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It's (not) Just Time:

The Lasting Effects of Incarceration on Identity

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Abstract

This thesis explores the impact of incarceration on identity, examining how it is shaped by the experience of time. This is explored through a move between repetitive, linear institutional time and subjective, non-linear temporalities. Employing an autoethnographic approach that integrates personal narratives with the theories of Deleuze, Butler, and Foucault, this study demonstrates how prison extends beyond physical and temporal boundaries to reshape identities and life trajectories long after release. Through the concept of "temporal friction", a conceptualisation of Deleuze's three syntheses of time, the thesis explores how temporalities dynamically influence incarcerated people's sense of self. Temporal friction manifests through routine disruptions, enforced performativity, coping strategies, resistance, and power dynamics, which all contribute to reshaping identities. The study also highlights how the roles of grief, loss, guilt, and shame intensify the challenges of incarceration. The thesis proposes "temporal justice" as a framework to address and remedy the disproportionate temporal effects of criminal justice systems. By advocating for a radically reimagined approach to incarceration that considers the temporal penalties extending beyond the prison sentence, this discussion contributes to sociological, criminological, and criminal justice discourses. It challenges existing narratives and proposes a transformative approach that recognises the dynamic interplay between time, identity, and power.

Preface

This is not only my story but how I choose to tell it. This is how I must tell it.

What I do not know about the prison experience could fill many theses.

All I can tell you is what I do know.

What I know came from my lived experiences.

Like a pendulum swings between two extremes, I rock back and forth between feelings of despair and infuriation at this system we call justice. If the pendulum ever settles between these extremes, my respite is often interrupted by confusion and, at times, a sense of helplessness. Forcing the swing out of a binary back and forth, sitting askew to despair and infuriation, is a perplexing type of hope. Tainted with the poison of the incarceration experience, any graspable hope is muddied by recalled images of what prison does to a person and their loved ones…by what prison did to me. In a somewhat blurred haze of memory and emotion, this thesis represents my lunge toward that barely graspable hope. This thesis is my resistance against the system that tied me to this metaphoric pendulum.

I Choose Hope

It makes no sense to me that one person can send another away for a measured period of time (a prison sentence). It makes even less sense to me that a legal system demands this action or that society expects this response to whatever that person has done (offending). My anger toward the New Zealand[1] criminal justice system is fuelled by stories of people dehumanised by a process that claims to be protecting others from them. My despair is brought on by stories of families ripped apart by structures that strip aspects of identity from people and their loved ones through the acts of control and

[1] Not specifying Aotearoa is a distinct choice to reflect the colonial history and ongoing neocolonial form of the current justice system.

violence that form a prison system. It breaks my heart that we, as a society, condone and even demand people be ripped away from their families, their lives, and who they are—often for minor and victimless crimes like a bit of pot (cannabis) or driving while disqualified. It all just does not make sense to me. I have read different perspectives, observed in court, and read sentencing reports, and this barbaric ritual still does not make sense to me. I have seen it from both sides. I have been an offender and a victim, and it still does not make sense to me.

Prison can be as challenging for those on the outside as it is for the incarcerated person. I shiver when I think of the pain my family went through while I was incarcerated, and I shed a tear when I think of children sitting at home, struggling to grasp why a parent has been taken away from them. I feel sick to my stomach thinking about relationships torn apart by the system, lives interrupted by callous expressions of control over another's life, and the expendability of life measurable by the sentences handed down by those who have the task of responding to offending (judges). Adults can, at least, possibly, conjure up some understanding of why they have essentially been made single parents by the system, yet explaining to their children why their other parent has gone away is a heart-wrenching conversation that should not be forced upon anyone. This pain can be exacerbated in situations when an only parent is lost to the system. Why a young child must lay their head at night without a hug, a kiss or a bedtime story from a loving father or a doting mother because the system deemed that parent unworthy of inclusion in society is beyond my ability to comprehend. Why families must carry on with their lives with someone missing from special occasions and daily interactions defies my comprehension.

I understand and can accept that society must be protected from those who commit the most heinous crimes. I am not naive; I do not view the problems incarceration causes with rose-tinted glasses, nor do I unquestioningly spout my views using virtue-signalling rhetoric better suited for a social media rant. I know that society needs to be protected from us at our worst. I am not convinced that prison is how we must do that, but I accept that something must

happen in the name of protection. Those are not the people for whom my heart breaks. I rage and despair for those in prison for victimless crimes, for those incarcerated for wrongdoing and mistakes that could have been addressed and resolved in other ways without resorting to tearing a person away from their loved ones and their lives.

Children should not be forced to travel some of their formative years without parents by their side because some judge decided it to be. Relationships should not be torn apart, nor should people be dragged from careers, opportunities and what they relish most. Our response to offending is wrong, and statements such as “do the crime, do the time” are merely rhetoric used to justify a system that destroys lives. These claims are solidified by ignorance and a lack of understanding of the long-term impact of imprisonment on not only the incarcerated person but also their families and wider society. Prison is never just the time-measured sentence imposed by the courts, and “doing time” as punishment for committing a crime is rarely a proportionate response.

I carry with me an anger that, at times, has been confronting to bear, and because of it, I have suffered. I feel anger toward a system that does not make sense. I feel anger and regret toward my own mistakes for which I have paid a price and still carry debts. If it is true that you reap what you sow, then I am still dealing with crops from the seeds I planted over a decade ago. I wrestle with self-forgiveness in an almost violent spar as much as I struggle to forgive others, and all these feelings must be directed somewhere before they grind away at me and leave my spirit beyond repair or void of any poison-immune hope. In despair, I recognise that people with more strength than I have, people with more intelligence, patience, and resources than I have, have all tried to change the system, tried and failed. The destructive, non-sensical arrangement of experience that we call a justice system in this country remains, and I cannot fix it. I wish I could. Nonetheless, despite that anger and despair always being there and appearing throughout this thesis, I choose to grab hold of that metaphoric pendulum and force it out of its binary swing. I choose to grasp the hope that sits askew to the extremes, wash off the poison of incarceration, and lean heavily into a form of hope that will keep me pushing

forward. I choose to use my experiences in a possibly starry-eyed attempt to change perspectives of the incarceration experience. I bring my story into this academic performance to beg anyone who reads it to see that a sentence of imprisonment does not make sense, nor does it ever truly end. I hope I can do that. This is why I must choose hope over anger and despair.

This story is about my never-ending experience of incarceration. It is about how a prison sentence cannot be fully understood through an over-reliance on common and measurable concepts of time and space. The narrative method I employ in this thesis allows me to address the problem to which this thesis speaks: the predominant reliance on conventional concepts of time and space inadequately accounts for the profound, enduring effects of incarceration on identity.

In the social sciences, narrative as a research methodology focuses on understanding lived experiences and personal narratives to generate knowledge about a social phenomenon. Lived experiences are influenced by the social, cultural, and historical contexts within which they sit and are thus multifaceted and complex. People construct and communicate their experiences and aspects of their lives and identities through narrative forms. Autoethnography centres on the researcher's narrative to gain insights into an aspect of society or culture. This is an appropriate and powerful approach for exploring and understanding lived experiences because it incorporates the subjective and contextual nature of the experiences studied in the research process. A narrative-based methodology is suitable for exploring the complexity of a person’s experiences because it provides a means through which meanings and insights embedded within that experience can be uncovered. Specifically, to contend with problems tied to the incarceration experience, a narrative approach is best suited as my lived experiences exist as the primary data source. I was incarcerated and, in ways I will describe in the following pages, I will always be even though I have long left the prison’s physical confines.

This is not only my story but how I choose to tell it. This is how I must tell it.

Acknowledgements

I naively once asked a recent PhD graduate, “What do you do for three years!?” because I could not comprehend how it took that long. They just laughed, and I now understand why.

I compare the PhD marathon to the journey of life; both are a metaphorical river flowing with water that, without warning, can kick up long-forgotten or never-before-sighted sediments from its bed. The resulting waves demand to be surfed and leave remnants of insight and consequence even after subsiding. My PhD slog has kicked up enough sediment for a lifetime, and I could not have surfed the waves without the support of some special people I feel blessed and grateful to have in my life. It is challenging to thank all who deserve a nod. The impact of some is so glaringly significant that their names appear almost automatically. Other contributions are barely recognisable or so fleeting that I may not yet understand their impact. The following is my attempt to acknowledge those who helped me surf these waves.

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Dedication

To James. You will always be in my heart and memories. You were the joy of my life, and I will continue to miss you every day for as long as I live. Thank you for coming into my life and for staying as long as you could.

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Chapter One

1. This How I Must Tell It: Introduction & Setting the Scene

I have realised throughout this PhD process that a set of objects—fantasy, coping, sexuality, and resistance—has helped form the temporalities by which I experienced imprisonment and now reflect upon that experience. In telling my story, these objects meet at an intersection of time, identity, and power and assemble in what Deleuze refers to as a synthetic memory, one of three syntheses of time (see Williams, 2011, and Chapter Two). This synthesis outstrips the normative conception and expectation of time and space by which a period of incarceration is commonly described and understood in public discourse, and through which public policy on imprisonment is developed. I will make much of this difference in the development of insights into the understanding of an experience of incarceration; specifically, into how the experience does not end at the completion of a court-imposed sentence length. A sentence of imprisonment never truly ends.

An incarceration experience is not confined to the physical boundaries of the space nor just the time spent according to the sentence. An experience of prison also evokes resistance to both the arrangement of the experience by those in administrative power and the demands on how an incarcerated person must respond to aspects of this arrangement. These demands take the form of adherence to expected behaviours and societal norms. This gives rise to the research design used in this thesis, specifically the autoethnographic approach. My work inserts temporalities of lived experiences to disrupt the over-reliance on the use of common interpretations of time and space to understand incarceration. As a form of resistance (including survival, coping, and friction), temporalities are essential in understanding the incarceration experience beyond the conventional measurements of time and space and for understanding incarceration's long-term impact on identity.

1.1 It’s just time, bro

‘It’s just time, bro.”

As clear as the computer sitting in front of me as I type this, I can picture John’s face, our surroundings, and the comfort I immediately felt from his words.

“It’s just time, bro.”

I nodded.

“That’s all they can take from you. They have to let you out one day. It’s just time, bro.”

It was day two of my prison sentence. I was in Waikeria Prison, Waikato, Aotearoa New Zealand. Sitting outside in the December sun two days before Christmas, I watched my fellow incarcerated pace the old, cracked basketball court (with no basketball in sight). Worn down by the thousands of feet that had strolled it over the years and as fractured as the lives of those who crossed it, that old court was used for daily attempts at some resemblance of exercise or as a distraction from the mundane, repetitive, and routine slog that is prison life. I knew John casually, from outside of prison walls, and was thankful the day I arrived in my unit—the place that would be my home for possibly the next 25 months—and saw his face. We immediately struck up a friendship, and he appeared to have decided, perhaps subconsciously, to mentor my early days of incarceration. I was not new to prison. I had spent three months on remand. I was, however, new to being sentenced. ‘Remand’ and ‘sentenced’ are not just labels for different units within a prison but two different worlds. I was effectively starting again. Any status or reputation I had in the remand unit had been rendered irrelevant by my change of location. Any credibility or favours I had collected were wiped. The friends I had made were either already released, still in remand waiting for their days in court or now in different units.

A new group now surrounded me, including strangers that would soon become friends, only to return to stranger status once beyond the confines of the prison gates, if not before. I was surrounded by fellow incarcerated, bonded if only by one thing in common: a combustible environment where yesterday's strangers become today's friends and just as quickly tomorrow's enemies. I observed status changes triggered by what seems so trivial on the outside yet appears to take on heightened importance in a prison unit, from owning a pair of well-worn shoes to an extra flavourless and overcooked potato on a dinner plate. Getting used to this new way of living, my new world, left me dumbfounded and searching for clues to assist my contextualisation of this environment that was now my home. I was immensely relieved that fate, destiny, Karma, or merely plain old luck had placed me in the same unit as John. Sitting outside under a December sun that was using all its heat to push through the smog of prison and warm up our bodies, battling to acclimate myself to my surroundings, I was thankful for John's presence.

"It's just time, bro".

Being sentenced is different from being on remand in other ways. When I was on remand, I felt a strong feeling of hope that few will ever experience, and fewer still will grapple to understand. A feeling of hope that it is all a dream, an illusion even. A feeling of hope that I would receive the magical sentence that many on remand crave: 'time served' (when the time already spent in prison equals the imposed sentence). A feeling of hope that only comes with not yet being sentenced. A feeling of hope that I would soon be free and convinced that if I closed my eyes tight enough and hoped with pure intention, I would be home soon. A glimmer of possibility in the thought, "I want to go home now", may even be possible. Before my sentence was handed down, all of that was possible.

It was not a dream; I did not get time served. I was sentenced to 28 months and had to find new hope.

“They have to let you out one day.”

I believe John knew I was struggling; this was not his first lag (sentence). He had seen it all before. I will never know his motivation for taking me under his wing, and I do not even know with certainty if that is what he did. Nevertheless, I see that moment so clearly. I hear that combination of words even clearer.

“It’s just time, bro.”

I nodded.

“That’s all they can take from you. They have to let you out one day. It’s just time, bro.”

John was both right and wrong at that moment. Prison is both just time and not. He was right that they had to let me out one day because I had a sentence end date. Even if I failed at every parole attempt offered to me, they had to let me out one day. It was the same for John and most of those I would meet during my taxpayer-funded time away from the society I apparently presented risk toward. He was even, using common and conventional measures of time, right that it was just time. If I consider John’s statement literally, as he perhaps intended it, and view time as merely the seconds passing by on a clock then, yes, a claim could be made that a prison sentence is just time. They had to let me out one day, and they did. However, he was also wrong. In the way I now understand prison, I now know that it is not just time. A prison sentence and the aftershocks and scars of incarceration are not just time. A sociological imagination and, more simply, my fury with what we dare to call a ‘justice’ system in this country will not allow me to take John’s words literally. A prison sentence is not just harm-inducing, nor is it just a restriction on freedom for a court-imposed measurement of time; it is almost always a disproportionate response and never truly ends. In that sense, prison is not just time.

1.2 Time is (not) on my Side

The control of the experience and perception of time for incarcerated people has evolved into a discursive practice because of the way time within the context of prison sentences has been manipulated into an aspect of broader discourses surrounding punishment and incarceration. This evolution has occurred through the implementation of temporal frameworks within prisons that exert control over incarcerated people and how they experience imprisonment. The control of time through the court-imposed prison sentence serves as a mechanism through which power is exercised and reinforced. Understood and explained further in this thesis (see Chapters Five through Eight), this understanding of time is important because of how it plays out at the intersection of time, identity, and power, which is evident in my analysis. Specifically, I argue that the control of the experience of time within prisons is profoundly influential in the long-term effects that incarceration has on identity.

Discursive practices refer to the ways in which language, power, and knowledge interact to shape and construct social realities. Societies construct and build narratives around and interact with time through discourse. These discourses shape how people and groups perceive and measure their temporal experiences (Thompson, 1993). Experiences of time are socially constructed (Porter & Stockdale, 2017; Pulk, 2022), displacing the given dimensions of time that, for example, mark the physical body as it ages (Kordela, 2006). The discursive formulation of time is evident in various facets of society. Specifically in relation to the discussion in this thesis, discursive practices of time are evident in the way in which we trace our pasts, presents and futures to categorise our temporal experiences (Ross, 2012). This linear discourse of time perpetuates these categories and influences how we relate to, engage with, and measure time. Different cultures have unique discourses that shape social norms and practices. However, in Western societies we most commonly view time in a linear progression, in contrast to various Indigenous cultures who understand time in a more cyclical existence (see Ingold, 1993). The standardisation of the linear progression of time is evident in the use of

the Gregorian calendar and UTC (coordinated universal time), both of which shape our experience of time. Through these practices, interactions between people and groups are coordinated globally (Zerubavel, 1982) and allow for the commodification of time in modern-day capitalist societies. Moreover, these universal measurements of time allow societies to ‘measure’ punishment in a time-related form through court-imposed sentences. I explore this linear perspective of time further in the following chapter.

Incarceration exemplifies time as a discursive practice, where the governance of the experience and measurement of time become tools of institutional power, control, and discipline. A Foucauldian analysis of institutions of discipline illustrates how time is regimented to control the daily lives of the incarcerated (Foucault, 1977). Daily lives are scheduled, often meticulously, from unlock times to meals, work, and recreation. This scheduling underscores discourses specifically aimed at punishment and, supposedly, reform. However, the form with which the discourse of time appears in the context of incarceration has changed. Historically, prison sentences were unfixed, reflecting a more fluid relationship with time (Ignatieff, 1978). In contrast, a shift toward fixed prison sentences occurred from the late 20th and into the early 21st centuries, representing a more rigid discourse of time within which punishment is measured in fixed temporal units (the sentence length) (Garland, 2001). This shift has also given rise to the ‘countdown to release’, a gaze to the future that can generate hope and anxiety within prisoners and further impact their experience of time during and post-incarceration (Gottschalk, 2006; Western, 2018). The shift from generally unfixed to fixed sentences reflects broader societal discourses on justice and the criminal justice system's role. The transition to determinate sentencing can be understood through Foucault's disciplinary power, which seeks to regulate behaviour through mechanisms of control (see Chapter Six for further discussion). This approach to penal policy not only delineates a predictable timeline but also reshapes the identities of those incarcerated by imposing a temporality that institutional administrators of power structure. Moreover, recent prison reform conversations have challenged traditional discourses of

time in prison and instead advocate for approaches that recognise the availability of rehabilitative and educational resources (Burke et al., 2018). There is a recognition of non-linear temporality in advocating for rehabilitative approaches, in that prison time is not merely tracked by the calendar but includes opportunities for transformation and growth. It is evident via the shift in penal policies that the discursive construction of incarceration time is linked with broader social discourses, including moral and political discourses. This includes developing and disseminating legal frameworks, creating institutional policies and practices, and, specific to my discussion in this thesis, the cultural narratives and societal expectations surrounding punishment and incarceration.

