherwise have been moved to write. More than a place of defeat and submission, the prison may be seen as a place of learning, where a nascent consciousness is born in the prisoner, often in defiant resistance to the institution containing him/her.”⁶² While Rymhs’ study looks at both well-known authors and those who are self-published who have written while incarcerated and/or about their incarceration, I would also argue that even if the product of this process is not a published work, there is still a “nascent consciousness” developed and encouraged in the program participant.

Many men and women put on a mask, or “tough guise,” enacting a performance of themselves in order to survive the experience of incarceration. This mask often precludes one from being able to engage in a positive relationship with oneself, one’s partner, family or community. Gang involvement adds another layer of complexity to the development of healthy masculinities. In *Indians Wear Red: Colonialism, Resistance and Aboriginal Street Gangs*, Comack et al. argue that “Membership in an Aboriginal street gang, as a gendered phenomenon, means conforming to a particular masculine script, one that aligns with and informs an identity

⁶² Rymhs, 24.

of resistance while endeavoring to respond to their colonial condition.”⁶³ However, this response is problematic in that it ends up reinforcing the heteronormative patriarchy at the root of hegemonic masculinity.

The tough attitude many men carry with them is challenged by many of the foremost scholars in Indigenous masculinities: Daniel Heath Justice, Daniel David Moses, and Taiaiake Alfred in particular,⁶⁴ express that (traditional) understandings of warriorhood are very different from popular interpretations and gang culture.⁶⁵ Warrior can mean many things, but at its core is a responsibility to community. Daniel David Moses explains that in translating from Iroquoian to English, much of the connotation of the term “that is commonly translated as “warrior” actually evokes the image of someone “carrying the burden of peace,” so it has a different emphasis, a different set of values behind it. It’s really about someone who is maintaining the good rather than participating in war, something that by its nature is problematic.”⁶⁶ As Daniel Heath Justice explains, “A warrior to me is somebody who fights the good fight with everything they can with love at the centre of their concern. And there are a lot of ways of doing that.”⁶⁷ These explanations vary significantly from the expressions of warriorhood and masculinity as articulated by those involved in criminal lifestyles and gangs.⁶⁸ However, if the process of community recovery and the development of healthy Indigenous masculinities or “equality masculinities” are to occur, it must do so with consideration for those involved in criminal lifestyles and those serving time behind bars.

The IM program builds on these reconceptualizations of masculinity by creating a space that values equality masculinities and the notion of warrior as espoused by the above scholars. The classroom becomes a space wherein the mask men wear as a means of managing the ordeal of imprisonment is temporarily removed. Instead, participants begin to examine themselves, their relationship to those around them, and their relationship with the toxic space of the prison through creative writing.

⁶³ Comack et al., 82.

⁶⁴ Sam McKegney, *Masculindians: Conversations about Indigenous Manhood*. (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2014.)

⁶⁵ In *Voices of the Plains Cree*, Ahenakew writes: “The important function of the society of Warriors, beyond dancing, feasting and providing for the needy, was policing the buffalo hunt.” Edward Ahenakew, *Voices of the Plains Cree*, (Winnipeg: Hignell Printing Limited, 1995), 112.

⁶⁶ McKegney, *Masculindians*, 62-63.

⁶⁷ McKegney, *Masculindians*, 142.

⁶⁸ McKegney, “Warriors, Healers, Lovers, and Leaders,” 259.

It became evident through the interviews that participants were aware of the ways in which their relationships and self-expression changed as a result of the IM program. For many participants, their lives have been marked by the expectation that they are the embodiment of toxic masculinity. Peers, professionals, and even they themselves expect the worst. The IM class works to challenge these perceptions by creating a contested learning environment and through providing positive rather than negative reinforcement. As one participant states:

Well I like it cause, just to be able to interact with people that aren't institutionalized or in jail, I like it because I got to be able to express my feelings in writing and on paper and ... it was positive, you know? Like it has helped me think positively and gave me something positive to do.⁶⁹

This participant values having something 'positive' in his life at the institution; it provides a break from what can be inferred as a typically negative environment. Others echoed the beneficial impact of the course and the way that this extends to those around them:

It makes you smarter, you know. It opens your mind and your mind is clearer, sharper, because you're constantly learning, you're learning new things. So you can tell other people notice that you're doing something with quality and it's helping you heal.⁷⁰

It's a fun environment, comfortable, it's not intimidating. We're not expected to come up with big words or come up with something really spectacular. We're expected to do what we can do. Which is great because there might be somebody who can't even write very well. And to be encouraged by his peers, by them clapping at the end, saying that's a good job. And that would be very encouraging to that person.⁷¹

Thus, the benefits participants gain from the class are reaffirmed by the positive responses of their peers and by the guards who see them engaging in positive activities:

People look at you and say, oh wow, this guy – he's actually smart, he can actually do something with himself, you know... in the future, with his life. And they say, they give you respect and they say, "good for you."⁷²

Improving relations or inmate perception of relations between inmates and with staff is a positive step in reconfiguring the hierarchy that exists in the institution. As Warren Cariou states, "How we *think* other people perceive us, that has a huge impact on how we interact with the world. So I guess in terms of masculinity, very often I think the violent exchanges between men that I

⁶⁹ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 18, 2013 (A).

⁷⁰ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 14, 2013 (A).

⁷¹ Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 27, 2013 (B).

⁷² Anonymous, Personal Interview, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, March 27, 2013 (B).

witnessed growing up are not about the two guys, but it's about the people around them -- it's about performing what people expect."⁷³ The IM program works to challenge the toxic constructions of masculinity that are too often reinforced, rather than challenged, in the prison environment. If facilitators expect something different, if they begin from a place of respect and of valuing individual experience and knowledge, this act works to challenge the institutional norms which bolster the hegemonic and toxic masculinities that are pervasive in the day-to-day activities of the prison

⁷³ McKegney, *Masculindians*, 127.

Chapter 5: Building Community Beyond Incarceration

5.1 Research Contribution

This research project was undertaken in order to gain insight into the multitude of ways in which the Inspired Minds: All Nations Creative Writing impacts participants, their relationships and the relationships between inmates and staff. I approached this study with the belief that such programming can do much more than merely developing literacy skills, though this is certainly an important aspect and goal of the program. What is fundamental to this study is the fact that the IM classroom, unlike other core-correctional programs, works to create a space in which toxic constructions of masculinity can be broken down as participants become active learners and engage in a process of transformative learning. Butterwick and Lawrence highlight that as facilitators we can work to create a space for transformative learning, but there are no guarantees: “And although we can set the stage for potential transformation to occur, we cannot always know what the actual impact of the learning experience has been on our learners.”¹ This research project was undertaken in order to provide insight into the kinds of transformative learning that occur as a result of the IM program, and in particular to gain an understanding of how Indigenous masculinity factors into one’s experience of incarceration and how this is influenced by creative writing and program participation.

Central to this process taking place is that IM is a partnership between SCC and the community, in this case the University of Saskatchewan. Having external facilitators contributes to the creation of a space that challenges a toxic institution and the hegemonic masculine values it embodies. Just as the program works to change and challenge institutional values, it also changes the institution’s relationship to participants and to the community. As Silver et al. note in their examination of the Ma Mawi Program in Winnipeg,

...Students are being transformed because of their exposure to new and exciting ideas; UW, and especially, Urban and Inner-City Studies, is being transformed because we are reaching out to and working cooperatively with the inner city community in a genuine way; and the

¹ Butterwick and Lawrence, 36.

inner city community is more likely to be transformed over the course of time because of the capacity building that is a central part of this educational process.”²

Like Ma Mawi, IM has also transformed the facilitators and the relationship SCC has with the university. Inspired Minds is still in its infancy and often struggles with sustainability as it is a volunteer-driven initiative; however, the continued development of this partnership is central to creating a support network that extends from the prison to the community. The absence of such linkages at the provincial corrections level presents a significant obstacle for participants and all those released to the community as many are lacking a positive support system amongst their family and friends. As funding cut-backs continue to strain correctional facilities’ resources and policy changes contribute to higher rates of incarceration,³ it is crucial that such programming partnerships are developed to fill the gap left by fiscal constraints and an increasingly punitive approach to justice.

5.2 Lessons Learned

It is challenging to talk about the nuances of corrections programming and policy when the reality is that many of these programs, including Inspired Minds, are continually struggling to articulate and maintain their place in the corrections system. Davidson succinctly articulates how problematic this is when such programs protect themselves from criticism:

Unfortunately, the majority of teachers in prison schools strive to justify their practices, not to criticize them, and they do this for a very good reason. As we have seen from the overview of contemporary features, educators are in constant danger of having their programs eliminated. As a consequence, unless political conditions directly threaten the existence of their programs, they display little interest in criticism lest it be turned against them.⁴

To some extent, this is true for the IM program and is why in Chapter Two, the RAND study was included. It presents comprehensive quantitative evidence that education programs in corrections, particularly those built on community-corrections partnerships, are effective in reducing recidivism and at the same time, are economically worthwhile.

² Jim Silver, Claudette Michell and Judith Harris, “To Walk in Both Worlds: Ma Mawi Goes to University,” in *Moving Forward Giving Back: Transformative Aboriginal Education* (Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2013): 89.

³ Kelly Malone, “Program Helping High-Risk Offenders after Release at Risk of Closing,” *NewsTalk650* March 4, 2015, <http://www.newstalk650.com/story/program-helping-high-risk-offenders-after-release-risk-closing/539102>; Andrea Hill, “NDP Blasts Yarrow Youth Farm Closure,” *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*, January 29, 2015, <http://www.thestarphoenix.com/blasts+Yarrow+Youth+Farm+closure/10769304/story.html>

⁴ Davidson, *Schooling in a Total Institution*, 10.

These challenges work as a reminder that providing evidence supporting investment in creative arts, education and health programming and building community connections is crucial to challenging the status quo of these institutions. Additionally, critical to gaining support for these initiatives is convincing a skeptical public that investing in such programs creates safer communities in the long term.

5.3 Recommendations: Capacity Building & Corrections Policy

Public opinion generally skews towards supporting more punitive practices when it comes to crime control and sentencing. This phenomenon, known as penal populism can largely be attributed to media representations of crime and with the punitive turn in the United States; however, it is increasingly becoming a reality in Canada. In particular, Bill C-10: The Safe Streets and Communities Act was touted as a response by the federal government to the public's call for an increase in 'tough on crime' measures, even though this bill was denounced by advocacy groups across the country.⁵ A lack of information and misinformation has resulted in public support and indifference to such policies. However, as Bousfield et al. find in their study, "Evidence-Based Criminal Justice Policy for Canada: An Exploratory Study of Public Opinion and the Perspective of Mental Health and Legal Professionals," public opinion can change quickly when individuals become informed about evidence based research on these issues:

The opinions of public participants did change in the direction of more strongly disagreeing with the criminal justice amendments after the presentation of the literature to a greater extent than the opinions of professional participants. These results are in line with what is known about opinion research; opinions, in general, may change when people are presented with research.⁶

⁵ See reports and submissions from: Canadian Civil Liberties Association, <http://ccla.org/omnibus-crime-bill-c-10/> ; John Howard Society of Canada: <http://www.johnhoward.ca/document/billC-10/billC10.pdf> ; The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, MB: <http://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/Manitoba%20Office/2012/03/Bill%20C-10%20The%20Truth%20About%20Consequences.pdf>; Chiefs of Ontario; Canadian Bar Association: <http://www.cba.org/cba/submissions/PDF/11-45-eng.pdf>

⁶ N. Kate Bousfield, Alana N. Cook, and Ronald Roesch, "Evidence-Based Criminal Justice Policy for Canada: An Exploratory Study of Public Opinion and the Perspective of Mental Health and Legal Professionals" *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie Canadienne*, 35. 3 (2014), 211.

These results highlight that when the public has a more complex and comprehensive understanding of the justice system, they are more likely to support evidence based policy initiatives.

In her Ted Talk, “The Danger of a Single Story,” Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie highlights the necessity for there to be more complex and complete representations of peoples and cultures.⁷ In presenting the ‘story’ of incarcerated Indigenous men it is important to understand not only the colonial context within which this incarceration has occurred, but to share a more dynamic picture of their experiences that is voiced by the men themselves. Drew Hayden Taylor describes how Indigenous sexuality is spoken about as a monolith, stating, “Although many of these stories are true, they are only a miniscule portion of the stories out there that reflect the vast ocean of Aboriginal sexuality. There needed to be some re-education.”⁸ Similarly, there is also a narrow perception of Indigenous men and violence because Indigenous men tend to be viewed (and marginalized communities more generally) one dimensionally. Thus, even the ‘true’ story of criminality presents a very narrow representation of these men’s lives. As a result of media representation, public perception of Aboriginal men and the stories of them we are told are both skewed and limited.

Changes in public perception, through sharing stories, can have a significant impact on support for corrections programming. If the public can understand that money spent on programming now is money saved in the long term, our correctional system could be organized very differently. Hopefully, increasing the permeability of the institution to outsiders – volunteers, spiritual and cultural leaders, etc. – will aid in changing the landscape of the public conversation through increasing knowledge about program impacts. It will become much more difficult for the public - and consequently, the government - to turn a blind eye to a system which has been proven not to create safer communities and to pay attention to programs and policies which prove to be more effective. As Wacquant states:

Penalization serves as a *technique for the invisibilization of the social “problems”* that the state, as the bureaucratic lever of collective will, no longer can or cares to treat at its

⁷ Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, “The Danger of a Single Story,” presented at TedGlobal, 2009. <http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en>

⁸ Drew Hayden Taylor, *Me Sexy*, (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2009): 3.

roots, and the prison operates as the judicial garbage disposal into which the human refuse of the market society are thrown.⁹

Prison programming, particularly that which involves the creative arts, seeks to make the invisible visible. The process and act of writing itself can be understood as a form of resistance, as Rymhs has also highlighted. These acts challenge this process of invisibilization. As I have shown in Chapter Two, even the act of participating in programming itself can also be seen as an act of resistance.

The lack of programming and support for education, arts and rehabilitative programs is acute at the provincial level and there are very few studies which examine provincial corrections programming. One study in Nova Scotia found:

Clearly, time spent incarcerated in Nova Scotia appears to be ineffective in terms of addressing the determinants of crime. There are no accredited programs available, there is no real job skills training, and only basic education is being offered. Exacerbating these needs, three of the five provincial prisons in Nova Scotia offer no rehabilitative programming other than AA. Without such programming, many offenders in the province of Nova Scotia will likely continue to reintegrate into surrounding communities lacking adequate education, job skills, and treatment for substance abuse.¹⁰

This complete absence of programming has a lot to do with a lack of funding and support for community driven initiatives which are often reliant on grants, awards and other short-term funding. Many organizations struggle with long-term sustainability because they rely heavily on volunteers and cannot offer competitive salaries for their full-time employees. This also related in high rates of turnover within these organizations. Silver argues that “Community-based programs ought to be treated like other public educational institutions and provided with adequate, multi-year funding. Teachers, counselors, support staff and others working in these programs ought to be remunerated on a basis equal to those in mainstream educational institutions.”¹¹ Doing so would provide a continuity of service that would have long-term benefits to both those accessing such services and to the community at large.

⁹ Loïc Wacquant, *Punishing the Poor: The Neoliberal of Social Insecurity*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), xxii.

¹⁰ Kitchin, Heath A., 518.

¹¹ Silver, 59.