Understanding time control in prisons as a discursive practice highlights that the way time plays out in a prison system is not neutral; it is a phenomenon constructed by and linked to the asymmetrical power dynamics that validate and authenticate the ideology and institution of incarceration. Discourses around punishment and the purposes of a justice system normalise the control of the experience of time during incarceration and perpetuate these practices and their justification. These practices and the control of time serve multiple purposes, including punishment and the enforcement of authority. The control of time as a punishment is first shaped through the fixed time-measured sentence, which is a temporal measurement intended to align with the severity of the crime to which the sentence relates. However, the experience of time for those incarcerated is controlled beyond the sentence itself through routine and schedule (Goffman, 1961) and the resulting behavioural expectations (Foucault, 1977). I return to this discussion in Chapters Five and Six to offer a deeper understanding of these ideas, in Chapter Seven where I explore them in relation to my experiences, and in Chapter Eight where I examine the intersection between time, identity, and power.

During incarceration, temporal restrictions and interruptions regulate, discipline, and reinforce both the implied and explicit authority and control of the prison and those managing the institution (Flaherty & Carceral, 2022).

Daily routines and behavioural expectations are designed to ingrain a sense of discipline. The arranging of the aforementioned aspects, including meals and work responsibilities, is done with elements of control and expectation, reducing the likelihood of impulse or autonomy. However, the rigidity of daily prison routine serves as a form of punishment that exceeds the time-measured sentence and that demands conformity. For some incarcerated people, and this was certainly my experience, the prison-imposed routine is in stark contrast to any schedule that was followed on the outside and with personal preference (Garner, 2020). This contrast can add additional layers to that which the incarcerated must respond to and to the arrangement of experiences of time to which they must conform. Through the externally imposed framework of punishment and control that exists in prisons, I argue that imprisonment can reshape the temporal subjectivity of a person, affecting their experience and perception of time well beyond the completion of their court-imposed sentence. Specifically, as I explore in this thesis, temporal subjectivity is the site at which the long-term impact of prison structures and practices on identity is sustained. I explore this further through discussions of the administrative control of the experience of time while incarcerated (see Chapter Two) and the consequences of imposed expectations on behaviours (see Chapters Five, Six, and Seven). I bring these discussions together in chapters Seven and Eight.

1.3 Who am I to tell you?

Incarceration changed me as much as I changed myself in response to the experience. I have no doubt that some change was forced upon me. Yet, I now understand that the adjustments to my behaviour and the performances I made in response to the pressures and expectations of incarceration have significantly impacted who I am today and how I interact with the roles I perform. Roles are stripped and changed for those incarcerated (Goffman, 1961). The stripping of roles can be literal in that they cannot be performed while inside, such as the role of an active member of a sports team or an employment position. Other roles are changed, such as where the

performance is affected by separation, including the role of a parent. A parent does not stop being a parent when incarcerated, yet they cannot perform regular parenting duties while inside. For me, the roles of a family member were interrupted, as was the career I had been establishing. Most significantly, though, my role as a gay man changed and it was this that has had a long-term impact on my sense of self. The part of my prison experience that never truly ended relates to my sexuality and the ‘proud gay man’ aspect of my identity before prison.

Upon arriving in prison, I had to decide whether I would be open about my sexuality. I had been coming out of the closet for 12 years at that stage. I started coming out as gay when I was 17. I say that I “started” coming out then because it never ends. The heteronormative privilege in our society forces the non-straights of us to come out repeatedly (see Chapter Six for a deeper discussion of heteronormativity). If someone’s sexuality differs from ‘straight’, then they must come out repeatedly, often confronted with assumptions about sexual identity that must be corrected if they are to be seen (Halkitis, 2019; Van der Toorn et al., 2020). When I first started coming out, I told people fast. I directed conversations to a topic where I could mention my sexuality. I even told people who I knew would tell others just to get assistance in the haste of my coming out. I wanted to come out fast. I was ready. I was quickly becoming a proud gay man.

The following year, I met the love of my life, James.

When I first met James, he was still in high school and was as ready to come out as I was (I was a year older). He, too, was quickly becoming a proud gay man. I convinced him to come out slowly because of the harshness and cruelty of teenagers (this occurred in the early 2000s). He took my advice, but a negative reaction from his father slowed him down further. I was still becoming a proud gay man but decreased my outward gayness to support James. Expectations from the heteronormative society we were living in and reactions

from personal relationships significantly impacted our relationship in those early months because we were performing roles that were expected of us, specifically gender roles. James slowly regained his confidence, especially when he felt safest or furthest from those who would judge or demand of him. Our relationship progressed, fuelled by his growing mettle and supported by my patience with his journey, and public displays of affection followed. James was becoming a proud gay man, and I was proud to be his.

We can remember some moments in our lives with crisp clarity, regardless of how much calendar or clock-measured time passes. Some moments sit in our memory banks and can be recalled with vivid clarity at any time (see Phelps, 2012; Tyng et al., 2017 for discussions on the impact of emotion on memory). One of those moments for me is sitting with James on the grass in the Pukekawa Auckland Domain after a visit to the Tāmaki Paenga Hira Auckland Museum. I can recall his words; I can recall my feelings. I can recall how his body heat blended with mine to ensure we would not feel any winter attempts to chill us. A warmth throughout my entire body, even though only part of mine was touching his, with the right side of his back leaning across the left side of my chest and my right arm holding us up in that position. I can even recall that my arm ached the next day as a consequence of pretending I had the strength to hold us both in that position for as long as we sat there. I recall feeling genuinely carefree and blissfully at peace. It was a reasonably warm day for the middle of June, the first winter month in Aotearoa New Zealand, comfortable enough to sit outside on the grass, smell the trees, and just be alive, to just be together. The grass still held some of the morning's dew yet was not wet enough to seep through our jeans, so we sat there comfortably. Relaxing there on that grass with James shrouded in an invincible bliss generatable only by young love, listening to his corny attempts at romanticism in between discussions of our future as if we had it all sorted and could manifest our dreams into existence. It felt like we were the only two people in the world.

Merely two hours before we sat on that grass, we had engaged in our first 'PDA' ('Public Display of Affection'), an innocent yet powerfully symbolic holding of hands in front of a Tongan display inside the museum. For a same-sex couple on the verge of adulthood in 2001, this was significant to both of us. I had been patient leading to this moment as, due to the aforementioned reaction from his father and the expectations of wider society, James had been unsure of how 'gay' he was prepared to be in public. This brief holding of hands shifted our relationship to a new level of seriousness, leading to the discussions of our fancied and assumed future later that day while sitting on that grass. We sat there as two proud young gay men envisaging a future filled with togetherness, careers, adventure, and love. We made many memories, but there was only one day in that domain. Surrounded by others in a public park, but the only two people in the world. Even just for that one brief moment.

1.4 I Should've Made You Stay

Three months after that day in the Auckland Domain, James was dead. I lost the love of my life and that future we had been planning in such vivid detail. In an instant, my life morphed into the lyrics of a country music song full of grief, heartache, and anger. I went from a happy young man to a bitter and angry person who demanded penance because of what was taken from me. I had been screwed, and I was entitled to something. I went through life with a giant metaphorical chip on my shoulder, angry at everything. My daily life took on a cloud of mist that blocked my ability to see any future clearly or even function without the heavy, all-encompassing burden of grief. The only thing that could regularly break that mist was the intense burning sensation caused by the rage I felt and that regularly rushed through my body. My anger and bitterness became a kind of fuel that both kept me going but also poisoned everything I touched.

Grief features often in this thesis, particularly the complicated or unresolved kind. I could have chosen a research topic related more to the impact of grief

and loss. Yet, I know, undoubtedly, that grief had just as much impact on my incarceration experience as did those with administrative power over my daily prison schedule. My unresolved grief for James significantly impacted the stories drawn on in this work, even those within which he does not feature. He is, simply, always there. Accordingly, an understanding of grief, even an overview of the concept from a sociological perspective, adds a layer of understanding to the story being told on these pages and to an understanding of the experience of time. No one will ever convince me that time heals all wounds, and I certainly do not accept that grief happens in stages. It changes as the years pass us by, but we are never completely free from the clutches of loss, and those grips can tighten on us at any moment, jolting us back to the absence of our lost loved ones when we least expect it, in my experience at least. This complex phenomenon demands insight because, despite the universality of loss, the experience of grief is deeply embedded in the social context.

Early studies of grief were predominately psychological, particularly Freud (1917), who described grief as a process of detachment. Bowldy & Parkes (Parkes, 1970) expanded on Freud's work and identified four stages of grief (Numbing, Yearning and Searching, Disorganisation, and Reorganisation). Kubler-Ross (1969, see also Kubler-Ross & Kessler, 2005) later expanded the grief process to the five stages most cited today (Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, Acceptance). However, these predominately psychological theories focus on the intrapsychic experience and can overlook the societal context of grief. A sociological perspective views grief as both a socially constructed experience and a personal emotional process. This perspective, and certainly my experience of grief, recognises the influence of rituals (Durkheim 1912), norms and shared beliefs (Rosenblatt, 2008), and societal expectations on how someone grieves for any loss. Durkheim (1912) recognised the societal aspects of grief and suggested that rituals of mourning worked to re-establish social equilibriums after the disruption that death causes. Rituals of mourning are often influenced by cultural meaning, thus providing a space to navigate loss and reconnect with communities and

established social norms. Klass, Silverman and Nickman (1996) suggest that people often maintain inner relationships with those they have lost, a practice heavily influenced by cultural context, especially in non-Western societies. For me, an inner relationship emerged in the form of fantasies of a world within which James never left. I return to this discussion in Chapters Six and Seven, specifically through a discussion of Deleuze's third synthesis of time, how this had an impact on my sexuality, and the role of fantasy in the intersection of time, identity, and power.

Disenfranchised grief (grief that is socially unsupported or recognised—see Doka, 1999) is especially relevant in this story. As I describe later in this chapter, lying about my sexuality in prison had the consequence of lying about James' gender and subsequently not being able to grieve in a genuine way even in situations where that was demanded of me, such as during a course where being seen to be honest was important to pass the course and thus impacted parole eligibility. Disenfranchised grief occurs in various situations, including non-normative loss or stigmatised death. A lack of recognition of death or space to have the loss validated can exacerbate the experience, and this highlights the significance of social sanction in grief. Additionally, the role of the person grieving can further influence their grief, especially in situations where the role of that person is altered by the death (see Stroebe & Schut, 1998; Volkan, 2018). Furthermore, intersectionality is recognised in sociological understandings of grief, as constructs of and norms surrounding gender, ethnicity, class, and sexuality influence the societal responses to grief (see Harris et al., 2021).

Different aspects of loss impact the grieving process and come with various social norms, particularly whether the loss is anticipated or sudden, which, with additional relevance to this thesis, adds another layer to the complex nature of how someone experience time. My loss of James was unexpected; it was sudden and without warning, brought on by a medical event. One morning, we were happily exchanging text messages with good wishes for the day (he had an exam), and by the afternoon, I was receiving panicked phone calls from his

sister. Just like that, he was gone from our lives. The suddenness of this loss has undoubtedly shaped my years since, as has my continued hope for a better past and my responses to social norms, particularly those related to an acceptable time to grieve. A loss that we can see coming allows the opportunity for anticipatory grief, where a person begins the process of grief before the death occurs (Patinadan et al., 2022). This period of pre-death bereavement provides space to come to terms with the impending loss, to share final conversations, to say goodbyes, and to come to some sort of peace (see Rando, 1988). The societal norms surrounding an anticipated loss differ from sudden loss, specifically around community support and any acknowledgement of the loss (Testoni et al., 2020).

A sudden loss, such as from an accident or medical emergency, often intensifies the grief process with feelings of shock and even guilt (Kristensen et al., 2012). The sudden disappearance of a lost loved one robs the grieved of opportunities to finish conversations, to say goodbyes, or for any type of preparation to be made. The complexity of a sudden loss aggravates the process and can sometimes manifest into unresolved, complicated, or prolonged grief disorder (see Prigerson et al., 2009). Characterised by periods of longing and significant life disruption, periods of unresolved grief often exceed social norms of what it means to grieve. Diverse experiences and different types of loss highlight the importance of nuanced and personalised approaches to understanding grief as the context of the loss influences the grief process (Dhanaraj & Kohlrieser, 2020).

I have been told that James and I were too young for the loss to be so significant, and I have been told I should be over it by now (the first of these utterances came from a family member less than six months after the loss). I have also heard too many opinions about what James would think or would have said about my choices and how I live my life. The social norms around grief have impacted my grieving process disproportionately and, thus, my experience of time. Evidence of the impact that the expectations of others and of associated role performances have had on me is scattered throughout this

thesis. Like grief, James appears at seemingly random stages throughout the following pages. He appears in stories where I both do and do not understand the relevance of his appearance. He appears when I crisply explain the relevance and can link it to temporalities, time, and even power. At other times, he appears because it just feels right to mention him. Unquestionably, these appearances are influenced by the acts and behaviours that have constituted my performance of grief over the years. Social norms and societal expectations have impacted my relationship with loss disproportionately. This has shaped and reshaped my identity just as much as my incarceration experience. I explore the impact of these experiences and my subsequent responses in the following section and again in Chapters Six and Seven.

Regardless of the bitterness and anger I carried on my shoulders after James passed, I was still a proud gay man. I still came out at every opportunity. I facilitated gay youth groups and came out loud and proud in my macho-infested sports community. If anyone had a problem with my sexuality, my chest would puff out, and I would call them out. I was a proud gay man, yet an angry and grieving one searching for some form of penance for the loss I had experienced. It has never been clear to me from whom I expected this penance, yet these feelings generated a sense of entitlement in me. The sense of entitlement I had because 'the world' took James from me lasted many years, and I made several poor decisions. Those decisions had consequences, and nine years after James passed, I landed myself in prison.

1.5 Slammed in the Slammer

My incarceration occurred during one measured period (2011-2012). My interpretation and understanding of my lived experience of incarceration occurred both during that measured time and in other measurable periods since my release. The lenses through which I view my incarceration and related lived experiences are influenced by the period within which I view them as well as experiences between each measured period. Moreover, when I

interpret my experiences through specific theories, my interpretation is influenced by the period within which others developed and interpreted those theories. This is important because the prison I found myself situated was similarly bound by the societal constructs and expectations of that period, as were the theories I use to understand my experiences. Furthermore, my interpretations and understandings of my experiences also occur with societal constructs of the time within which they sit. The significance of this is that I cannot, and do not, claim to understand anyone else's experience of incarceration or the experience of prison in any other period of measured time. I can use my experiences and draw on theories to make, what I believe to be, a solid argument. However, I cannot speak for others. Similar to how I cannot claim to understand how it is to come out as gay for the first time in any period other than the one in which my coming out experiences sit, my lived experiences can only be understood from within the contexts in which they occurred and through the lenses that this thesis operationalises. The interpretation and memory of these experiences have occurred in different measured periods of time. The different measured times, as represented by dates on a calendar, that appear in this thesis are relevant because in each of those periods, different social contexts and power dynamics exist, both in wider society and specific to the running of prisons.

The prison as an institution may once have been considered 'total' as a separation from wider society (I discuss the history of prisons further in Chapter Four). This is no longer accurate, and the impact of a period of incarceration has altered along with the shift in the position of the prison. Perhaps best understood in the context of a societal shift from Foucault's Disciplinary Societies to Deleuze's (1982) Contemporary Societies of Control, the prison is no longer a 'total institution'.

Even though the prison, as a series of buildings surrounded by gates and fences, remains identifiable as separate from the rest of society, the degree of separation is not total as prisons have a relatively stable and ongoing network of relationships and transactions with host communities and wider society

(Farrington, 1992). These relationships are essential for the survival of the prison as it is highly improbable that any institution could produce everything it needs to function in a self-sufficient way. Prisons can be operationally interdependent (Farrington, 1992), even when this is not visible, both through what is needed to meet daily needs and through relationships with other state institutions such as the police and court systems —the authorities in a justice system who decide the population of a prison (Alexander, 2011; Simon, 2020). However, the degree of interdependence a specific prison has varies practically in terms of what can be produced internally and historically, as influenced by approaches towards crime and punishment during any given period. Approaches to crime, or political leanings, are influenced by operational elements of the host society. As societies continue to shift from a disciplinary form, within which there are clear parameters around each stage of life, to societies of control where people move through boundaryless spaces, the prison responds (Deleuze, 1992).