5.4 Conclusion

This thesis has explored the way in which the Inspired Minds program impacts participant ideas of self and relationships in the prison environment and the way creative arts and education programming can work to combat them. However, I think that it is important to recognize that this process of recovery, particularly for incarcerated Indigenous men, is multilayered, complex and ongoing. In no way can creative writing and education programming in and of itself meet the diverse and changing needs of First Nations, Métis and Inuit offenders. The process of developing healthy masculinities and positive relationships needs to be incorporated in other facets of correctional programming including (but not limited to) substance abuse treatment, violence prevention, parenting, and cultural and spiritual programs. Further, we need to rethink our standards for measuring program success – rather than relying on recidivism rates, we need to recognize that “less measurable returns, such as increased self-confidence, healing, skills and understanding also make a difference to individuals and communities.”¹² What also needs further examination is how to extend or expand the experience of the transformative classroom in a particularly toxic environment. Is it possible to achieve an equality masculinity within such a space? Part of the answer lies in building linkages with communities and community organizations in order to continue both the enactment of equality masculinities and the recovery of the masculine upon an offender’s release from prison. These linkages are difficult to develop and maintain for a variety of reasons: funding, resources, community support, and the fact that we operate within a patriarchal social system, yet these elements are necessary if this process is to continue on the outside. If such programs could be developed and sustained, it would be possible to conduct a longitudinal study that could examine the impact of participation in IM and other creative arts and education programming over a longer period of time. This would provide insight into the transformative potential of the prison classroom and how this does or does not continue to impact participants’ future selves.

Though creative writing programming is not the be-all and end-all in terms of reconnecting with community or of returning oneself to the proper context, it can certainly

¹² MacDonald, Denise. “Getting on the BUS”: Reflections on the First Cohort of a Transition to University Program.” In *Moving Forward, Giving Back: Transformative Aboriginal Adult Education*. Edited by Jim Silver. (Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2013), 106.

provide the beginnings of this process. Kim Anderson, reflecting on the individual who started Indian Posse, a Saskatchewan-based street gang, and who escaped from prison, states:

Here's someone who must have some kind of genius that was lost to our communities. He was brave – he had to be brave to do some of the things he did. Courageous. Strong – he had to be physically strong, right? He had to have his wits about him, know how to build teams. Entrepreneurial, all these things. What would happen if we had those kinds of things applied for the good in our communities?¹³

Arts and education programs in corrections, through creating a space for re-engaging in a healthy and supportive learning environment, can have benefits that extend into the community.

Oftentimes these classes produce work that is published – i.e. *Str8 Up and Gangs: The Untold Stories*, a book that has been used in the classroom as an education and gang awareness tool.

Even when this is not the case, the involvement of outside facilitators can help in the maintenance of relationships and linkages to community supports once an individual is released.

In this way, arts and education programming seeks to bridge differences between communities by creating healthy spaces in otherwise toxic environments, creating both tangible and positive results for those involved and for the communities to which they belong.

¹³ McKegney, *Masculindians*, 96.

Appendix 1: Letter of Invitation to Participate & Project Information

Inspired Minds: All Nations Creative Writing Program Review

Background on Project

As a current or former participant of the Inspired Minds: All Nations Creative Writing Program you are invited to participate in a one-on-one interview session. As a Master's student at the University of Saskatchewan in the Department of Native Studies I have an interest in creative writing and art in prison. I have set up this project to explore how writing programs influences one's experience in prison. The project will try to answer the following questions.

- **Is a writing program needed?**
- **What should the program look like?**
- **Who should be involved in the program (which teachers, units, etc.)?**
- **What should the program do or accomplish?**
- **What do participants want in a writing program?**

Partner Organization and Team Members

This project has been developed with Diann Block, Cultural Coordinator at the Saskatoon Correctional Centre (SCC) and the University of Saskatchewan. Team members have expertise in program development, research and education.

- Allison Piché (University of Saskatchewan, M.A. Candidate)
- Nancy Van Styvendale (University of Saskatchewan, Assistant Professor)
- Diann Block (Cultural Coordinator, Saskatoon Correctional Centre)

Your Involvement as a Program Participant

The project looks to do the following:

- Interview Inspired Minds participants to gain feedback on the program.
- Expand the workshop program to other areas of the Correctional Centre and continue to offer it in those areas which have already had access.
- Interview approximately 10 program participants as well as staff (team leads) and program facilitators.

Participation in the project is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any point. Participation in the writing program does not mean you have to participate in the research project. You may participate in the program and not in the research project.

Staff will be interviewed to get their feedback on the program and the impact it has had on their unit. No identifying information will be included in the transcripts from these interviews, but you must be comfortable that a staff member (team lead, case manager) could be interviewed about the impact of the program.

Interviews will be confidential except for the limits of confidentiality (see attached document). Interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed.

NO identifying information will be included in the transcripts.

Participant names will be coded to ensure anonymity.

Once audio tapes have been transcribed they will be destroyed.

Once transcripts have been approved by the interviewee (you) the codes linking interviewee to transcript will be destroyed.

Articles and resource documents will be published from the material collected (interviews) and it will be used in the completion of my Master's thesis.

All of the interview material will be kept confidential and will only be seen by myself until it is agreed by you that I can use the material in public documents. I will not publish anything without your permission.

If you have questions you may contact:

Allison Piché

M.A. Candidate

Department of Native Studies

University of Saskatchewan

142 Kirk Hall, 117 Science Place

Saskatoon, SK S7N 5C8

(306) 966-6209 (Main Office)

alp585@mail.usask.ca

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact:

Research Ethics Office
University of Saskatchewan
Box 5000 RPO University
Saskatoon SK S7N 4J8

Hours of Business
Monday to Friday
8:30 am to 4:30 pm

Physical Address
1607 - 110 Gymnasium Place
NRC/PBI Building

Telephone: 306.966.2975

Facsimile: 306.966.2069

Appendix 2: Informed Consent: Participant

Inspired Minds: All Nations Creative Writing Program

I, _____, agree to
please print name

participate voluntarily to be interviewed in this research project. I have received and read the *Letter of Invitation to Participate & Project Information* and have been given a copy for my records.

Your right to withdraw from the study will apply until you have given your approval of your transcript. After this point the codes linking you to your transcript will have been destroyed and it will not be possible to identify transcript to interviewee.

Your anonymity in this project cannot be 100% guaranteed as per the Limits of Confidentiality:

- 1) If someone is in imminent danger.
- 2) If there is an institutional security breach.
- 3) If required by law.

Interviews conducted within the facility will be recorded on tape (as per your approval) and these will be removed from the facility without correctional services intervention. If you wish to review the transcripts of these files, paper documents with all identifying information removed will be brought into the facility, and these could become subject to search and seizure. As such, your anonymity is limited to what I, as a researcher, and the legal constraints included under the Limits of Confidentiality (Appendix 6).

Please indicate here, if you wish to review the interview transcript if you are still in the facility (Saskatoon Correctional Centre) when it is complete and indicate potential changes or satisfaction with the transcripts as listed on the *Satisfaction with Transcript Form*. If you are not in the facility, do you still wish to participate? If yes, sign below and sign Appendix 3: ‘Satisfaction with Transcript Form.’

Participant Signature

Date

Researcher’s Signature

Date

Appendix 3: Satisfaction with Transcript Form

Creative Writing Programming at Saskatoon Correctional Centre

I, _____ have participated in the study “Creative Writing Programming at Saskatoon Correctional Centre,” I have:

- I am satisfied with the interview and therefore decline to review my interview transcript, I waive the opportunity to make changes (add, alter, and delete).
- I reviewed the complete transcript of my personal interview in this study, and have been given the opportunity to make changes (add, alter or delete).
- I agree that if I am not in Saskatoon Correctional Centre when transcripts are ready I decline the opportunity to read my transcript and make any changes.

I acknowledge that the transcript (with the noted changes, if any) accurately reflects what I said in my interview. I authorize the release of this transcript to be used in the manner described in the *Consent Form*. I have received a copy of this *Satisfaction with Transcript Form* for my own records.

I HEREBY DECLARE THAT THE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT ACCURATELY REFLECTS MY VIEWS AND AUTHORIZE THE RELEASE OF THIS TRANSCRIPT TO BE USED IN THE MANNER DESCRIBED IN THE CONSENT FORM.

Participant Signature

Date

Researcher’s Signature

Date

Appendix 4: Request to Make Changes to Transcript Form

Creative Writing Programming at Saskatoon Correctional Centre

I, _____, have read the transcribed version of my interview and wish to make some changes. I have sent back only the pages where the changes are needed. You (the researcher) will note the highlighted areas that need to be changed. With these changes I acknowledge that the transcript accurately reflects what I said in my interview. I hereby authorize the release of this transcript to be used in the manner described in the *Consent Form*. I have received a copy of this *Request to Make Changes to Transcript Form* for my own records.

Participant Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

Appendix 5: Participant Questions

Creative Writing Programming at Saskatoon Correctional Centre

1. Why did you decide to participate in the Inspired Minds: All Nations Creative Writing program?
2. How/Is it any different from other programs offered?
3. What other programs do you/have you participated in?
4. Why did you like/dislike this program?
5. When did you start writing?
6. Why did you decide to start writing?
7. What level of education do you have?
 - a. Are you interested in pursuing further education?
 - b. What (if anything) did you learn from the program?
8. Why did you decide to start writing?
9. Do you write for a specific reason or person?
10. Is there a message you try to share with/through your writing? What is it?
11. What do you hope to achieve through your writing? Do you have a personal writing goal? Or a specific piece/article you would like to complete?
12. What kinds of things do you find yourself writing about? Why do you think this might be?
13. What do you want people/readers to learn from you/your experiences? (If anything)
14. Do you think sharing your work is important?
15. Who do you share your work with and why?
16. Is revising and getting feedback/criticism important for you?
17. Do you enjoy reading?
18. What do you read (genres)? Why do you like/choose to read these?
19. Do you feel you learn through reading? Why or why not?
20. Has your involvement in the IM program changed your relationships with other participants, non-participants, or staff? If so, how?
21. What would you change/add/delete from the IM program if you could?
22. Would you participate in this program again? Why or why not?

Appendix 6: Information about Limits to Confidentiality

The Ministry of Justice, Corrections, and Policing has practices in place to keep your personal information confidential. Though the information you share during your interview as part of the *Inspired Minds: All Nations Creative Writing Program Review* will be confidential and **NO** identifying information will be included in transcripts or published documents, there are some exceptions to this understanding of confidentiality.

You should know that there are a number of situations where your personal information may be shared, sometimes without your knowledge or consent. This sharing of information is in accordance with Divisional Directives *Administration - 0007 – Release of Information and Security – 0024 – Sharing and Release of Offender Information and Documentation*. These policies govern a wide variety of information for case management, reintegration planning, etc., but there are some specific examples that you should be aware of.

Situations where your personal information will be shared without your knowledge and consent include the following:

1. If someone is in imminent danger.

In situations where there is credible information of an imminent risk of serious injury or death to **yourself** or any **other person**, staff can share relevant personal information in order to protect you or the person in danger.

2. If there is an institutional security breach.

If you provide credible information that a breach of institutional security has occurred or is likely to occur, staff can share that information in order to protect the safety and security of yourself, other inmates and staff. Institutional security breaches include any action for which someone could be charged and disciplined (e.g., escape, assaults).

3. If required by law.

Your personal information can be shared in any situation where required by law. For example, situations of abuse as defined under the *Child and Family Services Act* (e.g., you report that a child is currently being abused or neglected), or if the person requesting the information has legislative authority to ask for the information. Another example is where the court may subpoena client files or staff.

Additionally, if you are on REMAND (have outstanding charges) do not discuss these charges (or any other outstanding charges) with the interviewer.

I have read the limits to confidentiality as outlined above and/or have had them explained to me.

Name

Date

Appendix 7: Informed Consent: Staff

Inspired Minds: All Nations Creative Writing Program

I _____, agree to
please print name

participate **voluntarily** to be interviewed in this research project. I have received and read the *Letter of Invitation to Participate & Project Information* and have been given a copy for my records.

Your right to withdraw from the study will apply until you have given your approval of your transcript. After this point the codes linking you to your transcript will have been destroyed and it will not be possible to identify transcript to interviewee.

Your anonymity in this project cannot be 100% guaranteed as per the Limits of Confidentiality:

- 1. If someone is in imminent danger.**
- 2. If there is an institutional security breach.**
- 3. If required by law.**

Interviews conducted will be recorded on tape (as per your approval). If you wish to review the transcripts of these files, paper documents with all identifying information removed will be provided.

Please indicate here, if you wish to review the interview transcripts and indicate potential changes or satisfaction with the transcripts as listed on the *Satisfaction with Transcript Form*.

Staff/Participant Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

Appendix 8: Letter of Invitation to Participate & Project Information (Staff)

Inspired Minds: All Nations Creative Writing Program Review

Background on Project

As a current or former participant of the Inspired Minds: All Nations Creative Writing Program you are invited to participate in a one-on-one interview session. As a Master's student at the University of Saskatchewan in the Department of Native Studies I have an interest in the relationship between writing and identity. I have set up this project to explore how writing programs influences one's experience in prison. The project has been designed to do the following:

- Determine whether a writing program is needed within Correctional Services and what format such a program should take to be successful.
- Develop a team of interested individuals among Correctional Services and University of Saskatchewan Staff, students, and other volunteers to facilitate the program.
- Produce documents and resources that examine the relationship between incarceration and writing; discuss the role writing plays in the institutional setting of the prison; identify areas of interest and developing programming to meet the interests and needs of program participants.

Partner Organization and Team Members

This project has been developed with Diann Block, Cultural Coordinator at the Saskatoon Correctional Centre (SCC) and the University of Saskatchewan. Team members have expertise in program development, research and education.

- Allison Piché (University of Saskatchewan, M.A. Candidate)
- Nancy Van Styvendale (University of Saskatchewan, Assistant Professor)
- Diann Block (Cultural Coordinator, Saskatoon Correctional Centre)

Your Involvement as a Program Participant

The project looks to do the following:

- Interview Inspired Minds participants to gain feedback on the program.
- Expand the workshop program to other areas of the Correctional Centre and continue to offer it in those areas which have already had access.
- Interview approximately 10 program participants as well as staff (team leads) and program facilitators.

Participation in the project is voluntary, and you may withdraw up until Appendix 3: ‘Satisfaction with Transcript Form’ has been signed. After this point codes linking interviewee to transcript will have been destroyed and it will not be possible to link you to your transcript.

Interviews will be confidential except for the limits of confidentiality (see attached document). Interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed.

NO identifying information will be included in the transcripts.

Participant names will be coded to ensure anonymity.

Once audio tapes have been transcribed they will be destroyed.

Once transcripts have been approved by the interviewee (you) the codes linking interviewee to transcript will be destroyed.

Articles and resource documents will be published from the material collected (interviews) and it will be used in the completion of my Master’s thesis and for the purposes of academic publication and conference presentations.

All of the interview material will be kept confidential and will only be seen by myself until it is agreed by you that I can use the material in public documents. I will not publish anything without your permission.

If you have questions you may contact:

Allison Piché

M.A. Candidate

Department of Native Studies

University of Saskatchewan

142 Kirk Hall, 117 Science Place

Saskatoon, SK S7N 5C8

(306) 966-6209 (Main Office)

alp585@mail.usask.ca

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact:

Research Ethics Office
University of Saskatchewan
Box 5000 RPO University
Saskatoon SK S7N 4J8

Hours of Business
Monday to Friday
8:30 am to 4:30 pm

Physical Address
1607 - 110 Gymnasium Place
NRC/PBI Building

Telephone: 306.966.2975

Facsimile: 306.966.2069

Appendix 9: Correctional Staff Interviews

The interviews will be open-ended in nature – allowing for flexibility and adaptability during the course of the interview, the interview itself will be guided by the following questions. Some follow-up questions might be asked to clarify answers or explore topics and ideas that are raised as a result of these questions.