Societies no longer operate in a form where people move from one space to another, recognised as compartmentalised life stages with clear beginnings and ends. In contemporary societies, people move through spaces without clear parameters. Accordingly, the prison is not as isolated from wider society as it may have been in the past. Increased relationships and connections between the prison and those ‘outside’ expand the prison’s operational possibilities.

Goffman defines a total institution as a place of both work and residence where many similarly situated people, cut off from the wider community for a considerable time, lead an enclosed and administered life (Goffman, 1961). Since the 1960s, when Goffman first wrote of this concept, gradual shifts have occurred in terms prison operations, the purpose of the prison, and the level of contact the incarcerated have with the outside. While some, including myself, argue that the prison has never been total (see Schliehe, 2016), it is less debatable that today’s prison has become ‘less total’ than when Goffman wrote. For an institution to be total, it requires those enclosed by its walls to be

closed off from those beyond the walls (Jones & Fowles, 2008). Today's prisons, including those in Aotearoa New Zealand, predominately do not fit this definition due to increased links with the world outside the fences and a reach beyond previously assumed boundaries (Allspach, 2010). Accordingly, today's prisons can no longer be considered 'total institutions' as per Goffman's definition (see Farrington, 1992; Engel, 2007; Jones & Fowles, 2008; Baer & Ravneberg, 2008; Moran et al., 2016).

Perceptions of what is meant by inside and outside prison include complexities that cannot be contained in previously accepted binary descriptions due to increasingly blurred lines between the two spaces that were previously considered more separated (Allspach, 2010). Examples of aspects of prison connecting the incarcerated to the 'outside' while still 'inside' include the deinstitutionalisation of prison health professions (Milly, 2003), prison theatre programmes run by volunteers from the community (Hazou, 2020), and limited access to the Internet which acts as both a freedom and a restriction of language when monitored (Hartman, 2000). These examples show that binary 'inside' and 'outside' descriptions no longer describe a relationship between an institution and the world outside of it due to various, often gradual, shifts throughout the carceral continuum—the practices of surveillance, control, and punishment that supersede the prison's physical boundaries (Baer & Ravneberg, 2008; see also Moran et al., 2016; Turner, 2016).

Further complicating the use of these terms and any attempt to separate the prison from wider society are the shifts in interactions between the incarcerated and community members. Visits home for those incarcerated (such as a weekend release) are an example of shifting barriers between the prison and community as the incarcerated person remains under the order of a prison sentence even while on the 'outside' and must return to the 'inside' once the approved visit period ends (Baumer et al., 2009; Moran & Keinanen, 2012). Additionally, programmes including 'release-to-work' have been established, at least in part, to encourage reintegration into society and deinstitutionalisation. These programmes increase the volume of potential

relationships for an incarcerated person, even though access to these is often circular and discriminatory. Tensions of access to programmes due to shifts from old institutions and practices toward the updated and reformed will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

Further shifts blurring the separation of ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ relate to the use of technology. The increased use of video technologies in court proceedings distorts the gap between the two spaces (referred to as the ‘justice matrix’ by Mackay, 2018), as a person charged with a crime can participate in live court proceedings, often in a location some distance from the prison in which they are held, without ever leaving the prison. In this context, the experience of the boundary, or lack of, between the inside and outside creates ambiguity about the prison's purpose and reach as an institution and its role in the justice process (Foster, 2017). Before the use of video conferencing technologies to manage court appearances, someone charged with a crime would interact in person with agents of multiple state institutions on the day of a court appearance. Having appearances conducted over video links and streamed into courtrooms reduces those exchanges, as the charged person interacts in-person only with prison staff and with those outside only over a screen. This example suggests that shifts in the institution's reach both tighten and open in response to societal shifts. An additional example of heightened technology is the increased use of electronic monitoring in the form of bail restrictions and as a sentence in itself (home detention as one example) (Jefferson, 2018).

Another shift that further blurs the lines between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ is the increase of transcarceral spaces, those spaces that sit alongside the formal institutions, such as halfway houses and in-residence drug rehabilitation programmes, and thus blur the lines between where inside ends and outside begins (Moran, 2013). Even referring to such a space as outside of a prison lays a claim on that space on behalf of that prison and assumes some link or relationship (Armstrong & Jefferson, 2017). This claim imposes post-incarceration effects on those formally incarcerated (Mitchelson, 2014). Often, these houses and programmes have strict rules and procedures that differ little from those experienced in prison, thus replicating incarceration and extending

the reach of the prison from which someone was supposedly released (Moran, 2013). Accordingly, while situated outside the prison institution, these transcarceral spaces are akin to incarceration for those recently released. Thus, transcarceral spaces blur the lines between inside and outside.

These blurred lines and the shifts in the role and reach of the prison have resulted in prisons moving from institutions defined by borders and stability to institutions experiencing and responding to constant change that prevents stable borders from forming, even when this change occurs slowly (Mincke, 2019; see also Massey, 2005). Before these shifts, institutional discipline held people in fixed positions that prepared them for the next fixed position, and so on. In a society of control, these fixed positions are a liability. Even the prisons with the highest levels of security must respond to this shift. Rhetoric by those responsible for the framing of crime and punishment policy has also shifted from punishment narratives to rhetoric of accountability and rehabilitation while also being positioned as part of wider societal objectives such as 'the war on drugs' and 'the war on terror' (Rhodes, 2009). Thus, the role of the prison in wider societal contexts is reformulated as one space through which the incarcerated move, not one in which they move 'in' to and 'out' of again. These ever-changing boundaries of the prison do not appear in fixed spaces, and the previously existing time limits of confinement have been lost. This fluidity in the spatial and temporal dimensions of the prison reflects what Richardson and Thieme (2020, p. 7) refer to as a transition from a 'limit-form' to a 'flow-form' prison experience. Stability has given way to constant change, and conventional definitions of the prison no longer accurately describe the institution (Mincke, 2017). Power relations have become more flexible (Vogelmann & Bernady, 2017), and while the control previously held by prisons still exists, it is now found distributed across various institutions and transcarceral spaces (Richardson & Thieme, 2020). These institutions and spaces blur together with less distinction than in the past (Wetzel, 2014), and the reach of confinement extends beyond where borders would have previously been found and beyond the traditional sentence end date.

Social control is always in a state of flux, yet because the prison is a primary form of enclosure in most societies, and thus a location of control, this state of flux demands an increased response from the prison. Although less focus is now on where the control occurs, that control still exists (Ben-Moshe, 2011). Accordingly, the prison's ability to maintain similar levels of control extends to practices such as the aforementioned electronic monitoring (Belur et al., 2020). The control maintained by these institutions and transcarceral spaces continues to function even when one source of control is disrupted (Guattari & Deleuze, 2020). This further extends the reach of the prison and the level of control held over those incarcerated even when the length of sentence imposed by the courts has passed. Different types of prisons and prison management methods have emerged in response to what Deleuze (1992, p.4) calls a 'crisis of enclosure' (the breakdown of traditional disciplinary institutions). Shifts in how the prison operates, its connections with wider society, and its reach beyond physical walls are all part of the evolution towards eventual expiry (Rhodes, 2009).

In emerging societies of control, the relationship between time and space and the inadequacy of these concepts to describe an incarceration experience become more complex. The reach of time and space has evolved beyond the sentence and physical boundaries and toward an expanded form of control where monitoring extends beyond the prison, blurring the lines between incarcerated and released. This shift raises questions about the nature of punishment and rehabilitation. Specifically, within a society where control is evident beyond physical confinement, the concepts of time and space must be redefined to describe the parts of the incarcerated experience they interrupt and distort. Time is no longer a measured period to be served as it becomes an ongoing state of being under monitoring. Space extends beyond the prison walls and encompasses the broader society where surveillance continues.

A question then emerges as to how these shifts impact the objectives of a criminal justice system, specifically those related to punishment, rehabilitation, and deterrence. If a justice system is to move to a form that is more humane

and effective, then I question if these wider-reaching forms of control are necessary, especially when they creep into every aspect of a person's life, particularly for those who are formerly incarcerated. These questions also form part of a debate on the role of prisons. Such a debate includes an analysis of the public's perception of the institution. Regardless of any questions pertaining to the effectiveness of incarceration, shifts often occur against the backdrop of societal expectations and public opinion. Thus, public perception influences penal reform and the framing of the role of the prison, even when the public has a lack of visibility into how the prison operates (Bartlett, 2009). This dynamic between public attitudes and shifting penal policy and prison operations complicates a redefining of the prison in modern society even further.

Relationships between the prison and those outside it are usually transactional matters controlled from inside the prison, rather than public-facing, and are often only seen when something goes awry. The public's common view of the prison is that it is total in that it removes certain people and groups from society (Cavadino & Dignan, 2006). Even amongst an awareness of the ineffectiveness of incarceration, the commonly held belief that the role of the prison is to separate groups fuels expectations of the prison as a total institution (Cullen et al., 2014). Often, the public sees the prison as the best of the available options, and the illusion of a total institution satisfies them, even when recognition of failures in the justice system exists (Farrington, 1992). Accordingly, an awareness of the relationships between the prison and communities comes to light only when something goes wrong, which often increases the desire for the prison to be more total and, thus, more secure for the general ('law-abiding') public (Farrington, 1992; Brown, 2023). The resulting punitive perspectives and demands have a detrimental impact on the push for reform in criminal justice policy and expanded rehabilitation over harsher punishment. However, regardless of public perception or knowledge, relationships between the prison and outside have increased in recent decades. The applicability of 'total institutions' as an appropriate label for

prisons has thus waned due to this increased interdependence, even when this interdependence occurs at different levels.

Regardless of the degree to which interdependence exists, it does exist, and the idea that a prison could be a total institution is impractical in modern-day justice systems. Farrington (1992) offers alternative labels for the prison, including ‘not-so-total’ and ‘somewhat-less-than total’. The ‘not-so-total’ label is used in this research, primarily because it allows for a recognition of further movement and flexibility in the reach and interdependent nature of the prison, and best describes the prison I experienced. ‘Somewhat-less’ implies a specific measurement or level must be reached before this label becomes applicable, whereas ‘not-so-total’ is less measurement-dependent and can be applied to a broader range of prisons.

Farrington (1992) defines a not-so-total institution as follows:

> “a “not-so-total” institution, enclosed within an identifiable-yet-permeable membrane of structures, mechanisms and policies, all of which maintain, at most, a selective and imperfect degree of separation between what exists inside of and what lies beyond prison walls.” (p. 7)

Since Farrington’s discussion of the not-so-total institution as a replacement for Goffman’s total institution, others have built on his critique to further explore the connection between a prison, its host community, and wider society (see Che, 2005; Engel 2007; Bonds 2006; Moran et al. 2012; Moran, 2013; Wacquant, 2011 as examples). Others have focussed more on the relationship between the incarcerated and wider society (see Peck & Theodore, 2008). A commonality in this work, specifically in carceral geography, is that lines between where the prison ends and society begins have become increasingly blurred, as discussed above. The carceral geography approach to prisons is that they are “fluid, geographically anchored sites of connections and relations

connected with wider societal processes through mobile and embodied practices" (Moran, 2015, p. 34). This is opposed to describing prisons as fixed entities encompassing something understood with fixed aspects taken for granted (Armstrong & Jefferson, 2017). Describing the prison using outdated terms and assumptions of fixed attributes traps researchers and society in a cycle of presuming that the prison has a fixed role and permanent state. The use of common interpretations of time and space to not only describe the role of the prison in society but also the experience of the prison reduces understanding of the prison experience and limits the possibilities of exploring incarceration beyond outdated assumed roles.

In the public discourses through which common-place assumptions about incarceration are reproduced, including the field of public policy, assumptions about time and space are fused. While the sentence is measured by time, that time is served in a physical space, the prison. The system, and indeed the public, expect certain parameters to be placed around that space. These parameters are both literal, the physical boundaries, and subjective, the practices that occur within the physical boundaries that control the experience of time. Accordingly, the prison space is an essential component of the time-measured sentence and the associated control of the experience of time. Without the physical prison, a sentence of imprisonment could not be handed down. While an account of an incarceration experience told through an over-reliance on time, the sentence, and the physical space can describe the experience, the dependence on common and literal definitions of these terms does not result in a complete understanding of the imprisonment experience. The use of these terms as common-sense concepts is not neutral and implies specific manifestations of time and space with particular expectations.

Temporalities distort the arrangement of the experience of time and space during incarceration and of an idea shaped by these concepts: that experiences of incarceration are linear. A consequence of the over-reliance on common concepts of time and space to describe a prison experience is a lack of understanding of the impact of prison on the development of self. Identity

formation is central to the experience of imprisonment. I argue that understanding the experience through only common and measurable concepts of time and space furthers the misunderstanding and the myth that prison is merely an imposed sentence in a confined space. A way to interrupt this over-reliance is not just through my story but by telling my story through the lens of temporalities. Temporalities interrupt this over-reliance in their disruption of the analytically limiting linear view of incarceration. My anger and despair at the system are fed by the misconception that a prison sentence ends upon release. The hope I choose to grasp onto is inspired by the belief that my story can interrupt this over-reliance on linear concepts of time.

Temporalities not only order behaviour but may support novel resistance to that ordering. This matters because the relationship between temporalities and resistance during and after incarceration impacts the process of identity formation. Temporalities are under-considered in the analysis of experiences of incarceration. Where time is the imposed sentence and space is the physical boundaries placed on the sentence, temporalities offer some autonomy by running askew to the operation of time and space in prison. By 'autonomy', I mean a capacity for incarcerated people to choose their responses to the situations and contexts they encounter in prison and to their own subjectivities (see Chapter Six for a deeper exploration of this). The kind of 'autonomous' temporality I thereby work with to understand the prison experience is that which manifests as forms of resistance and temporal friction (a concept I introduce in Chapter Five), and as coping strategies. In Chapters Five, Six and Seven, I draw on Deleuze’s (1968) theory of time, Butler’s (1990) performativity, Scott’s (1985) everyday resistance, and Rubin’s (1995) concept of friction to explore the long-term impact of my experience of incarceration on identity formation.

1.6 I Deserve an Oscar

While incarcerated, certain roles need to be performed daily. Good character must be portrayed to decision-makers for the gaining of parole or other opportunities (O'Hear, 2015), and other roles need to be performed to fit in as ‘one of the boys’ (Crewe, 2012). These roles can clash, and how someone chooses to respond to each interaction can be influential on their incarceration experience. I learnt quickly that my cellmate and fellow incarcerated did not care about my hopes, dreams, or past traumas. The only people who truly cared about who I was on the outside were those left on the outside. I had to be a different person in prison, whether I liked it or not. In prison, the voice of reason is muted at the gates, and common sense is not common. The nature of the prison environment means that certain ways of responding to situations, ways that might be common and the norm on the outside, are foreign or unadvisable while incarcerated. Roles and aspects of identity are threatened by incarceration, and a person must choose how they respond to that threat (Adams, 1992; Scott-Bottoms, 2024). The example of my sexuality is heavily drawn on in this work to further explore how responding to situations while incarcerated can have associated consequences.

Identifying as anything but ‘straight’ in prison is a risk (Robinson, 2011). Some have the choice to lie, and I had that choice. I fit the stereotype of ‘straight acting’—I could act as straight and keep my sexuality hidden from most. While prison is a hostile environment with little protection for the most vulnerable and not a safe space to be openly homosexual, it ultimately was my choice to keep this hidden. I had to decide quickly who I was going to be inside, and I believed that any equality or gay pride I had before prison could not factor into that decision. I decided to keep my sexuality to myself and, for the first time in 12 years, I pretended to be straight. I had probably seen too many movies or heard too many crude jokes about what happens in prison. But I felt that being straight was the safer option.

Even though, to that point, I had been a proud gay man, I had reached a stage in my coming out journey where I did not need others to recognise my sexuality as much as I had when I was younger. My need for others to see me or even validate that aspect of my identity had waned. At the time, pretending to be straight was not a huge drama. It was the consequences of that decision, consequences that have an impact on my identity still today, in which the significance of this story lies. When I found myself participating in a course required for my parole and discussing reasons for my offending, I needed to talk about James.

But I was straight in prison. How was I to do that?

I was told by facilitators of that course that participants could assume that the sessions are a safe space, and they frequently encouraged all to share. These courses are not safe spaces. Surrounded by dictionary definitions of the word macho and listening to patched gang members talk about violence and drugs, I never once felt safe in that room. Sitting next to a fellow convicted fraudster who had manipulation down to a fine art and games running all over the unit, including with me as a pawn, I never felt safe in that room. I even felt judged by facilitators based on their assumptions about how genuinely I was sharing (this was often commented on in session reports—the reports that would go to the parole board).

But I needed to talk about James. If I was even going to understand my offending for myself or meet the required and expected performance for those assessing me for good character and parole eligibility, I needed to talk about James.

So, I lied.

A core component of these courses is an exploration of reasons for people's offending. From day one, we were told of an expectation that we would be open, honest, and self-critical. When in that room, I was open about losing a partner. I was open about the impact of grief, entitlement, and feeling owed had on my decisions and behaviour. I answered questions, was brutally honest, and presented my awareness of my grief as insightful and with hope for a future free from the burden of loss. I was open, but my openness just was not about James. It was about Jay. It was about a 'she'. He became she in that room and James became Jay. Whoever that is.