1. What do you see as programming needs at this institution/at correctional institutions in general?
2. Is there enough educative programming, why or why not?
3. Does programming as it exists now meet the education needs of offenders/inmates?
4. What do you see as the role of (liberal) arts based programming?
5. Have you noticed any attitude or behavioral changes in participants of the Inspired Minds program?
6. Have you noticed any changes in the daily activities of program participants?
7. Have you observed any changes in the way participants of Inspired Minds relate to:
 - a. Each other?
 - b. Non-participants of Inspired Minds?
 - c. Staff?
8. Do attitudes or behaviours change over the course of their involvement with the program? (i.e. Does The length of involvement influence behaviour?)

Appendix 10: Creative Writing

“Hear Us Too” by Charles Phillip Bear Morin

*Hear us too!
It doesn't matter who you are
We're all affected from the residential schools
Open up your eyes and you will see the truth
That we're all affected from the residential schools*

*I'm a man on a mission learning from my life lessons,
where I always have to make split decisions,
Every day I see my own people struggling to survive but
there's no one there to listen.
Or to hear their cries, they're trying to stay alive
but it feels like no one's there that cares
So I look up to the lord “please” hear our prayers
I know in this life it ain't fair
'cause all I have to do is just take one good look at the welfare and this so called justice system*

*Creator this is really how it seems I look around and all I see is lost souls, broken hearts and
shattered dreams
Some people don't even have a single fuckin' clue, or know exactly what it feels like dealing with
the shit we been through
'cause all I ever seen was only judgmental*

*If they can open up their eyes and take a walk down the street in our shoes,
maybe one day they will realize
and will not despise
understand and see the truth,
I don't need the proof
'cause all you have to do is just look around
and you will see the pain and misery from the substance abuse,
One of the many effects we face from the residential schools.
It is really sad to see that in reality
we're being judged by our own nationality
And I get the impression that it's the mentality
but we all have to deal with this kind of bullshit in society
On a day to day basis
and we can't help but face it
that we live everyday life with racists
and I'm not a man to judge
or hold on to any kind of grudge either
'cause respect goes a long way
and takes you higher
and at the end of the day*

it will come down on you to pay.

*Yeah, our voices need to be heard too
Cause we all live with the effects from the residential schools
It's our choice we made it's true
But you can't judge us until you been in our shoes*

*Yeah, our voices need to be heard too
Cause we all live with the effects from the residential schools
It's our choice we made it's true
But you can't judge us until you been in our shoes*

*Yeah we all been to hell and back
and this is a known fact
'cause I lived my life off track
for many years,
I suffered in silence in a jail cell - shed quiet tears
I got over some of my fears*

*Now all I gotta do is try to stay true with myself on the right path
But it's hard as fuck, when your mind is struck,
with the alcoholism, the racism and you ain't got the luck,
to get a job feed your family and make the bucks'
it's not that we can't do it - maybe we grew up without the proper skills
To live the life we want and pay our own bills
I try to live a good life and speak my mind
but you always have the haters trying to take what's mine,
so I write down these lines so you can all hear my rhymes
that I'm proud to be NATIVE and I'm one of a kind
I love my life and I love all my Indian people,
and there shouldn't be any reasons why we're not treated equal,
I see the evil discrimination
Amongst all our First Nations,
we're struggling with gang affiliation, have no education,
cause they got us locked up, and isolated on our home reservations,
and my interpretation
to have my voice heard to represent and help my younger generation,
having done this will be my own dedication
to get the message across to all my people throughout the whole nation.*

*Yeah, our voices need to be heard too
Cause we all live with the effects from the residential schools
It's our choice we made it's true
But you can't judge us until you been in our shoes*

For those of you who don't know what it's like

*To not always have your family by your side every night
I suggest that you open up your eyes, and try to realize
That we all live in a world where it's hard to survive
Everyday struggles, we try to stay alive
Everyday troubles when we wake up with the sunrise
And the sunshine, we do our best in this life with what we got
And take every chance or shot
To make a good life whether it's bad or not
And try to forget the past and live for today
Cause the bad moments will pass, and eventually fade away.*

*Yeah, our voices need to be heard too
Cause we all live with the effects from the residential schools
It's our choice we made it's true
But you can't judge us until you been in our shoes*

*Hear us too!
It doesn't matter who you are
We're all affected from the residential schools
Open up your eyes and you will see the truth
That we're all affected from the residential schools¹*

“Change” by Rocky C Bird

*Institutionalized, that's how it is for me
Struggling to stay free in society
Lying, cheating and stealing, just to stay alive
Time to live in the real world, with a Nine to Five
Winning is my goal, I really hate to lose
maintaining a healthy lifestyle, without the drugs and booze
Positive thinking is what I have in mind
Time to be a role model to my younger kind
I have to continue to learn to be a better man
I have to follow up on change, which is my game plan
My destructive lifestyle is a thing of the past
My constructive lifestyle, it will be a blast²*

“My life is Ever-Changing” by Eugene Brady

*I drank and smoked to build walls so high,
So I don't face the man I have become;*

¹ Phillip Charles Bear Morin, “Hear Us Too,” in *Str8 Up and Gangs: The Untold Stories*, (Saskatoon: Hear My Heart Books, Inc., 2012): 9-11.

² Rocky C Bird, “Change,” *Creative Escape*, 2012

*Hiding the person I don't want anyone to know,
Angry and sad; I try to pretend I don't know why.*

*It's now or die; I have come to the end of my road,
I have begun to search and look within myself;
Understanding what it takes to be a different man,
I can look in the mirror knowing I carry a lighter load³*

“I Wish” by Chris Hahn

*I wish the sun would always shine
And the sky was always blue.
I wish that people wouldn't fight
And love was always true.
I wish people would help each other
And building houses everywhere
So no one would be homeless
And people showed they care.
That skin would have no colour
But the blind were made to see.
The lame could walk, the deaf could here
While everyone would cheer – happily and free
That drugs and knives were used by doctors
To help the sick to heal
Not by others to hurt their brothers
Where the pain is all too real.
That guns were only used by hunters
So everyone could eat
And all the people would be fed
Before they went to sleep.
I wish...⁴*

“Survivors” by Jayvin Mooswa

*Where have my roots gone
Lost in the wind like my fellow inmates
Don't be a follower into despair
Trying to be someone I really am not
Being teased as an Indian
Forced to be more like our settlers
Now we teach what has been taught
Education, diseases, racism, sexual abuse and addiction
By far weak survived the worst
In their eyes we were uncivilized*

³ Eugene Brady, “My Life is Ever-Changing,” *Creative Escape*, 2012

⁴ Chris Hahn, “I Wish,” *Creative Escape*, 2012

*What was so wrong from the way we once lived?
Now... they break their word.⁵*

“The Years” by Mike Demers

*The years flew by, building things up inside
True feelings and emotions I tried to hide
For more than ten years I hid and I ran
I lied and I cheated and played the big man
Now that’s in the past, no longer part of me
It took this jail bit for me to finally see
That my life was a mess and I was going down fast
This is the time to deal with feelings and emotions I masked
Now starting from scratch, being through and true
Of who I really was I didn’t have a clue
But I’m slowly learning and I like what I see
A gentle loving man, the real me⁶*

“Systematic” by Robin D. Wuttunee

*[...]
How can we learn to be better men
When stuck in the system and locked up at ten
In school I wondered what one day I’d be
But a jail bird in the system is all my kids see
One day we will realize that all of this time
Paid for this system by doing the crime
If you like what I write share it with others
Like a messaging system for all of our brothers⁷*

“Bottled Up” by Zachary Warren

*When you’re born, you’re a perfect child
10 toes, 10 fingers
And a perfect little smile
Nothing matters; you’re just to be loved
By a mother and father
Who gives hugs and kisses
You start crawling, and then you start walking
After you’re breast fed
Then you start talking
Things start changing, as the years go by
When your parents start yelling*

⁵ Jayvin Mooswa, “Survivors,” *Creative Escape*, 2012

⁶ Mike Demers, “The Years,” *Creative Escape*, 2012

⁷ Robin D. Wuttunee, “Systematic,” *Creative Escape*, 2012.