Sitting in that room with an awareness that my every word was being analysed and by observing the words and behaviour of others, I chose my utterings carefully. I presented my grief as not a loss but as a reason for my offending. I criticised my behaviour in response to the loss of James/Jay and used that criticism to present myself to my assessors as someone who understood why he had offended. I did not realise it then, but this performance of grief threatened my relationship with and memory of James. He was no longer the love of my life; he became a tool for parole eligibility. In a sense, I had learnt to play the game too well. My lived experiences shifted from being my own to another mode of assessment in prison procedure. Personal experiences are no longer something intimate in those rooms; they become just another facet of a system that often does more harm than good. It seems to me that courses like that one are spaces where personal experiences become just another tool for judgement and suppression of potential.

However, —and this is one of the components of the story that has had the most significant and long-lasting impact on me and how I engage with my grief today—even though to others I was speaking of a heterosexual relationship with a female, Jay, I knew I was talking about a homosexual relationship with a male, James. Talking about a female partner is easier in a male prison, to the degree that I could talk about my 'fiancé,' not a partner with whom I would have had a commitment ceremony. The loss felt as if it fitted with social norms better than that of a gay relationship, and, in that sense, I could show my pain

more openly (see Schetky, 1998, for a discussion of the impact of unwritten codes in prison on mourning). Paradoxically, when my grief was being disenfranchised by the context I found myself within, it was possibly never more socially and culturally acceptable, even if I was the only one in that room who knew of the actual loss. In other contexts, and when participating in different communities and social situations, I have felt more need to justify the loss because of the period I have grieved and the social norms around an acceptable time to grieve.

I brought an unresolved grief with me into prison, unresolved because of the length of time I had grieved for James and because of the components of my grief I had yet to deal with. This was, at least partially, influenced by social norms around grieving and the discomfort people often display when confronted with the grief of others. The occasions when my outward displays of grief were not welcomed had a significant impact on this process for me and I often turned to fantasy and the hope for a better past to cope and as a means to express myself. As noted above, unresolved grief refers to grief that is prolonged, exceeds cultural or societal norms, inhabits daily functions, or does not follow the typical grief process (see Zisook & DeVaul, 1985; Field, 2006). Grief can take various forms, unresolved grief is an emotional state typically characterised by an inability to process or reconcile the loss of a loved one fully. Someone experiencing unresolved grief often engage in various coping mechanisms including fantasies of a world where the loss never happened to retain ties with the departed (Field, 2006). By creating intricate imaginary scenarios or participating in activities involving the presence of the lost loved one, people attempt to find solace and temporarily escape the harsh reality of their loss. As a coping mechanism, I found fantasy provided a respite from a situation where my grief felt disenfranchised and my ability to grieve in a way that felt authentic to me was hindered by the expectations of others.

Before, during, and after prison, for much of my 20s and a significant portion of my 30s I tried to rewrite my own story. Various states of ‘what might have been’ and ‘if only’ trapped me in a past. Much of this was subconscious and in

response to whatever situation I encountered. However, during many of these rewrites, I was conscious enough of what I was doing to control the fantasy and imagine a future that relied on a different past. Murkier because of unresolved grief, I imagined what might have been if James had not passed away. I imagined a life that could have been if I had made different decisions and did not land myself in prison. I imagined the future that I could never now have with such vividness that the fantasy was real to me. Drawing on that day in the Auckland Domain, I could feel shared body heat in those imaginings. I could taste and smell our surroundings, such as that soft winter dew and I could experience emotions as if the fantasy were reality. What felt real in those fantasies, however, could never be because they hinged on what never was. My dependency and delving into fantasy increased while incarcerated, specifically as strategies of coping. My plunge into these fantasies, often in the absence of my grief being accepted or acknowledged by others, helped me survive prison and did their job as coping strategies. However, along with the increase of fantasy, my unresolved grief intensified. I developed a fear that I would lose the parts of my story with James that did happen. Feeling like I was forced into a choice to hide my sexuality in prison made me, in hindsight, fearful that I would lose the parts of me that loved him and the part that recalls the bliss of a love not everyone gets to experience. I overcompensated because of that fear and, almost ironically, nearly lost what was real in a cloud of fantasy.

I have experienced too many occasions during which others tried to make me feel weak because of my grief when, in my opinion, grieving openly takes strength and is not a weakness. The only sustained period in the past 20 years that I have not felt a need to justify my grief was when I was, to the outsider, grieving for a loss more acceptable than that of a gay partner and during a time when that loss became more of a tool to achieve parole than a personal lived experience. Nevertheless, the lasting consequence of going back into the closet, lying about the gender of the love of my life, and leaning heavily into fantasy to cope is something I still confront today. I return to these discussions

in Chapters Six and Seven, although James and grief are never far from the surface throughout this entire thesis.

I got my parole. I was released 12 months into a 28-month sentence. I am convinced that how I chose to respond to certain situations and the ways I tried to influence how others saw me had a positive impact on this outcome (Goffman, 1961, would refer to this as 'impression management'). Yet it is the negative impact many of those choices had on my identity that I still feel today and, in some ways, is irreversible. The lasting impact of the way I chose to respond to certain situations while incarcerated is one reason why a sentence never ends and why prison is not just time.

In the years that followed prison, my relationship with my sexuality has been murky. I left prison no longer a proud gay man. I did not pick up where I left off, and in the years that followed, I used phrases like "I'm probably more asexual these days". I did so not because my sexuality had changed but because I was shamed and carried the heavy burden of guilt with me. I was searching for a more acceptable identity. I have never been asexual; I have always been gay. I am not interested in relationships, but I would certainly let Ricky Martin or Brad Pitt in for a whiskey or a cuppa tea if they appeared at my door and my celebrity crush on Johnny Castle (played by Patrick Swayze in Dirty Dancing) is as strong as it ever was, because I am still attracted to men, regardless of the shame my incarceration experience instilled in me.

I have carried that shame about my sexuality and a guilt about lying in general and about James specifically. But now, in my forties and over a decade since prison, I have accepted that the shame and guilt my prison experience instilled in me will always be there, but I have learned to reshape how they impact me. Prison tried to take part of my identity in the way various contexts, norms, and power structures do to many of us every day. But I am taking it back.

I now wear a pride ring. I have a pride tattoo. I am once again a proud gay man.

Well, most days.

I tell this story not to be heard because I have been heard. I feel incredibly blessed that I have been heard by at least someone with compassion and understanding at every stage of my journey. Even at times when only two people read drafts (my PhD supervisors), I have always felt heard. Writing this PhD is not about just telling my story. Writing this is my act of resistance against a system that arranges experiences and perceptions of time. This PhD is about influencing change. If only one policymaker, one academic, or one somebody somewhere reads this and their perspective of a prison experience shifts, then maybe, just maybe, this rollercoaster I have been on would have been worth it, and I will be able to get off, leaving it behind for good.

This story is about my prison experience. It is about the theatre of playing the role expected of an incarcerated person to firstly cope and survive, and then to instil an impression of change and good character. Exploring those aspects of prison life includes everyday instances of prejudice, privilege, and opportunity, tangled further by unresolved grief, detailed fantasies, and desperation for futures that could never be. Yes, this story is about all those things. Nevertheless, this story is mine. My story is underpinned by grief and loss, bitterness, and regret, yet also by gratefulness that I experienced love even though it was eventually taken from me. I have a gratefulness for the opportunities I have enjoyed and the chances I have been given to start over, twice. This story is underpinned by joy of memory and thankfulness for the things I have experienced and what I have done right; for the people I have met and those still in my life. This story includes the performance of roles that met expected portrayals of appropriate character or to be one of the boys and, at other times, refusals to play the anticipated role at all. It includes living in the hope for a better past and a future free from what can never be undone.

My story is one of mistakes and privilege, one of growth and starting again, one of observation and unwillingness to ignore the marginalisation and discrimination I have seen and benefited from as a Pākehā (white) male and experienced as a gay male. The telling of my story is driven by a refusal to accept the system how it is and to challenge common interpretations of a prison experience. I hope I can do that.

This is not only my story; this is how I choose to tell it. This is how I must tell it.

1.7 Story Roadmap

Chapter Two offers an examination of the evolution of temporal perceptions, highlighting the dominance of linear, homogeneous time as a tool for control and discipline. This exploration sets the foundation for challenging the hegemonic form of understanding time—an aim central to this thesis. It introduces Deleuze's concepts of the three syntheses of time, difference and repetition, and the virtual and actual, positioning these ideas as essential lenses for understanding the temporalities of and within the prison system. This theoretical context is crucial for discussing my dual sexual identities and experiences of time during incarceration, forming the basis for subsequent chapters that delve deeper into the intersections of time, identity, and power.

Chapter Three introduces autoethnography as the primary research methodology of this thesis and discusses its appropriateness for connecting personal narratives with existing theoretical frameworks. This chapter examines my dual roles as both the researcher and the subject, using personal experiences of incarceration to challenge and expand theoretical frameworks in sociology and criminology. It departs from conventional linear narratives, blending my journey and methodological insights to meet expectations of an academic performance. The chapter details the multifaceted autoethnographic

approach employed (narrative, analytic and evocative), considering ethical concerns, data sources and uses, and the justification of decisions made within the research process. I liken this narrative approach to assembling a jigsaw puzzle, with each piece representing an aspect of academic rigour and personal journey.

Chapter Four delves into the contextual and environmental influences on the incarceration experience, exploring the impact of decision-making and power dynamics in the prison. Through a lens of privilege, specifically the special treatment I received as Pākehā, this chapter explores access to different opportunities while incarcerated and demonstrates how administrators of power shape the incarceration experience. Building upon the Deleuzian framework introduced in Chapter Two, my analysis examines how institutional dynamics and prejudices facilitate or hinder the actualisation of potentialities from the virtual realm. I argue that the privileges and opportunities I encountered significantly influenced my experiences of the prison environment, impacting not only when I achieved parole but also the expression of dual sexual identities and the processing of grief.

Chapter Five introduces temporal friction, my conceptualisation of Deleuze’s three syntheses of time. While the notion of temporal friction has been employed in other disciplines, such as in labour studies to describe conflicts in balancing work and family time, I redefine it here to explore the clash between the linear, regulated time of prison routines and the non-linear, virtual time experienced by those incarcerated. This chapter applies the concept within a Deleuzian framework to illustrate how the rigid, scheduled routines of prison life intersect with the non-linear, subjective experiences of time that include memories, future aspirations, and moments that diverge from the mundane. Such experiences, aligned with Deleuze's notion of the virtual, represent realms of potentialities where change or difference might be imagined or actualised, thereby challenging the temporal regimes enforced by the power structures operative with prisons. Drawing on personal narratives and detailed observations, this chapter explores how temporal friction manifests during

incarceration. It examines how temporal friction influences both actions and perceptions, while serving as a form of resistance and coping mechanism that impacts identity formation and prison dynamics.

Chapter Six delves into the nuanced dynamics of sexuality and gender within the confines of prison life and into broader societal contexts, framed within alternative temporalities that have the potential to reshape personal identity. Employing theoretical insights from Foucault and Butler, alongside the Deleuzian concepts previously discussed, this chapter focuses on the performance of gender roles, particularly the ‘straight guy’ act I maintained during my incarceration. This analysis explores the societal expectations and constructs of compulsory heterosexuality and how my performances of dual sexual identities, deeply influenced by societal norms, offer a complex view of the enduring effects of incarceration on identities, specifically in terms of gender and sexuality. Through this exploration, this chapter provides an understanding of identity formation and transformation occurring within restricted environments like prisons.

Chapter Seven further explores the complex interplay of sexuality and gender within the prison context. Through personal narratives, this chapter illustrates the transformative potential of alternative temporalities on personal identity. It revisits and expands upon my conceptualisation of temporal friction to further examine the clash between the linear, regulated time of the prison system and the non-linear, subjective time experienced by those held within its walls. My narrative delves into my dual sexual identities, examining how my performance of these identities under constant surveillance influenced my personal and social interactions within and outside of the prison. By reflecting on these experiences, this chapter highlights how incarceration reshapes identity through the continuous interaction of past, present, and future, and thereby emphasises the lingering impact of prison life long after the end of the court-imposed sentence.

Chapter Eight introduces and explains my concept of temporal justice, a framework that examines the extensive, enduring effects of incarceration beyond the traditional confines of a prison sentence. It emphasises the transformative impact on a person's sense of identity and societal reintegration, focusing on how the criminal justice system manipulates and controls time to often detrimental effects. This chapter argues for the immediate implementation of reforms that address both the practical and systemic failings of the current prison system. It advocates for a transformation toward practices that thoroughly respect the temporal dimensions of justice. Building on theories from Deleuze, Butler, and Foucault, this discussion explores how incarceration reshapes personal narratives, disrupts life trajectories, and imposes barriers to personal development and societal reintegration. The proposed framework of temporal justice seeks not only to alleviate these disruptions but also to fundamentally rethink how time, identity, and power are managed within the prison system, aiming for a criminal justice system that restores dignity and potential to affected people.

Chapter Two

2. Don’t Arrange Me: Linear Time, Deleuze & The Virtual

The first part of this chapter offers a concise examination of the evolution of perceptions of time to illustrate that the modern prevalence of the homogeneity of linear time is used as a tool for control and discipline. This explanation defines the ‘common concept’ of time that I frequently mention and against whose hegemony this thesis argues. It also provides a contextual illustration of temporal control's pivotal role in this discussion. This role is crucial in shaping the environmental factors that influence actualisations of Deleuze’s concept of virtuality in my narrative. This chapter's movement from time to temporalities also provides the foundation for the different views of incarceration for which this thesis argues. This contextualisation leads to a discussion of Deleuzian concepts that I draw upon throughout this thesis, from which the time aspect of the intersection of time, identity, and power is understood. Specifically, these Deleuzian concepts are the three syntheses of time, difference and repetition, and, with particular emphasis, the virtual and actual. These concepts are central to understanding temporalities in prison because they allow for an understanding of how people experience time differently. The primary purpose of this chapter is to provide a theoretical framework for discussing and analysing the parallel actualisations and dual sexual identities I experienced during my incarceration.

2.1 A Brief History of Time

Our lives and much of how we see and engage with the world have a beginning and an end. We are born, and we die. Books have a clear beginning and end. Movies, the pursuit of academic qualifications, road trips, songs, dinners out with friends, and even this thesis you are currently reading all have a clearly identifiable beginning, something in the middle and an identifiable ending.

However, time as linear and measurable was not always the dominant perception and understanding.

Historically, perceptions of time were linked to natural rhythms and events rather than the clock-measured timekeeping that dominates today. In pre-industrial societies, time (especially in relation to the workday) was commonly perceived and managed in relation to seasonal cycles or the sun's path (Miller, 2000; Sahlins, 2013; Thompson, 2015, 2017). The shaping of these perspectives and the eventual shift into linear measurements were heavily influenced by philosophical debates, especially in ancient Greece. Antiphon, as one example, believed that time did not actually exist and was merely a tool for measurement (see Morrison, 1961, 1963; Dunn, 1996). Both Zeno and Parmenides viewed time as an illusion and claimed that it could not exist if mental representations do not shift along with the constant changes that were commonly expected and accepted with time (Hoy, 1994; see also Meyerstein, 1998; Lynds, 2003; Dorter, 2012; Strobach, 2013). Religions like Christianity significantly influenced linear concepts of time, specifically in the narrative that situates Genesis as the beginning and Judgement Day as the end (Beetham, 2015; Bigoni et al., 2021). This narrative presents a structured and linear view of time and aligns with ideals of creation, life, and a divine power in charge of time. From this viewpoint, the experience of time is underpinned by an awareness of our mortality, which imposes an urgency on the use of the time we have available to us (Wahidin, 2006).

Kant's work is recognised as the first substantial theory of time that gave time autonomy (see Williams, 2011; Smith, 2013; Ross, 2013)—before Kant's works, time had been subordinate to movement. The most commonly cited example, Aristotle's description of time as a number of movement illustrates the prevailing perspective and understanding of time before Kant (Protevi, 1994; Klein, 2009). The Industrial Revolution marks a shift in the perception of time, specifically in urban Western societies. Time became defined by the clocks and bells that measured work and daily lives. Work in factories replaced seasonal farm work, and tasks were regulated, routinised, and paid for based

on time worked (Bauman, 2004; Thompson, 2016). This transformation resulted in a standardisation of time, seen as necessary for the functioning of increasingly complex industrial systems and economies. Wahidin (2006) describes this period of movement as a shift from working in time, to with time, and then for time (see also Marx & Engels, 1976). Efficiency in communications, trade, and transportation flowed from this shift, creating a sense of shared experience measured by a common conception of time (Thompson, 2015). Specific to work, factories utilised clocks to dictate the rhythm of operations and incorporate a measured management of time into the working day (Beniger, 2009). Unsurprisingly, this standardisation of time eventually spread beyond factories and into other facets of societies.

Increased use of clocks during and after the Industrial Revolution was a vital element in the expansion of capitalism and global economies (Fuchs, 2014). This is because time precision increased productivity (Hassan, 2003) and led to market growth (Barassi, 2020). Time could essentially be bought, sold, and traded (Thompson, 2017), assigned a value (Foucault, 1979), and given order (Medicott, 1999; see also Giddens, 1981; Nyland, 1990; Postone, 1996). This demand for increased productivity also led to worker exploitation, low wages, long hours, unrest, and the eventual formation of labour and union movements (Hopkins, 1982). An emerging 'clock culture' instilled a societal expectation for punctuality and adherence to schedules and routines (see Neustadter, 1989). Efficiency became something to be valued, often occurring at the expense of free time. Expectations of timekeeping eventually manifested into new temporal norms, and people were judged based on their adherence to these norms (Conrad, 2018). These shifts in the perception of time necessitated a new form of discipline specifically related to time management. This time discipline shaped modern attitudes towards work and time management and generated a form of social control that remains today (Hassan, 2011; Fellner, 2017; Thompson, 2017).

The routine, controlling, and disciplining aspects of measured time extended beyond the workplace and into institutions like schools, health, and justice

systems. In schools, the introduction of clocks condition students from a young age to the expectations and discipline of measured time and punctuality (Turner & Rindova, 2018). These expectations socialised students to meet the aforementioned developing social norms around time management (Stearns, 2020). In criminal justice and mental health systems, specifically in institutions like prisons, routines became marked by bells that were used as tools for instilling order and control. Rigid time management in prisons was intended to instil order and discipline and reflect broader societal transformations and approaches to crime and punishment during and after the Industrial Revolution (I return to this idea in Chapter Four in a discussion of the transformation of prisons in the 1800s).

2.2 Temporalities

The concept of temporality, and temporalities, becomes complex and dynamic as it influences our experiences and the formation of our identities and perceptions of self (Stets & Burke, 2003). Time has been the subject of inquiry in various disciplines for centuries, including its ontological and epistemological aspects. Sociologically, explorations of time can provide an understanding of how people experience life (Hassard, 2016) and how these experiences can shape interactions with others and frame perspectives of events and surroundings (Lang & Carstensen, 2002). For some, time is seen as dependent upon the subject in that it is time through which the subject experiences (Dainton, 2008; Phillips, 2009). Ontologically, this understanding of time as a metaphysical category positions its role as influencing and shaping a person's experience of their reality (Le Poidevin, 2000; Ruwet, 2021). From this perspective, time is not neutral nor objective; it is intertwined with the subjectivity and their perception of experiences. Furthermore, people are subjected to time in the determination of self. The measurement of time is thereby not a natural occurrence. Rather, it is also shaped by societal structures and practices.

As a concept by which the subject’s sense of itself ‘in time’ develops, time is not an ordinary concept. Rather, it manifests within experience as a social reality produced by the social structures (industrialism, capitalism) within which its passage is then measured. As this extraordinary concept, time then emerges as a mediator between a person and their social surroundings, whether those surroundings are general, such as a country, or specific, such as a prison. Building on this, it is crucial to distinguish between 'time' as a singular, overarching framework and 'temporalities' as varied manifestations of time that reflect different rhythms and durations specific to particular environments and experiences. It then emerges from this perspective that an understanding of these varied temporalities can provide a nuanced understanding of the role of temporalities in shaping perspectives of experiences, identities, and social structures, especially in relation to prison and understandings of the incarceration experience. This differentiation allows for a deeper exploration of how temporal dynamics, beyond mere chronological time, critically influence the lived experience and identity formation within carceral settings.

Time takes on specific values in prison because control of it shifts to a form not seen elsewhere in society (Brown, 1998). In prison, choices for how time is spent are limited, and time is not a resource to be used. Rather, time becomes something to be managed by the incarcerated person (Wahidin, 2006; see also Murray, 2021; Marti, 2022) while under the control of the routine of the prison. The incarcerated must learn how to manage time in a way that seems to be marked by endless repetition (Medicott, 1999). How this occurs depends on the type of sentence, the security of their unit, with whom else they are incarcerated, and other environmental and societal factors (for examples, see Brown, 1998; Matthews, 1999; McKeown, 2001; Evans & Wallace, 2008). In prison, units of time can be forfeited, gained, survived, and even feared, and further control of those units of time can be instigated to impose additional punishment on people (Wahidin, 2006).

One viewpoint through which to explore time, specifically in relation to the prison experience, is the work of Gilles Deleuze. Deleuze's approach to time, rooted in Bergsonian duration, offers a unique lens to examine prison life's nonlinear and stratified temporalities. This perspective is particularly valuable in understanding how those incarcerated experience time as multilayered temporal experiences, reflecting the paradoxical nature of incarceration that simultaneously freezes and stretches temporal existence. Before exploring Deleuze’s work on time and related concepts, understanding Bergson’s concept of time is prudent, predominantly because of its influence on the Deleuzian concepts this thesis draws heavily upon. This foundational understanding is crucial because it directly informs these Deleuzian concepts, and enables a deeper exploration of how time, as experienced in the carceral environment, shapes and is shaped by people within its boundaries.

2.3 From Bergson to Deleuze

Bergson's concept of the 'durée' (duration) critically confronts the fragmented concept of time dominant in modern cultures, such as that which is measured by the clock and calendar. He argues against time being quantifiable into measurement segments (Lawlor, 2010; Kleinherenbrink, 2014; Flórez Restrepo, 2015). Instead, Bergson contends that true time (which he calls duration) is a seamless flow of change (Hodges, 2008; Guerlac, 2021). This kind of time can be understood qualitatively based on personal and internal experience. An approach to time like this significantly diverges from the objective-focused quantification often imposed by the norms of industrial-capitalist society. Instead, Bergson’s duration is underscored by the subjectivity of the human temporal experience (Bergson, 1910). Exploring Bergson’s ideas further and understanding their implications not only offers insight into the work of Deleuze but also provides an additional lens through which to view the prison experience, specifically in exploring the influence of imprisonment on people. It provides a nuanced understanding of the control mechanisms embedded within penal institutions and their deep-seated impact on those incarcerated, illuminating the extensive, often overlooked, temporal

dimensions of incarceration that extend beyond mere physical confinement (Flaherty & Carceral, 2022). This perspective offers insight into the control mechanisms of the prison system and the profound effects these have on incarcerated people, highlighting the frequently ignored temporal aspects of imprisonment that extend beyond the physical boundaries and limitations of the prison.

The rigid and linear time structure found within most prisons is an example of what Foucault (1977) describes as a mechanism of discipline, utilised to regulate the behaviours and movements of the incarcerated. Foucault's analysis highlights the use of the management of the experience of time in prisons to exert control over bodies within the prison system. This segmentation of time, found in routines behind the wire, is not exclusively a tool for organisation; it is an integral component of the ability of the system to exert power over those under its control. This exertion of power effectively reshapes the incarcerated's experience of time (Foucault, 1977). This external imposition of an experience of time disrupts Bergson's internal sense of duration, leading to the consequences discussed throughout this thesis. The prison environment, with schedules and routines, forces a time structure that clashes with the flow of time experienced as duration. This conflict in the experience of time between the internal and external can result in a disparity between the self and the structure imposed by prison life, leading to a sense of temporal disorientation (Fredriksson, 2023).

In this thesis, I argue that the long-term effect of the temporal disruption caused by incarceration extends beyond the calendar measurement of the sentence. Beyond release, formerly imprisoned people can continue to experience challenges in aligning their internal experience and sense of time with external demands (Aresti et al., 2010). This struggle and accompanying sense of disorientation can impact reintegration and the ability to adapt to life outside of prison (Marlow & Chesla, 2009; Liem & Kunst, 2013). Applying Bergson's concept of duration to the incarceration system, specifically the system I experienced, reveals temporal violence (a manipulation and control

of time as a form of violence that affects psychological and social experiences) inflicted upon those imprisoned (Scott, 2015). This perspective exposes a need to evaluate how the experience of time in prisons is structured and controlled, highlighting the potential for an approach to imprisonment that respects the subjective experience of time (see the final chapter of this thesis for a discussion toward a temporal justice that encompasses this respect). Furthering the discussion and application of Bergson's duration, specifically its implications for understanding the experience of time while incarcerated, I extend this analysis by contrasting it with Deleuze's synthesis of time. Deleuze, influenced by Bergson's work, expands on the concept of duration to develop a layered conception of time (Borradori, 2001; Lawlor & Moulard-Leonard, 2004; Moulard-Leonard, 2008). The resulting theory provides an insightful lens through which to explore and understand how incarceration disrupts the temporal experience.

Deleuze's philosophy emphasises the processual nature of reality, which he describes as unpredictable, dynamic, and constantly in flux (Williams, 2011). While Deleuze did not produce a singular work on time and temporality, his theory of time has consistent elements woven throughout his works. It offers a lens through which I understand not only the prison experience from the perspective of temporalities but also my experience of incarceration. In his philosophy of time, Deleuze argues that time is not a homogeneous and linear progression but rather a multiplicity of heterogeneous and non-linear temporalities (Firth & Robinson, 2014). Deleuze's theory of time is rooted in his ontology of difference, which asserts that the nature of reality is constructed from a multitude of distinct and evolving elements that cannot be reduced to a single stable entity (Voss, 2013). According to Deleuze, time is not a metric for measuring change but rather the fundamental state that facilitates change (Williams, 2011). Rather than being a uniform and abstract medium, time consists of a diverse and intricate range of temporalities that continually interact and interconnect with each other. His three syntheses of time articulate this complex and dynamic ontology. The syntheses (habit, memory, and future) discussed further in this chapter are not sequential nor linear but rather co-

existent and interdependent (Williams, 2011). Accordingly, they provide a specific lens into the incarceration experience because a series of interdependent experiences form the overall experience of imprisonment. However, before exploring each of these syntheses further and in relation to the prison experience, I first outline additional Deleuzian concepts that illuminate much of this discussion on time, including difference and repetition, the virtual, and multiplicity.

2.4 Difference and Repetition

Building on Spinoza's monism, Deleuze argued that everything in the world, material and non-material, is connected (Deleuze, 1988). Accordingly, he worked to provide ontological foundations for views that everything in the world is forever changing (Grosz 2015; Williams, 2011). As we generally think by quantifying, judging, and categorising things, we can consider the stones on the old, cracked basketball court that feature in my opening story as a working example to explore his ideas further. I walked that court almost daily, strolling it for exercise and as a distraction from my surroundings and the emotions rushing through my mind and body. The concrete that formed that court was older than me and seemed to have more cracks than solid pieces. Accordingly, pieces of concrete broke off regularly, most often in the form of what we would label small stones. On that court, little stones all rested in one small patch of the court where the concrete was slowly breaking away to form more stones and fragments almost daily. These fragments of concrete all come from the same larger piece that was mixed and laid on the same day and possibly even by the same worker. Each fragment has been exposed to similar elements, pressure from being walked on and kicked about by the feet of bored prisoners. We can judge these as stones with the naked eye and label them as such. We can even surmise the chemical makeup of each stone based on which part of the concrete they broke away from. By observing those little stones and the court daily, we can even guess their future shape, in which direction they may be kicked, and even which corner they are most likely to gather. Similarly, we can list the qualities and characteristics of most 'things' in

the world. However, quantifying the things of the world in that way does not account for the process of change; describing things in this quantifiable and categorised way does not explain how things develop into new things. These stones, while similar, are not the same. Each has differences that make them unique to the other stones they rest next to or on top of and to every other stone or fragment that we label with the same name. Each may also morph into something new, not maintaining the same form upon which we based our categorisation nor upon which I walked multiple times a day for nine months.

Waller (2018) uses the example of the evolution of television to Netflix to illustrate this idea of change. He argues that there is nothing inherent in television that evolved this type of media consumption into Netflix. The evolution between these two mediums results from connected aspects, including the internet, code programming, and phone lines. All these other things, and many others, converged together at a specific time and in a particular way to form something new: what we now call Netflix. The evolution of television into Netflix is similar to the evolution of species in response to their environment and other species in that it is the spaces between things and the differences between these things that create possibilities for new (Deleuze, 1968). Swiss philosopher Saussure's conjecture influenced Deleuze's view of difference. Difference is the product of language, of the movement of signifiers in a state of pure differentiation of one to the other. Signifiers exist in a state of pure differentiation because no foundational connection exists between them and their respective referents (Joseph, 2012). Following Saussure, the relations involved are thereby arbitrary. We thereby understand and categorise solely based on the difference between the category used for one thing and the category used for another (Williams, 2008, Parr, 2010). One example of this is how we recognise colours. We recognise that green is green, not because of any real relationship between the word green and the shade it represents, but because of the difference between green and red, blue, exotic orange, mustard yellow, fuchsia, and so on. Colours are only colours as we know them when we compare one colour to another and label it based on what it is not.

Given how complicated the world is and how interconnected everything in it is, there are infinite possibilities for newness. Difference is everywhere, and perhaps Deleuze (1968) explains this best himself:

> *"No two grains of dust are absolutely identical, no two hands have the same distinctive points, no two typewriters have the same strike, no two revolvers score their bullets in the same manner"*
>
> (p. 26).

When we think about something, we are repeating it. When I categorised those stones on that old, cracked basketball court, I repeated similar thinking for each stone and judged each one with every thought I needed to make for the categorisation. Each thought was a repetition of a previous one, and the categorisation of each fragment as a stone relied on that repetition. When we repeat our thoughts in this way, we are generalising by looking for resemblances between multiple things to categorise them based on similarities and differences to other things. Generalising in this way is the most basic action of thought, and to think this way, we must repeat, as it is the repetition that contributes to generality. However, in every repetition, something new occurs. No stone, or shade of green, or Pōhutukawa tree, or grain of sand is an exact repetition of another that we categorise as the same. Each repetition has something new because newness is inscribed in thought (Parr, 2010). Each repetition, while carrying something from the past, is something new in space and time and has no equivalent (Williams, 2011). Every act of nature repeats with novelty, and every repetition of thought creates something new in the mind that contemplates it (May, 2005). It is the difference in repetition that accounts for change and newness and if we only recognise the repetition of the thing, then we fail to see how difference creates new.

2.5 The Virtual, Actual & Multiplicity

Deleuze (1968) introduces concepts of the virtual and actual as two interrelated dimensions of reality in that the virtual represents potentialities that are actualised. Deleuze's distinction between the virtual and actual is influenced by and complicates Bergson's duration by contending that time is not only a continuous flow but also a process of becoming that occurs through actualising potentialities (see Faulkner, 2004).

The virtual is determined by the differential relations between ideas that are made up of multiplicities. It is the innate potentiality of newness and refers to a realm of potentiality that exists along with the actual, empirical world (Smith, 2009). According to Deleuze (1968), the virtual is not a separate realm or world but rather a dimension of reality that exists in an inseparable relationship with the actual. The virtual is not the same as the possible, which is limited to what can be imagined based on what already exists in the actual world (Williams, 2011). Rather, the virtual is a realm of pure potentiality that exceeds the limits of the actual world (Pearson, 2005). It is a space of becoming and transformation where new possibilities and ways of being can emerge (May, 2003). In every repetition, different combinations eventuate and the virtual is a product of the intensities between differences (Boundas, 2006). The virtual is determined by the differential relations between ideas that are made up of multiplicities. The differences in relations between these multiplicities then lead to different potentialities. These multiplicities both precede the idea and shape it into new expressions of itself (Roffe, 2010).

The virtual cannot be accessed directly (Hardt, 1993) but, rather, is expressed or actualized through the creation of new social forms and structures (Smith, 2009). These new forms and structures emerge through the process of actualization, which involves the transformation of the virtual into the actual (Maras, 1998; Hammer, 2007). In this sense, the virtual is not a passive or

inert realm but rather an active and dynamic one that constantly shapes and transforms the actual world. The virtual creates the conditions for potentiality.

Another concept useful for the discussions throughout this thesis and for understanding my perspective of my incarceration experience is one of two core concepts in Deleuze's theory of time: multiplicity. The concept bears upon Deleuze’s approach to temporality. Time is non-chronological and defined by interactions with other time points (Roffe, 2010). Each point is singular and combines with others in limitless variability and chaos (Conley, 2011). Deleuze proposed the syntheses of past (memory), present (habit), and future (new) to understand this variability. As my various states of hoping for a better past, of reimagining a future that could never be, and of fantasy were further complicated by the roles I was performing, each of these instances drew heavily on 'memory' and 'future' (referred to by Deleuze as 'habit' and 'new'). These manifested in moments of the present that could only ever be fleeting, never sustainable in any kind of graspable existence or stable form, and occurring passively (Deleuze, 1989). In Chapter Six, as part of my discussion on sexuality and identity, I draw on a story of me strolling the old basketball as a form of distraction and to cope. During those strolls, I fantasised about a future with James that could never be because it relied on a past that never occurred, and this occurred in a present within which the confines of incarceration surrounded me. This story helps us understand Deleuze's concept of multiplicity because of the coming together of the past and the present in a way that created a new present which influenced the potentiality of new futures. I unpack this idea further in Chapter Six. For the purposes of this chapter, it leads this discussion into Deleuze’s three syntheses of time.

2.6 Deleuze’s Theory of Time

Deleuze's three syntheses of time do not reduce time to our conscious sense of what time is. While we have common perspectives and a sense of past, present, and future, and Deleuze's three syntheses are largely categorised

under these labels, his work does not address the conscious phenomena of our sense of time, nor does it aim to (Williams, 2011). Rather, Deleuze's theory of time addresses the unconscious and preconscious conditions that produce our sense of time (Voss, 2013). Our sense of duration is dependent on our expectations and biological needs. Each organ in the body may have its own duration determined by its needs and the strive for satisfaction. Deleuze's use of the 'passive' is an example of this because we are not directly aware of these processes in our organs, yet each influences the conditioning of our sense of time. We experience ourselves through feelings, thoughts, actions, and sensations, always under the condition of time (Faulkner, 2004). Another example of the 'passive' is in our sense of the past. Deleuze (1968) refers to the 'pure' past as a dimension of time prior to content, rather than as a memory process. This is passive because unconsciously held attachments determine our sense of the specific experiences that have occurred (Voss, 2013).