*And you don't know why
Then you started crying, they didn't seem to bother
When the yelling stopped...
Your father hit your mother
You knew it was wrong, but didn't understand
What God had planned
For you as a man
Living in violence, living in poverty
Christmas came
And nothing was bought for me
Now you're a man, living with anger
Don't be like your father
And put your kids through danger
But anger builds up, and frustration takes over
So you resort to alcohol
And drink till you're sober
Still hard to understand, so you pray to Jesus
You ask for forgiveness
So your anger releases
As a man you cry in the corner cuddled up
As that child so innocent
Whose anger got bottled up.⁸*

“Ghetto” by Wade Littlepine

*Born and raised in the ghetto
So how am I supposed to let go
It's a vital part of me
A vital artery
Never had a dad
So it fathered me and made me a man
Taught me all I know high risk
Try this life in the ghetto
Gangsters & groupies
Lexs & hoopies
Leg H? Fuck?
The drug money moves me
Semis & uzis, scenes like the movies
That's why I'll never try to live the boonies.⁹*

⁸ Zachary Warren, “Bottled Up,” *Creative Escape*, 2010.

⁹ Wade Littlepine, “Ghetto,” *Creative Escape*, 2010.

Works Cited

- "A Case Study of Diversity in Corrections: The Black Inmate Experience in Federal Penitentiaries Final Report." *Office of the Correctional Investigator*. 2013.
- "Aboriginal Corrections." *Correctional Service of Canada*. 2007. <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/prgrm/abinit/who-eng.shtml>.
- "Aboriginal Corrections[b]; Working Together." *Correctional Service of Canada*. August 15, 20113. <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/prgrm/abinit/challenge/11-eng.shtml> .
- "Aboriginal Initiatives." *Correctional Service of Canada*. February 2, 2011. <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/prgrm/abinit/who-eng.html>.
- "Aboriginal Peoples and the Criminal Justice System: Part IV." *Canadian Criminal Justice Association*. May 15, 2000. <http://www.cjja-acjp.ca/en/abori4.html> .
- Adams, Howard. *Prison of Grass: Canada from a Native Point of View*. Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers, 1975.
- Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. *We Should All Be Feminists*. New York: Anchor Books, 2012.
- Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: The New Press, 2010.
- Anderson, Kim. "Speaking from the Heart: Everyday Storytelling and Adult Learning." *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 28, no. 1/2 (2004): 123-129.
- Anderson, Kim, and Robert Alexander Innes. "Introduction: Who's Walking with Our Brothers?" In *Indigenous Men and Masculinities: Identities, Legacies, Regeneration*, edited by Kim Anderson and Robert Alexander Innes. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2015.
- Anderson, Kim, Robert Alexander Innes, and John Swift. "Indigenous Masculinities: Carrying the Bones of Our Ancestors." In *Canadian Men and Masculinities: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, edited by Christopher J. Greig and Wayne J Martino. Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press, 2012.
- Anonymous, Personal Interview, March 1, 2013 (A)
- Anonymous, Personal Interview, March 1, 2013 (S)
- Anonymous, Personal Interview, March 8, 2013 (A)
- Anonymous, Personal Interview, March 8, 2013 (B)

- Anonymous, Personal Interview, March 11, 2013
- Anonymous, Personal Interview, March 14, 2013 (A)
- Anonymous, Personal Interview, March 14, 2013 (B)
- Anonymous, Personal Interview, March 18, 2013 (S)
- Anonymous, Personal Interview, March 18, 2013 (A)
- Anonymous, Personal Interview, March 18, 2013 (B)
- Anonymous, Personal Interview, March 27, 2013 (A)
- Anonymous, Personal Interview, March 27, 2013 (B)
- Anonymous, Personal Interview, March 27, 2013 (C)
- Anonymous, Personal Interview, March 27, 2013 (D)
- Anonymous, Personal Interview, March 28, 2013
- Anonymous, Personal Interview, March 29, 2013
- Anonymous, Personal Interview, May 1, 2013 (S)
- Argue, Julie et al.. "Transformation through Negotiation: Initiating the Inmate Mural Arts Program." *The Arts in Psychotherapy* 36, no. 5 (2009): 313-319.
- Bird, Rocky C. "Change." *Creative Escape*. 2012.
- Blumstein, Alfred, and Richard C Larson. "Problems in Modeling and Measuring Recidivism." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 8, no. 2 (1971): 124-132.
- Boyce, Jillian, Adam Cotter, and Samuel Perreault. "Police Report Crime Statistics in Canada 2013." *Statistics Canada*. n.d. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2014001/article/14040-eng.htm?fpv=2693#a1> .
- Brady, Eugene. "My Life is Ever Changing." *Creative Escape*. 2012.
- Brewster, Lawrence. "An Evaluation of the Arts-in-Corrections Program of the California Department of Corrections." *Prepared for the William James Association of Santa Cruz, CA & California Department of Corrections 95132*. San Jose: San Jose State University, 1983.
- Brzozowski, Jodi-Ann, Andrea Taylor-Butts, and Sara Johnson. "Victimization and Aboriginal Offending Among the Aboriginal Population in Canada." *Statistics Canada - Juristat Catalogue no. 85-002*. 2006. <http://publications.gc.ca/Collection-R/Statcan/85-002-XIE/85-002-XIE2006003.pdf>.

- Buchanan, Kim Shayo. "E-race-ing Gender: The Racial Construction of Prison Rape." In *Masculinities and the Law: A Multidimensional Approach*, edited by Frank Rudy Cooper and Ann C. McGinley, 187-206. New York: New York University Press, 2012.
- Butterwick, Shauna, and Randee Lipson Lawrence. "Creating Alternative Realities: Arts Based Approaches to Transformative Learning." In *Transformative Learning in Practice: Insights from Community, Workplace and Higher Education*, edited by Jack Mezirow and Edward W. Taylor, 35-45. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2009.
- Cardinal, Harold. *The Unjust Society*. Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1969.
- Clare, Kim. "It's the WEC Way: Transformative Social Work Education." In *Moving Forward Giving Back: Transformative Aboriginal Adult Education*, edited by Jim Silver, 61-75. Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2013.
- Clements, Brookfield in Paul. "The Rehabilitative Role of Arts Education in Prison: Education to Enlightenment?" *International Journal of Art and Design Education* 23, no. 2 (2004).
- Code, Lorraine. *The Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Cohen, M. L. "Choral Singing and Prison Inmates: Influences of Performing in a Prison Choir." *Journal of Correctional Education* 60, no. 1 (2009): 52-65.
- Collins, Michael. "Chapter Four: Shades of the Prison House: Adult Literacy and the Correctional Ethos." In *Schooling in a "Total Institution": Critical Perspectives on Prison Education*, edited by Howard S. Davidson. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey, 1995.
- Comack, Elizabeth. *Out There/In Here: Masculinity, Violence and Prisoning*. Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2008.
- Comack, Elizabeth, Lawrence Deane, Larry Morrissette, and Jim Silver. *Indians Wear Red: Colonialism, Resistance, and Aboriginal Street Gangs*. Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2013.
- Connell, Raewyn. "Change Among the Gatekeepers: Men, Masculinities, and Gender Equality in the Global Area." In *Men's Lives*, edited by Michael S. Kimmel and Michael A. Messner, 587-602. Toronto: Pearson Education, Inc., 2013.
- Connell, Raewyn, and James W. Messerschmidt. "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept." *Gender and Society* 19, no. 6 (2005): 829-859.
- "Correctional Programs: Education and Employment Programs." *Correctional Service of Canada*. November 22, 2011. <http://www.csc.scc.gc.ca/text/prgrm/educ-eng.shtml> .
- Correctional Service of Canada. *Correctional Programs: Educational and Employment Programs*. 2011. <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/prgrm/educ-eng.shtml>.
- Cranton, Patricia. *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning: A Guide for Educators of Adults*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1994.