Deleuze's work on the three syntheses of time, and his theory of time overall, address an array of problems and questions rather than anything specific (Boundas, 1993; Williams, 2011). As there is no overarching problem or question, summarising the three syntheses into coherent definitions or polished meanings is a challenging task because none of the three has a definitive meaning. The three syntheses are each about the functioning of, rather than the description of, time (Voss, 2013). Accordingly, what follows is an application of the three to understanding my experience of incarceration and beyond, rather than any attempt to provide a definitive description of the three syntheses or of Deleuze's theory of time. The remainder of this chapter works towards a conclusion that decentres Deleuze in favour of an exploration of the concepts' potentialities. Specifically, I am less interested in how Deleuze may have thought his work would be used than I am in the possibility of applying his work toward an understanding of my experience of incarceration.

2.6.1 First Synthesis: The Living Present (Habit)

Time emerges from the living present; it gives rise to it, not vice versa (May, 2005; Williams, 2011). The present is not a moment in time and is never a graspable 'now' (Faulkner, 2004); it is always in flow such that it is always non-identical with itself (Williams, 2011). The living present is always reaching and expanding between that which has been, the past, and that which is yet to come—the future. The present contracts experiences of the past and expects the experiences yet to come (Loewen Walker, 2019). This means that in any present, every aspect of the past can contribute to a manifestation of an understanding of the moment and an expectation or anticipation of the future. Each present is different from the past because of some recognition of the past in the present that brings past and future together (Williams, 2008, 2011). This contraction of past and future allows habit and novelty to contract and open for the creation of the new. For example, my instinctive memory of my body's ability made it possible for me to take a daily walk around that old, cracked basketball court that features so often in this thesis. My assumption of my body's ability contributed to a future within which my strolling propelled me forward, both physically and in the fantasy of a different future.

Deleuze's first synthesis of time is the passive synthesis of habit. This synthesis is characterised by the repetition of events that create a sense of continuity and stability in our experience of time. We can think of this in relation to my repeated stroll on the old, cracked basketball court. According to Deleuze, the passive synthesis of habit is the most basic and fundamental form of temporal experience, which forms the foundation for our understanding of time. This first synthesis operates at the body level and results in the habitual repetition of actions, behaviours, and routines (Faulkner, 2004). Habitual actions create a sense of familiarity and stability (O'Keeffe, 2016), and these feelings enable us to navigate our familiar surroundings with the ease of relative automation. The strolling of the basketball court became an act of repetition. The act of walking was familiar to me—left after right, arms swinging by my side—and the route I took around the court became habitual.

I did not have to think about how to walk each time I took that stroll, as I could rely on the habitual pattern of my body to guide me in that act of distraction. However, like the prison environment, the synthesis of habit is not static or unchanging. Rather, it is adaptable, as habits can be altered in various ways. Those experiences that disrupt existing patterns of behaviour or routine are of specific significance. I discuss this further in Chapter Seven, where I give various examples of my existing patterns being disrupted and my resulting altered habits.

Deleuze argues that this synthesis challenges traditional notions of causality and posits that time is not a linear progression but rather a multiplicity of heterogeneous temporalities that exist simultaneously (Williams, 2011). Causality assumes that events in the past cause events in the present and future. Instead, Deleuze suggests that the past does not simply cause the present but rather coexists with it, producing a multiplicity of possible futures (Al-Saji, 2004; Bryant, 2011). The past and the future are not simply moments that precede or follow the present but rather temporalities that coexist with the present, constantly influencing and shaping it (Bogue, 2011). The present is not a fixed point in time but rather a moment that is constantly in flux, continuously slipping away and being replaced by a new present (Williams, 2011).

Deleuze's notion of the present contends that the multiple processes of past and future are connected and contracted in the present, and each experience expands temporally with each contraction (Parr, 2010). This contraction of time serves as a dynamic intersection where past events and future possibilities mingle, enriching each present moment with layers of potentialities. In this way, every present state is not merely a point in time but a dense node of temporal relations, where each layer unfolds and reconfigures itself. The passive nature of each synthesis means that these contractions and the resulting influence on experience and the creation of new all occur without observable awareness. My body remembers how to walk, and the resulting rhythm of the stroll with one leg before the other prevents me from falling over

or walking in circles. There is an expectation of continuity in this action because of past experiences and the results of similar actions in those pasts (Biehl & Locke, 2010) such as previous strolls around that concrete area.

Instantaneously, the contraction of past and future reaches back and forth between the two (Williams, 2011). This means I was both moving forward and back during any of my strolls. Deleuze's living present disregards both subjectivity and consciousness as the site in which contraction occurs (this differs from many other time theorists, including Husserl, who works with a consciousness of time—see Williams, 2011). This is evidence of Deleuze's denial of 'self', as the 'self' we speak of exists only in thousands of little fragments, usually only observed by others. In contrast to Husserl (and others), Deleuze contends that the present's habitual experiences result from a passive process, not conscious reflections of any past experiences. Retention itself is a passive process, and any retentive recollection of events is also passive (such as instinctively stepping away from danger). Habits not only form our expectation and anticipation of something: there is, according to Deleuze (1968), "no continuity apart from that of habit" (p. 75).

On any given day, during any of those strolls and regardless of how far I could escape the prison in my mind, I was still surrounded by other incarcerated people, corrections officers, and prison staff (including those I would never see, such as camera operators). However, none of these actors existed in the same present. Each person represents a singular thing, and the synthesis of events around each singularity determines a present (Conley, 2011; Williams, 2011). Each present includes other things, yet its singular synthesis does not include their present in the same state or in the same way they include it (Deleuze, 1968). Each present moment includes a variety of elements and relations, yet integrates them based on the specific conditions at that present. Consequently, the present modifies and reconfigures these elements, giving each moment its unique composition and characteristics. This approach illustrates the complex and non-linear nature of time in Deleuze's philosophy, emphasizing that each present is both a continuation and a transformation.

During those strolls around that court, simultaneously, the others around me coped and distracted themselves in different presents of their own, some longer than mine, some shorter. The variation comes, following Deleuze, from the impact of each person's specific passive present on their futures, as measured by their own sense of their time. The various presents in that prison unit included one another but did so without transforming each other. Therefore, in any moment of strolling, there was an asymmetry between the events that led me to that present, other events from my past, the present of the attempted distraction then interrupted by others, and the future within which I would recall my pasts, including each stroll.

This multiplicity of futures implies that the future is not predetermined but rather open and contingent, constantly being shaped by the present and the past (Williams, 2011). Deleuze argued that the disruption of habit is essential for the emergence of new forms of temporal experience, and this insight brings our discussion to the second of three syntheses in Deleuze's theory of time: memory.

2.6.2 Second Synthesis: Pure Past / Memory

Deleuze's second synthesis of time is the active synthesis of memory and emphasises the fluid nature of memory and its role in shaping our experience of time (Smith, 2023). This synthesis posits that the past is not a fixed phenomenon but a dynamic and creative force producing new temporal experiences (Harper, 2020). The past is not simply a collection of facts and events but a set of virtual potentials constantly being actualised and reconfigured in the present. Memory is active in this, involving a constant reconfiguration of past experiences. In this sense, memory is not just a matter of recalling past events but an active process that produces new temporal experiences through recombining and reconfiguring past events. This reconfiguration process is not limited to simply repeating past experiences. According to Deleuze (1968), the active synthesis of memory is the condition

for the emergence of novelty and difference in our experience of time. The active synthesis of memory operates at the level of consciousness and involves the active reconfiguration of past experiences. Memory is not a passive warehouse of past events but rather an active and creative process that produces novel temporal experiences. Moreover, Deleuze's active synthesis of memory is not limited to the level of individual consciousness but can also involve collective and cultural memory. Collective memory involves a community or society's shared cultural and historical experiences and can play a significant role in shaping personal experiences of time.

Strolling that basketball court, my experience is driven by previous strolls, encounters with others operating in their own presents, their and my responses to these encounters, and other environmental and biological factors. As each stroll could easily be interrupted by prison life (see Chapter Seven), all future strolls became new and influenced by that passive memory. I would never, passively, again be able to fully zone out from my surroundings on those walks after being interrupted during any walk. As my passive memory influences my present, I knew that that environment was one where I could engage in fantasies while I strolled, so too did it become a place of anticipated caution and expected feelings of insecurity because an interruptive display of the combustible prison environment was never far away.

The active synthesis of memory is also closely related to Deleuze's broader philosophy of difference and becoming (Williams, 2011). By emphasising the dynamic and creative nature of memory, Deleuze challenges traditional notions of identity and stability and suggests that personal experiences of time are constantly characterised by a transformative process of becoming (Grosz, 2005). The active synthesis of memory is the condition for the emergence of novelty and difference in our experience of time. This means that the active synthesis of memory is not only a creative and dynamic process, but also a critical one, since it enables us to break free from the repetition and sameness of the past and to produce new and unexpected temporal experiences. Accordingly, the synthesis of memory has important implications for our

understanding of the experience of prison. In the context of the prison, the active synthesis of memory can play a critical role in enabling incarcerated people to break free from the repetitive and dehumanising routines of the prison environment and to create new temporal experiences. By actively reconfiguring past experiences, incarcerated people can transform their relationship to the present and open new possibilities for the future.

However, the active synthesis of memory can also be a challenging process in the prison context, given the constraints and limitations of the prison environment, particularly the limited options available to someone when they need to respond to a situation. Incarcerated people may face significant obstacles to accessing the resources and opportunities necessary to actively reconfigure their past experiences and produce new temporal experiences. Furthermore, the prison environment may actively discourage and suppress the active synthesis of memory through its emphasis on discipline, control, and punishment. This can further limit the response options available to the person to even those temporal experiences that do not involve others, such as my fantasies. Despite these challenges, Deleuze's synthesis of memory offers a transformative lens for understanding the experience of prison, the role of memory in shaping personal experiences of time, and the long-term impact of an experience of incarceration. By emphasising the creative and critical functions of memory and its transformative potential, Deleuze provides a lens for understanding the prison experience's impact on how someone engages with and recalls their own experiences and for challenging the dehumanising aspects of incarceration.

The active synthesis of memory is not a simple process but rather a complex and non-linear one. It involves interweaving past and present experiences, producing a multiplicity of temporalities. These temporalities are not hierarchical or linear but rather co-existent and interdependent. Deleuze suggests that this synthesis of time challenges traditional notions of history, which may assume that the past is a fixed and objective reality that can be accurately represented and understood (Deleuze, 1968). Instead, he argues

that the past is a subjective and dynamic phenomenon that is constantly being reinterpreted and reconfigured in the present. History is not a linear progression of events but rather a complex and non-linear process of becoming, constantly being shaped by the present and the future. Similarly, the future is not something separate from the past and present but rather a continuation and repetition of them. In this sense, the future is not predetermined or fixed but open to multiple possibilities and potentialities that emerge from the interplay between memory and the present moment. In addition to its critical function, the active synthesis of memory also has a transformative dimension. By actively reconfiguring past experiences, we can transform our relationship with the past and the present and open new possibilities for the future. This transformative dimension of the active synthesis of memory is closely related to Deleuze's third synthesis of time, the synthesis of the future, which emphasises the creative and open-ended nature of the future and its role in shaping our experience of time (Williams, 2011). This brings my discussion to Deleuze’s third synthesis as, in conjunction with the first two, the three offer a complex and nuanced understanding of the ways in which memory and the future intersect and shape our experiences of time.

2.6.3 Third Synthesis: Future / New / Eternal Return

"The subject of the return is not the same but the different, not the similar but the dissimilar, not the one but the many, not the necessity but chance.”

(Deleuze, 2013, p. 49)

Deleuze’s philosophy argues that things can never repeat in the same form (no two strolls were ever the same); the future is an external return of difference. A repetition of the same would be a denial of the passing of time, and that thought changes with each thought that passes (Spinks & Parr, 2005). Therefore, Deleuze explains that the future is a cut between the before and the after; this cut is always leaping into a new, but this leap always has a contraction of past and present, influencing the potentialities of new in the

virtual (Voss, 2013). Accordingly, time moves from the past to the future (through the present), and the external return expresses the pure past beyond memory and habit, through diversity and multiplicity, and of difference and repetition (Spinks & Parr, 2005). Deleuze's synthesis of the future is perhaps the most challenging of the three to grasp coherently, as it is not reducible to any conscious expectation of a future event. Rather, it can be found in Deleuze's concept of the 'problem' (Faulkener, 2004). The problem is a divergent event that centres on a complex image of action and a series of actions that are constantly at work in the unconscious. The third synthesis of time is the passive synthesis of perception. This synthesis is characterised by the production of a dynamic and constantly changing temporal experience that is not reducible to the passive synthesis of habit or the active synthesis of memory. It is the synthesis of the passive and the future. This synthesis posits that the future is not a predetermined and fixed reality but a dynamic and creative force producing new temporal experiences. The future is not simply a projection of the present and the past but rather a multiplicity of possible futures that are constantly being shaped by the present and the past.

In summary, Deleuze's three syntheses of time are all interconnected and mutually reinforcing, without being dependent on each other (Williams, 2011). The active synthesis of memory and the synthesis of the future collaborate to produce a dynamic and constantly evolving experience of time. The synthesis of the future presents a more open and fluid understanding of time, one that is constantly being created and recreated by the forces of the present and the past.

In the context of the prison experience, the synthesis of the future can help shed light on how the past and the present shape the future, and how different possible futures emerge from the multiplicity of temporal experiences that intersect within the prison environment. Despite the constraints and limitations imposed by incarceration, people in prison still have the capacity to shape their futures and create new temporal experiences. Because this synthesis emphasises that the future is not predetermined and that incarcerated people

can actively work towards creating a different future for themselves, it provides a specific lens through which to view temporal experiences while incarcerated. By recognising the creative and dynamic nature of the future, the prison system can be understood beyond conventional and common interpretations and measurements of time. Furthermore, this perspective opens political possibilities, challenging and potentially transforming the foundational structures and policies of the prison and criminal justice systems.

Understanding the prison experience from this perspective also has significant implications for understanding how an incarcerated person's identity is constructed during incarceration. Similar to the future not being predetermined, the identity of an incarcerated person is not fixed (I expand on this discussion in Chapter Six). Rather, the construction of self is influenced by interactions with the past and present. Specifically, within the prison environment, possibilities for futures are restricted by the institution's limitations, including the rules that manage routines and set behavioural expectations (see Chapter Five). Deleuze's third synthesis suggests that, despite the constraints of incarceration, the incarcerated can create new futures and possibilities through their interactions with their surroundings and with their own memories and imaginations (or, in my situation, fantasies). However, the expectations of others and the limitations of imaginings dictate how people can respond to any situation. Accordingly, the construction of self during incarceration is limited and is one example of why the sentence never ends because incarceration shapes the self.

This chapter has not only outlined the concepts fundamental to my argument but also advanced that argument by showing that the experience of incarceration and its temporal structures cannot be understood through a linear perspective of time. The temporal frameworks employed in the prison environment are primarily used for purposes of control and discipline and to shape the incarcerated experience and perception of time. The dominant linear perspective of time is not only inadequate for a complete understanding of the prison sentence, but it also reinforces supports temporal control and

significantly hinders the actualisation of identities during and beyond the prison sentence. Incorporating Deleuzian concepts of time, repetition, difference, and the virtual and actual provides a theoretical lens upon which the remainder of this thesis draws.

Chapter Three

3. The Academic Performance: Methodology, Ethics & The Journey

This chapter introduces autoethnography as the primary research methodology employed in this thesis, highlighting its value in connecting personal narratives with academic inquiry. Through autoethnography, the chapter navigates my dual roles of the researcher as both the subject and academic and highlights how personal experiences of incarceration can explore, inform, and expand existing theoretical frameworks. This methodological exploration sets the groundwork for discussions on how incarceration reshapes identities over time, challenging traditional perceptions of temporality and space within the scholarly fields of sociology and criminology. Departing from a traditional linear narrative, what follows is a combination of my journey through this process and the methodological discussion required to meet the expectations of the academic performance. I explore the multifaceted autoethnographic research design I employed for this work, along with an understanding of ethics, the data I used, and the justification for my decisions. Beyond that, however, the narrative I offer in this chapter mimics the piecing together of a jigsaw puzzle, where each piece offers an understanding of the subject matter explored, symbolising the ongoing process of academic rigour and personal discovery that is an autoethnographic project.

3.1 The Beginning is in the Middle

When I think about how I came to some of the realisations shared on these pages, I am aware there is no single or obvious place to start. In a thesis drawing on arguments that time and temporalities are not linear, it feels appropriate to start anywhere but the beginning or even to start at multiple places concurrently. That also works for another reason: the beginning is

simply not as interesting or significant as the rest of my story. However, the end has yet to occur, so I cannot start there either. Somewhere in the middle is where I felt the rumbles of the shift that has led me to this point, so that's where I have started, somewhere in the middle. Well, a few places in the middle, at least.

I have read others talking about moments of clarity that they can recall with crisp recollection, 'a-ha' moments where their thesis or central argument simply came together all at once. I have those crisp recollections of events and moments in my life, but my PhD journey has been far more fractured. My 'a-ha' moment is a collection of pieces that have forced themselves into an, almost, coherent picturesque jigsaw puzzle shaped in the form of a prison experience that will never end. Unlike a jigsaw with pieces preshaped by an arranger of the experience (the manufacturer) that need to be placed together in a particular fashion to form a clear picture, my journey has been one of constant shift, fracture, and appearance of new pieces. I have managed to force them into the picture evident on these pages yet remain aware that alternative pictures could have formed if those puzzle pieces had been twisted into other forms.

At times, I imagine my PhD experience as a prison cell. Parts of it are so sturdy that they are unforgiving and restrictive. Yet other parts, represented by a tiny open crack in the cell window, represent those aspects of this thesis that are open and on a journey of change along with this writer. That open crack in the window, letting in fresh, crisp, and appreciated air, represents the ideas that have come to me during this process. That crisp fresh air can soften the staleness of a prison cell, as my academic breakthroughs have alleviated the times when I have experienced frustration with the academic process and have been desperate to get this PhD behind me.

A prison cell has always been there throughout this PhD journey. The forms that the cell has taken, while no longer physical, have shifted and morphed

along with personal changes, but there has always been a cell. Now, at this moment, I find myself in two places—two places that co-exist, often in contrast and tension, but sometimes also in synergy. Part of me is staring out of that tiny cell window, still looking to the outside for something or someone to grasp onto and to drag me out of the metaphorical enclosure and leave it fully behind. Another version of me is glancing back through that window, recalling my experiences for understanding and with a shifting perspective that curiously drives each interpretation and consideration. That version of me is still looking to a past I am desperate to leave behind, yet I seek to understand so that the time spent there is not wasted. I may occasionally glance back forever, but as the distance between me and that cell grows, so too will my glances get fewer. By the end of this process, I hope to be mostly out of that cell, and the only way I can do that is if I find meaning in and from the experience. It is almost as if I am trying to force these experiences into some form of linear script after all.

But life is not a movie, and regardless of how much I try to embed song lyrics into my life, life is not a song. This is not a story with a 2-hour arc or 4-minute time limit so that it can satisfy a Netflix craving or get selected for a trend-setting Spotify playlist. This journey does not have a clear beginning or end. It has been a mess. Whenever I tried to start a story at a logical beginning, I found myself shunted into another part of the story (which makes Deleuze's three synthesis of time such an ideal lens through which to view these experiences—as outlined in the previous chapter). I have started telling these stories at various points, never in any sense of a beginning, because it is in the chaos that I have found some sense. I now share that sense on these pages in the form of a PhD thesis using an autoethnographic research design.

Exploring the impact of incarceration on identity has involved me critically analysing the impact of my incarceration on my life trajectory. My journey, stunted by grief and a period of incarceration, manifests into a narrative that crosses over the constrained space and temporal restriction of incarceration and includes hidden aspects of identity. Through this lens of personal

experience, I explore the primary research thesis statement: the predominant reliance on conventional concepts of time and space inadequately account for incarceration's profound, enduring effects on identity. The long-term effects of imprisonment, such that a sentence of incarceration never truly ends, cannot be understood through conventional concepts of time and space. To substantiate this claim, I engage in three types of autoethnography: narrative, analytical, and evocative. I discuss this combination in the following section. The combination allows me to interpret my experiences of incarceration and grief in a form that situates these experiences within wider societal contexts and theoretical perspectives. A performative aspect emerges in my writing as I recall, reimagine, and reflect upon my experiences. Through these lenses and via my chosen research design, I show that incarceration is not merely a spatial or temporal experience; rather, it is a transformative journey that shapes identity long after the sentence has supposedly ended because of how perceptions of self and community are reshaped by the experience. This research contributes to understandings of incarceration and challenges traditional approaches to measuring the impact of imprisonment.

My research is situated within the interpretivist paradigm, leveraging subjectivity and introspection (Chang, 2008; Ellis & Adams, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). The core of this research—exploring the long-term impact of incarceration on identity—demands a research approach that provides space to explore nuances of personal experiences while still interpreting those experiences in a form that is contextualised in wider societal constructs. An interpretivist approach allows the flexibility required to interpret a personal journey (Denzin, 2013). This research is inductive as it teases broad insights from personal experiences. An autoethnographic design, inductive by nature, provides a medium through which to explore personal stories to identify patterns and insights toward an understanding of the contexts being explored (Chang, 2008). Through a reflection on my own experiences—such as hiding my sexuality while incarcerated—my research builds an understanding beyond the conventional and inadequate conceptualisation of incarceration experiences.

3.2 Research Design & Approach

Autoethnography is a qualitative research method that incorporates aspects of ethnography and autobiography (Chang, 2008; Reed-Danahay, 2021). As a methodological approach, it allows researchers to incorporate lived experiences and self-reflection in exploring and understanding wider societal aspects and meanings (Ellis, 2004; Holman Jones, 2018; Deitering, 2017). In my research, those societal aspects concern modes of temporality upon which the organisation of imprisonment works, the forms of meaning-making to which those modes give rise, and the alternatives that the incarceration experience itself enables. The autoethnographic approach developed from a postmodern challenge to authoritative voices usually privileged in traditional research and advocated for a more subjective and inclusive form of inquiry (Wall, 2006). This methodology has roots in disciplines such as sociology, communications, and anthropology and gained prominence in the 1970s and 1980s through the works of Arthur Bochner, Carolyn Ellis, and Tony Adams (Douglas & Carless, 2009; Grant & Lloyd-Parkes, 2024). These scholars advocated using personal narratives as a legitimate research method and challenged academic norms prioritising objectivity and researcher detachment (Sparkes, 2013; Grant & Lloyd-Parkes, 2024). Autoethnography has since evolved to include a range of approaches, such as poetry and vignettes, that allow researchers to explore their lived experiences in relation to broader societal contexts (Koopman et al., 2020).

A key feature of an autoethnographic research design is the presentation of personal narratives in which the researcher's experiences are embedded in such a way that offers nuanced insights (Ellis et al., 2010). This approach provides a critical and reflexive lens into the experiences explored through those narratives while simultaneously engaging with the broader societal contexts to which the research speaks (Denzin, 2013). The autoethnographic method enables the exploration of the complexities of lived experiences within existing social constructs and thereby emphasises the researcher's perspective (Allen et al., 2015). This research method is particularly

appropriate for understanding experiences of time and identity formation as it allows the researcher, myself in this situation, to delve deeply into how these constructs are lived and their impact upon future experiences. In the contexts of grief and imprisonment, my chosen research design uncovers how the experiences I share throughout this thesis disrupt and reshape my identity over time. My use of personal narrative provides a detailed exploration of my temporal experiences of incarceration and grief and my changing perceptions of time, as well as how these changes have impacted, and continue to impact, my grieving process and the reconstruction of my identity during and after incarceration.

3.2.1 Justification for Choosing Autoethnography

My decision to employ an autoethnographic approach in this research is rooted in its unparalleled capacity to access and articulate the intricacies of personal and social experiences. This research method is particularly suited to exploring the profound impact of incarceration and grief because it allows for an intimate examination of how a person internalises and expresses these experiences. The subjectivity acknowledged and embraced in autoethnography makes it a powerful tool for understanding the personal significance of broader social phenomenon (Chang, 2008).

Moreover, autoethnography’s focus on narrative and storytelling aligns with the objectives of this thesis, which aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the temporal and identity-related consequences of imprisonment and personal loss. The emotional and psychological depths explored in autoethnographic research enable a comprehensive exploration of how time is experienced differently by those who have undergone incarceration and how these altered temporalities influence the grieving process. It also allows for the examination of how one's identity is performed and reformed in the wake of such defining experiences (Ellis et al., 2010).

Autoethnography is chosen for its effectiveness in capturing complex personal and social realities, providing a rich, detailed, and empathetic account of the phenomena under study. This approach not only enhances the academic understanding of these issues but also contributes to a more empathetic and informed discourse on the experiences of those affected by incarceration and grief.

3.3 The Data

Utilising an autoethnographic research design has implications for both the collection and use of data (Ellis et al., 2010; Ellis & Adams, 2014). With elements of autobiography and ethnography, autoethnography allows for a deep exploration of personal experiences to locate these experiences within wider social, cultural, and theoretical contexts (Chang, 2008). This method is particularly appropriate for exploring experiences of incarceration and for the introspective nature of my work because it allows for profound exploration of subjective and analytical aspects of lived experience. My approach prioritises a nuanced portrayal of the emotional truths of these experiences. This approach necessities a unique data collection that not only supports research that is inherently reflective but also explores transformative life events through various narrative forms.

3.3.1 Data Sources

The data sources used in this project each contributed something to this research. Together, they provided the basis for the narratives pivotal to understanding the long-term effects of incarceration. The following outlines each of my primary data sources.

Personal Journal

From my third day in remand, I maintained a journal. The first four months (three on remand, one sentence) have almost daily entries. From month five, the entries decreased to approximately weekly for the remainder of my sentence with sporadic additional entries if an event warranted some words on the paper. This journal is a critical data source as it contains reflections, thoughts, and experiences. Each offers an unfiltered glance into my emotional and psychological state during my prison experience. It shows the immediate impacts of the prison environment on identity and perception and highlights the different ways I responded to specific situations drawn on in this work (see Chapters Four to Seven). In my own words—some of which feel alien to me today because of how much I changed during that experience and since—I can see shifts in my identity; I can also see growth and struggle. I use quotes from this journal throughout this thesis.

Letters Received

In Chapter Six, I share a story that mentions how often I received mail. Compared to many others in my unit, I received a lot of correspondence from the outside and this unquestionably helped me cope with the prison experience. I kept every single item sent to me. Letters from family, friends, and acquaintances represent a direct line of social and emotional support from those outside of the physical boundaries of the prison. These letters now offer insights into how relationships and outside roles were maintained and altered by my incarceration. Specifically, I can see how others responded to my shifting identity, my growth, and the pain I shared.

Letters Sent Home

I wrote many letters to those waiting for me on the outside. One person, my mother, kept every letter I sent home. The letters I sent to her have been

invaluable to this process as they reflect attempts to maintain my sexual identity as a gay man through outside connections (see Chapter Six). Additionally, they show my evolution of thought, my hope for various futures, and the reflective nature of my coping strategies. These letters became a window into some of the personal narratives I shared within this thesis. More than this, they also highlight the shifts in my identity over the 12 months that I was incarcerated.

Legal Documents

I kept many of the legal documents related to my journey through the criminal justice system, including sentencing reports, parole applications and decisions, and letters from my lawyer. These documents were the least used of the data sources available to me, yet they provide a structured and formal view of the prison experience. They outline an institutional perspective and show the legal rationalities behind my sentencing and eventual parole. It is from these documents that I have felt comfortable arguing the significance of course access and in-unit employment when it came to my parole board appearances (see Chapter Four).

Memory as a Data Source

Memory is a significant data source in this research. It has allowed for the exploration of personal history, emotional nuances, and changes in my identity over the period covered by this thesis. Drawing upon my memory has enabled me to provide a deep internal perspective that is not always accessible through conventional data sources. This subjective aspect is crucial for understanding how past experiences impact present and future selves, which is essential for enriching the narrative and the analytical depth of my work.

However, using memory as a data source comes with specific challenges. Memories are not static; they can be reshaped by new experiences, emotional

states at the time of recall, social contexts, and various other factors (Schacter & Scarry, 2001). Furthermore, the process of drawing on memory can introduce personal bias and a person may unconsciously reshape their recollections to align with their perceptions of themselves or the purpose of recollection (Rowlands, 2016). Ethically, using memory in a project like this requires careful consideration to avoid potential harm (see the section on researcher harm below), as recalling past traumas can be distressing to the researcher. Therefore, while memory has been a valuable resource for enriching this research, it has demanded methodological scrutiny and sensitive handling to mitigate challenges. Accordingly, each story I share throughout this thesis draws on at least two of the aforementioned data sources.

The above data sources come together to offer a complex narrative of identity transformation shaped by personal and external interactions. My prison journal and letters shared with those in personal relationships highlight identity negotiation and coping strategies within the physical boundaries of a prison. In contrast, the legal documents frame my lived experiences within the institutional contexts and as controlled by the administrators of the power that dictates prison life. This combination of personal and institutional data adds layers to my analysis of how imprisonment impacts identity not only during the court-imposed sentence but also beyond release. Memory then adds an additional layer over and askew to that combination. The varied sources drawn on for this research ensure that the work is grounded in lived experiences. This approach enriches the understandings explored in this thesis, contributing to broader discourses in both sociology and criminology.

3.3.2 Data Collection Challenges

The data collection phase of the research process presented several significant challenges, especially concerning incomplete memories, emotional toll, and the organisation of different forms of data. I employed various

strategies to mitigate these challenges. In addition, ethical considerations are discussed as part of the complete ethics and considerations section starting on in 3.7.

To address the challenge of fragmented memory, I utilised triangulation strategies. This involved cross-verifying, where possible, information from my multiple data sources including memory, my personal journal, my various correspondence with my outside relationships, and legal documents. When necessary, this approach ensured a more complete narrative that did not solely rely on my recollection, providing a more accurate representation of the significant experiences drawn on in this thesis. The emotional toll of revisiting some of these experiences posed the most significant challenge. To manage this, I engaged in regular counselling sessions and leant on personal relationships when my reaction called for that type of support. These sources of support aided me in navigating the psychological and emotional strain of this work. Additionally, I paced the workload and took breaks when needed. This strategy assisted me in managing emotional fatigue yet also resulted in this thesis taking longer to complete than it otherwise could have.

3.4 Multifaceted Autoethnography

Throughout the process of telling my story, it became clear that one type of autoethnography would not suffice for the type of research I aimed to produce. Incorporating personal experiences of incarceration, identity transformation, and profound grief into one research project necessitated a multifaceted approach. This has seen me undertake three forms of autoethnography: analytical, narrative, and evocative. This approach integrates the storytelling and emotional depth of both narrative and evocative autoethnography, with the interpretative rigour of analytical autoethnography to provide a deep exploration of elements of my lived experiences within broader theoretical frameworks.

The difference between narrative and analytical autoethnographic approaches can be subtle, as both use stories to engage with theory. The primary difference between the two, particularly in my use of each as a component of the multifaceted approach employed in this research, is found in their central purpose and the role of theory in each approach (see Allen et al., 2015). Narrative approaches engage with theory to add context to the stories shared, primarily using storytelling to highlight the interplay between experiences and societal settings (Bochner & Ellis, 2002). Analytical approaches use stories to engage with and contribute to theoretical conversations, analysing personal experiences to challenge, expand, understand, or refine theoretical frameworks (Adams & Jones, 2013). The third type of autoethnography I employ in this research, evocative, uses emotional narratives to elicit a response, provoke reflection, and encourage an understanding of the experiences being shared (Ellis, 1997). I write emotionally at stages throughout this thesis and do so intentionally to illustrate the emotional landscape of these experiences rather than merely using my experiences to explore theoretical frameworks.

The multifaceted approach to autoethnography that I employ in this research becomes clearer through the following descriptions.

3.4.1 Narrative Autoethnography

A narrative approach to autoethnography uses storytelling to explore and connect the researcher's experiences to wider historical, socio-political, and cultural discourses (Ellis et al., 2010). This approach is characterised by the focus on personal narratives as the lens through which an understanding of personal experiences within wider societal contexts is sought (Holman Jones, 2008). Through detailed and reflective recounts of lived experiences, narrative autoethnography highlights the interplay between the personal and the cultural. This type of autoethnography requires the researcher to engage in both self and cultural introspection (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). It is particularly

effective in exploring the complexities of identity, experiences, and interactions within specific settings, such as a prison. It allows researchers to delve deeply into how their experiences are shaped by and contribute to shaping societal norms, expected behaviours, and social structures.

Narrative autoethnography uses an accessible form of storytelling to engage with both general and academic audiences (Ellis et al., 2010). It combines theoretical frameworks with narrative techniques to further understanding and engage readers in conversation that bridges the gap between the personal and the theoretical. The aim of this type of autoethnography is to engage critically with the story being shared and to examine how personal narrative reflects and constructs broader societal understandings (Trahar, 2009). Accordingly, narrative autoethnography is an effective methodological tool for providing insight into the interactions between the person and their wider societal constructs, including institutions like the prison. This approach is particularly effective in providing a platform for voices and stories often marginalized in traditional research methodologies (Chang, 2008).

3.4.2 Analytical Autoethnography

As briefly noted earlier in this section, analytical autoethnography emphasizes the connection between personal experiences, sociological understandings, and theoretical concepts (Anderson, 2006). This approach integrates rigorous analysis and rich personal narrative to explore connections between experiences and theoretical frameworks (Wall, 2006). Researchers using the analytical approach engage deeply with existing literature to analyse their narrative, aiming to contribute to academic conversations by understanding how lived experiences exhibit or challenge existing theory (Anderson, 2006). A research design employing this approach emphasises the examination of personal stories to provide insights into social processes and offer critical perspectives grounded in the researcher’s lived experiences.