- Davidson, Howard S. "Possibilities for Critical Pedagogy in a "Total Institution": An Introduction to Critical Perspectives on Prison Education." In *Schooling in a "Total Institution" Critical Perspectives on Prison Education*, edited by Howard S. Davidson. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey, 1995.
- Davis, Angela. *Abolition Democracy: Beyond Empire, Prisons and Torture*. New York: Seven Stories Press, 2005.
- . *Are Prisons Obsolete?* New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003.
- Davis, Lois M., Robert Bozick, Jennifer L. Steele, Jessica Saunders, and Jeremy N. V. Miles. *Evaluating the Effectiveness of Correctional Education: A Meta-Analysis of Programs that Provide Education to Incarcerated Adults*. Washington, DC: RAND Corporation, 2013.
- Delshadian, Suzanne. "Playing with Fire: Art Therapy in a Prison Setting." *Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy* 17, no. 1 (2003): 68-84.
- Djurichkovic, Alexandra. "Art in Prisons: A Literature Review of the Philosophies and Impacts of Visual Arts Programs for Correctional Populations." *Studies in Human Society, Report for Art Access Australia* (Studies in Human Society, Report for Art Access Australia), 2011.
- Donaldson, Mike. "What is Hegemonic Masculinity?" *Theory and Society* 22 (1993): 643-657.
- Dubois, W.E.B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. New York: Dover Publications, 1994.
- Duguid, Stephen. *Can Prisons Work? The Prisoner as Object and Subject in Modern Corrections*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000.
- Duguid, Stephen. "Chapter Three: Rehabilitation Through Education: A Canadian Model." In *On Prison Education*, edited by Lucien Morin. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1981.
- Dustyhorn, Marty. In *Str8Up and Gangs: The Untold Stories*. Saskatoon: Hear My Heart Books, Inc. , 2012.
- Enke, Anne Finn. "The Education of Little Cis: Cisgender and the Discipline of Opposing Bodies." In *Transfeminist Perspectives in and Beyond Transgender and Gender Studies*, edited by Anne Finn Enke, 60-77. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012.
- Ermine, Willie. "The Ethical Space of Engagement." *Indigenous Law Journal* 6, no. 1 (2007): 193-203.
- "Facility Operations." *Government of Saskatchewan Corrections and Policing*. n.d.
<http://www.justice.gov.sk.ca/Default.aspx?DN=e75de182-1c7a-4e60-8755-f186dd7b063c>.
- Fanon, Franz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Charles Lam Markman. New York: Grove Press, 1967.
- . *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 1963.
- Foucault, Michele. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1977.

- Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Translated by Myra Bergman Ramos. New York: Herder and Herder, 1970.
- Gelman, Andrew, Jeffrey Fagan, and Alex Kiss. "An Analysis of the New York City Police Department's "Stop and Frisk" Policy in the Context of Claims of Racial Bias." *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 102 (2007): 813-823.
- Glasson, Barbara. *A Spirituality of Survival: Enabling a Response to Trauma and Abuse*. London: Continuum Books, 2009.
- Goeman, Mishuana R., and Jennifer Nez Denetdale. "Native Feminisms: Legacies, Interventions, and Indigenous Sovereignities." *Wicazo Sa Review* 24, no. 2 (2009): 9-13.
- Green, Joyce. *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*. Black Point, NS: Fernwood Press, 2007.
- Grekul, Jana, and Patti LaBoucane-Benson. "Aboriginal Gangs and Their (Dis)placement: Contextualizing Recruitment, Membership, and Status." *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice* 1, no. 50 (2008): 59-82.
- Gwyn, Richard. "Maybe Canada's National Unity Problem Not Meant to be Solved." *Toronto Star*, June 1998.
- Habermas, Jurgen. *The Theory of Communicative Action Vol. 1 Reason and the Realization of Society*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1981.
- Hall, Stuart. "Introduction." In *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London: SAGE Publications, 1997.
- Hayman, Stephanie. *Imprisoning Our Sisters: The New Federal Women's Prisons in Canada*. Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2006.
- Henry, Robert. *Indigenous Lens: Understanding Indigenous Masculinity and Street Gang Involvement*. Ph.D. Diss: University of Saskatchewan, 2015.
- Hill, Andrea. "NDP Blasts Yarrow Youth Farm Closure." *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*. January 29, 2015. <http://www.thestarphoenix.com/blasts+Yarrow+Youth+Farm+closure/10769304/story.html> .
- Hill, Susan. "Chapter Eleven: This is for Anthony Beard." In *Teaching the Arts Behind Bars*, edited by Rachel Marie-Crane Williams, 153-166. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2003.
- Hokowhitu, Brendan. "'Physical Beings': Stereotypes, Sport, and the 'Physical Education' of Maori." *Sport in Society* 6 (2003).
- Hokowhitu, Brendan. "Tackling Maori Masculinity: A Colonial Genealogy of Savagery and Sport." *The Contemporary Pacific* 16, no. 2 (2004).
- Hokowhitu, Brendan, and Tiffany Page. "Postcolonial Peace." *Junctures*, no. 14 (2011): 13-25.
- hooks, bell. *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love*. Toronto: Atria Books, 2004.

- Innes, Robert Alexander. "'Wait a Second. Who Are You Anyways?'" The Insider/Outsider Debate and American Indian Studies." *American Indian Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (2009): 440-461.
- Innes, Robert Alexander. "Moose on the Loose: Indigenous Men, Violence, and the Colonial Excuse." *Aboriginal Policy Studies* 4, no. 1 (2015): 46-56.
- Jimmy, Brendon. In *Str8 Up and Gangs: The Untold Stories*. Saskatoon: Hear My Heart Books, Inc., 2012.
- John Howard Society of Canada. "Brief to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice, Human Rights, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness 39th Parliament Regarding Bill C-10." 2006.
- Kann, Mark E. "Penitence for the Privileged: Manhood, Race, and Penitentiaries in Early America." In *Gender and Prisons*, edited by Dana M. Britton, 21-34. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2005.
- Katz, Jackson, Sut Jhally, Susan Ericsson, Sanjay Talreja, and Jeremy Epp. *Tough Guise, Violence, Media and the Crisis in Masculinity*. Media Education Foundation, 1999.
- King, Thomas. *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative*. Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2003.
- Kitchin, Heather A. "Needing Treatment: A Snapshot of Provincially Incarcerated Adult Offenders in Nova Scotia with a View Towards Substance Abuse and Population Health." *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice* 3, no. 47 (2005): 501-525.
- Kovach, Margaret. *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations and Contexts*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009.
- Lindley, Lorinda. "A Critical Race Theory Analysis of Academic attainment: A Qualitative Study of Sixteen Northern Arapaho Women Who Earned Degrees at the University of Wyoming." *Ph.D. Diss.* University of Wyoming, 2009.
- Ludlow, Jeannie. "From Safe Space to Contested Space in the Feminist Classroom." *Transformations* 15, no. 1 (2004): 1-13.
- MacKinnon, Shauna. "Healing the Spirit First: Aboriginal Second-Chance Learners in Three Inner City Programs." In *Moving Forward Giving Back: Transformative Aboriginal Adult Education*, edited by Jim Silver, 49-60. Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2013.
- Malone, Kelly. "Program Helping High-Risk Offenders after Release at Risk of Closing." *NewsTalk650*. March 4, 2015. <http://www.newstalk650.com/story/program-helping-high-risk-offenders-after-release-risk-closing/539102>.
- Mann, Michelle M. *Good Intentions, Disappointing Results: A Progress Report on Federal Aboriginal Corrections*. Ottawa: Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2009.
- Manual, George, and Michael Posluns. *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality*. Don Mills: Collier-Macmillan Canada, 1974.

- Martinson, Robert. "What Works? Questions and Answers about Prison Reform." *The Public Interest* 35 (1974): 22-54.
- McCorkel, Jill A., and Kristin Myers. "What Difference Does Difference Make? Position and Privilege in the Field." *Qualitative Sociology* 26, no. 2 (2003): 199-231.
- McKegney, Sam. *Masculindians: Conversations About Indigenous Manhood*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2014.
- McKegney, Sam. "Warriors, Healers, Lovers and Leaders: Colonial Impositions on Indigenous Male Roles and Responsibilities." In *Canadian Perspectives on Men and Masculinities: An Interdisciplinary Reader*, edited by J. A. Laker., 241-265. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Memmi, Albert. *The Colonizer and the Colonized*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1965.
- Messerschmidt, James. "Engendering Gendered Knowledge: Assessing the Academic Appropriation of Hegemonic Masculinity." *Men and Masculinities* 15 (2012): 1-21.
- Messerschmidt, James W. *Crime as Structured Action: Doing Masculinities, Race, Class, Sexuality and Crime*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014.
- Mezirow, Jack. "Transformative Learning: Theory to Practice." In *Transformative Learning in Action: Insights from Practice. New Directions for Adult Continuing Education*, edited by Patricia Cranton. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 74 (1997): 5-12.
- Milloy, John. "Our Country: The Significance of the Buffalo as a Resource for a Plains Cree Sense of Territory." In *Aboriginal Resource Use in Canada: Historical and Legal Aspects*, 51-70. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1991.
- Ministry of Justice. "Plan for 2013-2014." 2013.
<http://www.finance.gov.sk.ca/PlanningAndReporting/2013-14/JusticePlan1314.pdf>.
- Mooswa, Jayvin. "Survivors." *Creative Escape*. 2012.
- Morin, Phillip Charles Bear. "Hear Us Too." In *Str8Up and Gangs: The Untold Stories*. Saskatoon: Hear My Heart Books, Inc., 2012.
- Nakata. "Chapter Six: Researching Anger in Indigenous Men in Prison: A Perspective from Non-Indigenous Researchers." In *Doing Cross Cultural Research: Ethical and Methodological Perspectives*, by Linda Davey and Andrew Day, edited by Pranee Liamputtong. 2008.
- Paulson, Bob. "Royal Canadian Mounted Police Commissioner, "Letter to Grand Chief Bernice Martial"." April 7, 2015. <http://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/1815008/2015-04-07-mmaw-rcmp.pdf>.
- "Penitentiaries in Canada." *Correctional Service of Canada*. n.d. <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/about-us/006-1006-eng.shtml>.

- Persons, Roy W. "Art Therapy with Serious Juvenile Offenders: A Phenomenological Analysis." *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* 53, no. 4 (2009): 433-453.
- Rafay, Atif. "An 'Impossible Profession'? The Radical University in Prison." *Radical Teacher* 95 (2013): 10-21.
- Rom, Robert Boost. "'Safe Spaces': A Reflection on an Educational Metaphor." *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 30, no. 4 (1998): 397-408.
- Rothman, David J. "Perfecting the Prison: United States: 1789-1865." In *The Oxford History of the Prison: The Practice of Punishment in Western Society*, edited by Norval Morris and David J Rothman, 100-116. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Rotman, Edgardo. "The Failure of Reform: United States, 1865-1965." In *The Oxford History of the Prison: The Practice of Punishment in Western Society*, edited by Norval Morris and David J Rothman, 151-177. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Rudin, Jonathan. "Aboriginal Over-Representation and R. v. Gladue: Where We Were, Where We Are and Where We Might Be Going." *Supreme Court Law Review* 0228-0108, no. 40 (2008).
- Rymhs, Deena. *From the Iron House: Imprisonment in First Nations Writing*. Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2008.
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. Toronto: Vintage Books, Random House, 1979.
- Sapers, Howard. *Annual Report of the Office of the Correctional Investigator of Canada, 2011-2012*. Ottawa: Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2012.
- Sapers, Howard. *Annual Report of the Office of the Correctional Investigator of Canada, 2011-2012*. Section V: Access to Programs, Ottawa: Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2012.
- Sapers, Howard. *Annual Report of the Office of the Correctional Investigator of Canada, 2012-2013*. Ottawa: Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2013.
- Sapers, Howard. *Annual Report of the Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2013-2014*. Ottawa: Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2014.
- . "Speaking Notes for Mr. Howard Sapers, Correctional Investigator 33rd Annual Report to Parliament." *Office of the Correctional Investigator of Canada*. 2006. <http://www.oci-bec.gc.ca/cnt/comm/sp-all/sp-all20061016-eng.aspx> .
- "Saskatoon the Fastest Growing City in Canada." *National Post - Postmedia News*. July 20, 2011.
- Schroeder, Kirby. "Hypermasculinity." In *Men and Masculinities: A Social, Cultural and Historical Encyclopedia*, edited by Michael Kimmel and Amy Aronson. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2004.

- Sium, Aman., Chandni Desai, and Eric Ritskes, "Towards the 'Tangible Unknown': Decolonization and the Indigenous Future," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society*, 1.1 (2012):I-XIII.
- Siwak, John. In *Str8Up and Gangs: The Untold Stories*. Saskatoon: Hear My Heart Books, Inc., 2012.
- Smith, Andrea. "Queer Theory and Native Studies: The Heteronormativity of Settler Colonialism." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16, no. 1 (2010): 41-68.
- Starks, Katherine. "Inspired Minds: All Nations Creative Writing A Vital Part of First Nations and Metis Cultural Programming at Saskatoon Correctional Centre." *Unpublished term paper for Dynamics of Community Involvement, for Prof. Nancy Van Styvendale*. University of Saskatchewan, 2013.
- Styvendale, Nancy Van. "Program Description: Overview of Principles, Activities, and Goals." *Personal Communication*. 2011.
- Suzack, Cheryl, and Shari M. Huhndorf. "Indigenous Feminism: Theorizing the Issues." In *Indigenous Women and Feminism: Politics, Activism, Culture.*, edited by Cheryl Suzack, Shari M. Huhndorf, Jeanne Perreault and Jean Barman. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007.
- Taylor, Evan. "Cisgender Privilege: On the Privileges of Performing Normative Gender." In *Gender Outlaws: The Next Generation*. Berkeley, CA: Seal Press, 2010.
- Thompson, James. "Chapter Three: Doubtful Principles in Arts in Prisons." In *Teaching the Arts Behind Bars*, edited by Rachel Marie-Crane Williams, 40-61. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2003.
- Vibert, Elizabeth. "Real Men Hunt Buffalo: Masculinity, Race and Class in the British Fur Traders Narratives." *Gender and History* 8, no. 1 (1996): 4-21.
- Waldram, James B. "Chapter Twelve: Some Limits to Anthropology in the Native Canadian Context." In *Anthropology, Public Policy and Native Peoples in Canada*, edited by Noel Dyck and James B. Waldram. Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1993.
- Waldram, James. *The Way of the Pipe: Aboriginal Spirituality and Symbolic Healing in Canadian Prisons*. Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1997.
- Ward, Shakoor A. "Career and Technical Education in United States Prisons: What Have We Learned?" *The Journal of Correctional Education* 60, no. 3 (2009): 191-200.
- Warren, Zachary. "Bottled Up." *Creative Escape*. 2010.
- Weitzer, Ronald, and Charis E. Kubrin. "Misogyny in Rap Music: A Content Analysis of Prevalence and Meanings." In *Men's Lives*, edited by Michael Kimmel and Michael A. Messner, 490-508. Toronto: Pearson Education Inc., 2013.
- Williams, Rachel Marie-Crane. "Introduction." In *Teaching the Arts Behind Bars*, edited by Rachel Marie-Crane Williams, 3-13. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2003.
- Young, Robert. *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2001.