The analytical approach to autoethnographic research requires the researcher to be fully visible in the research process, develop sociological understanding, and engage with theoretical concepts and frameworks (Anderson, 2006). This type of autoethnography is distinguishable from other types by its emphasis on conversing with existing literature, using the researcher's personal experiences as the case studies through which insights are explored and developed (Chang, 2008). The analytical approach to autoethnography requires a balance between evocation and analysis, as the shared stories must not only express personal experience but also be appropriate to critically engage with and expand on existing literature (Ellis et al., 2010). Accordingly, analytical autoethnography is an effective methodological tool for exploring the intersections of the personal and culture and providing a reflexive critique of both the self and the wider society within which they are situated (Anderson, 2006; Ellis et al., 2010).

3.4.3 Evocative Autoethnography

An evocative—also referred to as emotional or expressive—approach to autoethnography uses deeply personal stories to engage with readers' emotions. This approach aims to promote empathy and understanding by evoking specific feelings in the reader through detailed narratives exploring the researcher's experiences (Ellis, 1987, 2004). It seeks to go beyond mere academic analysis by sharing stories in an accessible form that elicits an emotional response to facilitate a deeper connection and an understanding of the experiences being used in the overall discussion (Bochner, 2014).

The evocative type of autoethnography is distinguishable from other types by its emphasis on revealing vulnerabilities and introspective details of the researcher's experiences (Bochner & Ellis, 2003). This approach leverages subjective and often deeply personal narratives to connect the reader with the text and foster an intimate understanding of the research's complexities. Accordingly, evocative autoethnography is an effective methodological tool for

exploring the deeply personal aspects of a researcher's story as well as often unrepresented experiences, such as the incarceration experience. It provides a means to express the nuanced interplay between personal experiences and wider societal contexts, often challenging conventional academic boundaries (Ellis, 2004; Anderson, 2006; Ellis et al., 2010).

3.4.4 Multifaceted Approach

I have a lot to say about the prison experience. I have a lot to share with any reader about my experiences of incarceration and grief. No single autoethnographic type could contain how I need to tell my story. I mention in various places throughout this thesis that I need to tell my story in a certain way, and I believe this is for various reasons. Firstly, the academic performance demands a specific type of storytelling and analysis to meet the requirements of an academic qualification, regardless of the research design. Secondly, my story needs to be told in a certain way because of when this all occurred. The various aspects of my story shared on these pages creates an assemblage resembling a form of the present. The period of calendar measured time these experiences occurred in and within which I recalled them, means that the form with which I have told this story is the form I feel I must have used. Thirdly, and most importantly to me, my story needs to be told in a certain way so that I retain emotional integrity and ownership over my experiences regardless of how often I share them. Grief plays a specific role here and leaves the future open to potentialities. The future is far from closed, and I hope I have told this story in a way that did not force any future shut. Accordingly, my approach to this autoethnographic research design is a shift between narrative and analytic approaches, with a touch of evocative when the story calls for it. Each of these three types could adequately address the problems to which this research speaks. However, together, they offer an approach that is most effective for my unique experience and honours the way I need to tell my story. This is not only my story but how I choose to tell it. This is how I must tell it.

Narrative autoethnography is effective because it enables me to engage with these discussions through storytelling and personal reflection. Analytical autoethnography is effective because it enables me to rigorously connect my temporal experiences of incarceration and grief with existing theoretical frameworks. Evocative autoethnography is effective because it adds a layer of emotion and provides lenses through which readers can connect on an empathetic level if they choose. My multifaceted approach of incorporating narrative, analytical, and evocative autoethnography in my thesis combines the strengths of each. My approach engages readers through the emotional approach of evocative autoethnography, vividly recalling experiences that evoke emotional responses (Ellis & Bochner, 2003; Ellis, 2004) and also structures my personal narratives to enhance understanding and reflection. It also integrates the required analytical component to connect my personal experiences to the theoretical frameworks I draw upon. This multifaceted approach allows me to explore my experiences in a nuanced way that informs, evokes, and engages.

Adopting this methodological approach to understanding temporal experiences and identity formation while incarcerated and the impact of grief, this thesis offers a nuanced and layered understanding of how imprisonment and loss disrupt and reshape temporal and social existence. Facilitated by my multifaceted approach to autoethnography, this thesis contributes to an understanding of the profound and lasting effects of incarceration, informed by evocative storytelling, clarity of narrative structure, and the inquiry of analytical insight.

3.5 Data Integration with Autoethnographic Methods

The integration of data within this project's multifaceted autoethnographic research design was organised to emphasise the strength of narrative, analytical, and evocative autoethnographies. This integration and the resulting

presentation of data as rich narratives aligns with the primary purpose of this research to explore the profound impact of incarceration on identity.

Narrative Autoethnography: I use the narrative approach primarily to structure the personal experiences I drew from my journal, letters, and recollections into coherent and useful stories. This type of autoethnography ensures that the data is more than isolated views of past events. Rather, the data becomes a continuous and evolving story that reflects changes in my identity throughout and beyond my incarceration. Through organising the data into narratives, I highlight connections between different experiences during my incarceration and my identity in the years since. These narratives are essential in making the data relatable and understandable to readers and as part of my overall argument.

Analytical Autoethnography: I use the analytical approach to connect personal narratives to theoretical frameworks and discussions. Each piece of data used in this research—whether a journal entry, letter, document, or memory—was analysed to draw out relevant themes. This method involved me identifying aspects of each narrative that applied to the theories and existing research findings upon which I draw, thereby situating my lived experiences within a wider societal context. The analytical approach provides a means to understand the incarceration experience and ground relevant theoretical concepts in lived experience.

Evocative Autoethnography: I used the evocative method to bring emotional depth to the presentation of the data. This approach places emphasis on the emotional responses within and to the experiences shared on these pages, aiming to engage the reader and evoke empathetic understanding. Through my detailed description of relevant experiences, I aim to convey the very personal impact of incarceration, and grief, and its long-term effects on identity. This approach is particularly effective in the narratives addressing grief, loss,

and my struggle for identity. The goal in these sections is not just to share, but also to resonate emotionally.

Together, the three autoethnographic methods enable a comprehensive presentation of the data I have available. The narrative element provides a structural basis, the analytic element a critical and theoretical depth, while the evocative adds emotional layers to illustrate the profound impacts discussed. This multifaceted approach ensures that the objective of this thesis is met with both academic rigour and emotional integrity, presenting a balanced, insightful, and human exploration of the incarceration experience and its impact on identity formation.

3.6 Insider Perspectives and Comparative Approaches to Incarceration

Understanding incarceration requires more than detached observation; it necessitates engagement with the voices of those who have lived through it. Insider perspectives—whether from formerly incarcerated people, corrections officers, or prison volunteers—offer invaluable insights into the everyday realities of imprisonment, the structures of power that shape prison life, and the long-term effects of incarceration on identity. This section situates my research within the broader field of insider and comparative studies of incarceration, drawing on convict criminology and ethnographic and autoethnographic accounts specific to New Zealand. By engaging with these perspectives, I highlight both the commonalities and the unique aspects of my experience, demonstrating how the prison sentence extends beyond the physical boundaries of the prison and continues to reshape identity over time. The following discussion first examines convict criminology as a field that challenges traditional criminological approaches by centring the lived experiences of formerly incarcerated researchers. It then explores key New Zealand-based ethnographic and autoethnographic studies, contextualising

my own work within existing literature to articulate the particularities of my experience.

3.6.1 Convict Criminology

Originating from the experiences of formerly incarcerated academics, convict criminology offers nuanced insight into the systemic and personal challenges faced by those who go through the prison system. Accordingly, this field not only offers perspectives that complement my approach to this research but also a field of academic discussion to which my research contributes. This experience-driven viewpoint illuminates the long-term impact of incarceration not just as a theoretical perspective but as a set of lived realities. Engaging with this perspective deepens my discussion about the temporal impacts of prison and the ongoing negotiation of identities that those impacts necessitate, broadening the scope of my discussion further beyond traditional academic constraints.

Similar to autoethnography, convict criminology prioritises personal experiences of the justice system and challenges traditional academic methodologies (Richards & Ross, 2001). This specific approach to criminology confronts distant and empirical perspectives that dominate conventional criminology and introduces a profound insider's perspective to the conversations to which it contributes (Jones et al., 2009). The insights that come from lived experiences of incarceration are invaluable as they provide nuanced perspectives into the dynamics and complexities of incarceration and the effects it has on those who have been imprisoned (Earle, 2016). The addition of convict criminology broadens the analytical scope of my research and offers a more comprehensive understanding of how imprisonment impacts identities as well as enriching practical discussions of the long-term effects of incarceration (see Newbold et al., 2014; Ross et al., 2014).

This approach brings to the forefront the perspectives of those who have experienced incarceration, including personal narratives regarding stigma and identity transformation (LeBel, 2012), reintegration challenges (Travis, 2005), solidarity (Earle, 2016), and psychological effects (Moran et al., 2016; see also Terry, 2003; Kerman, 2010; Earle & Phillips, 2012; Comfort, 2019). This awareness of personal narratives enhances the depth of my discussion, allowing for a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the prison experience. This deeper understanding is particularly valuable in exploring the effects of incarceration on identity and social structures and in understanding how these experiences affect life trajectories (Tewksbury & Ross, 2019).

Work done in the field of convict criminology deepens our understanding of how incarceration impacts identity over time, specifically at the intersection of identity, temporality, and power (see Chapter Eight). As two examples, the themes of the lasting stigma of incarceration (LeBel, 2012) and reintegration challenges (Travis, 2005) are central to convict criminology, enabling insights into the reach of the sentence beyond incarceration. Both are relevant to my work because of how they illuminate the lasting impact of imprisonment on identity. The stigma associated with incarceration seeps into various facets of a person’s life and can affect employment, relationships, and connections with their communities (Travis, 2005; see also Chapter Eight for my discussion of how a temporal justice can address these barriers). Insider perspectives on these challenges, and the other themes to which this thesis contributes, highlight how the identity of those formerly incarcerated is continuously shaped and reshaped (Weaver & Lerman, 2010).

The ongoing negotiation of identity caused by stigma and reintegration barriers, as well as the temporal experiences discussed throughout this thesis, can result in a continuous state of penal subjectivity, within which those formerly incarcerated feel as though they are still serving a sentence long after they have left the physical boundaries of the prison (Moran et al., 2016). Furthermore, barriers to reintegration are structurally embedded within policies and practices that restrict access to housing, education, and public services

(Visher & Travis, 2003). Convict criminology underscores how these barriers reinforce the identity of someone formerly incarcerated. This highlights how they must not only continuously navigate a landscape that keeps them in a carceral framework (Pager, 2008), but also negotiate environments within which their temporal experiences are still controlled, arranged, and limited.

The emphasis of convict criminology on the experiential insights of formerly incarcerated researchers, including myself, significantly enhances the credibility and relevance of my research. This first-hand perspective ensures that the discussions in this thesis reflect a lived reality of direct experiences of the prison system. Such methodological enrichment is essential in addressing gaps in traditional criminological literature, where the voices of those most affected by incarceration are often silenced or underrepresented. By integrating personal experiences, my research contributes to a more comprehensive and empathetic understanding of incarceration and its profound, never-ending effects on people (Richards et al., 2010).

Insider perspectives also add layers of understanding to the theoretical frameworks upon which I draw. To Deleuze's concepts of the virtual and actual (see Chapters Two and Seven), convict criminology adds insights into the daily realities of incarceration. Deleuze's idea that the virtual encompasses potentialities that exist in tension with actualisations, aids understanding of how incarcerated people navigate identity formation while incarcerated. Lived experiences highlight the interplay between the actual and virtual, enriching an understanding of Deleuzian concepts and deepening their relevance to my overall discussion. To Butler's notion of performativity (see Chapter Six), which argues that identity is constructed through repeat performances, these perspectives emphasise performativity while incarcerated through an understanding of how people may adopt certain behaviours and roles as survival strategies. Lived experiences of incarceration are examples of identities being performed, and often in ways that differ from outside identities (see Chapters Six and Seven for a discussion of my gender performance while incarcerated). To Foucault's discussion of power, discipline, and punishment,

insider perspectives offer nuanced understandings to descriptions of the prison environment. Foucault (1977) describes how the prison system uses various mechanisms to control and normalise expected behaviours and create docile bodies. Observations from lived experiences add layers to the understandings offered by Foucault as they take the ideas from theory to lived realities, enhancing our understanding of how power is experienced and exercised in the prison system.

By drawing these connections, convict criminology not only provides empirical grounding for theoretical discussions but also offers a critical insider perspective that challenges and extends these frameworks, offering a richer, more nuanced understanding of the complex dynamics of incarceration. By incorporating insights from convict criminology, this thesis broadens its examination of the long-term effects of incarceration on identity formation. The empirical data and theoretical analysis provided by convict criminologists are instrumental in articulating how the temporal and social existence of formerly incarcerated people is disrupted and reconstituted over time.

In my work, I strive to enhance understanding of the profound effects incarceration has on identity by intertwining my personal experiences with rich theoretical insights. This endeavour enriches the knowledge base of convict criminology, emphasizing aspects of the prison experience such as the nuances of temporalities and grief—elements often neglected in conventional criminological studies. By integrating convict criminology with the broad and complex theories of thinkers like Butler, Foucault, and Deleuze, I offer insights into the dynamics of power, time, and identity within the prison system. This integration aids in bridging the gap between abstract theoretical concepts and the tangible, lived experiences of incarcerated people, thereby enhancing the theoretical foundations of convict criminology.

Utilising an autoethnographic approach in my research allows me to challenge traditional and detached approaches to research into incarceration that have

previously dominated criminology and sociology. This research design legitimises personal narratives within academic research and advocates for a more inclusive and reflexive approach to conversations on issues in criminal justice and prison systems. The insights and insider perspectives that I offer about the profound and enduring impact of incarceration on identity carry implications for prison reform, policy, reintegration, and rehabilitation strategies. By highlighting how the sentence never truly ends, I underscore the necessity of support systems that respect and assist those formerly incarcerated. I use my story to advocate not only for policy changes, but for a different approach to justice entirely: temporal justice (see Chapter Eight).

My work amplifies the voices of those directly impacted by the prison system and centralises lived experiences within academic discussion. My intention is to offer my story as a resource for students, fellow academics, policymakers, and even to the general public to understand that a sentence of incarceration never ends because it shapes and reshapes identity through the impact it has on temporal experience.

While convict criminology highlights the importance of insider perspectives, it is equally useful to ground this discussion within Aotearoa New Zealand's specific context. Comparative ethnographic and autoethnographic literature on imprisonment in this country provides a lens to articulate both the commonalities and the particularities of my incarceration experience. The following section examines relevant research on prison experiences in New Zealand, allowing for a clearer articulation of how my incarceration experience contributes to this broader discourse.

3.6.2 Comparative Ethnographic and Autoethnographic Literature on Incarceration in New Zealand

Incorporating comparative ethnographic and autoethnographic literature on incarceration in New Zealand provides a lens to articulate both the

commonalities and particularities of my experience. This engagement not only situates my narrative within the broader context of New Zealand's prison system but also highlights unique aspects of my incarceration experience.

Ethnographic and Autoethnographic Studies in New Zealand

Richards' (2014) study on female inmates at Christchurch Women's Prison provides a critical examination of incarceration's impact on identity and reintegration. Using an autoethnographic and mixed-methods approach, Richards collected data from 82 inmates via questionnaires and conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 participants. Additionally, they incorporated excerpts from their own prison journal, using autoethnography to provide an insider perspective on the lived experiences of incarceration. Key findings indicate that imprisonment reinforces a criminal identity rather than facilitating rehabilitation, with inmates adapting to a "prisoner" persona to navigate the institutional environment. The research highlights the disempowering effects of incarceration, particularly for women, and questions the system's ability to support successful reintegration (see also Kale, 2020; Gibson 2022, 2023; Loughnan, 2022; Ward, 2023).

Oldfield's (2023) autoethnographic study, 'Penal Populism, Prison and Performance Measures: Autoethnography of a New Zealand Corrections Officer', critically examines the contradictions within offender rehabilitation policies and the broader penal system in New Zealand. He highlights how penal populism, driven by political and media narratives, perpetuates punitive approaches rather than addressing structural causes of crime. His reflections as a former corrections officer reveal the superficiality of prisoner-officer relationships, the ineffectiveness of performance-based measures in reducing recidivism, and the entrenched colonial dynamics within the justice system. Oldfield ultimately questions the efficacy of prisons in achieving their rehabilitative mandate, arguing that they often exacerbate rather than mitigate

cycles of criminality (see also Napier, 2012; Trounson & Pfeifer, 2017; Dowd, 2020; Bowling, 2022; Johnstone & Gilbert, 2023).

Greg Newbold's research provides significant contributions to the ethnographic and insider study of New Zealand's prison system. Formerly incarcerated, Newbold later became a criminologist, and his work offers a unique perspective that combines lived experience with academic analysis. His works, including *The Problem of Prisons* (2007) and *Punishment and Politics: The Maximum Security Prison in New Zealand* (1989), critically examine New Zealand's justice policies, the social structures within prisons, and the effects of incarceration. Additionally, 'Prison Research from the Inside: The Role of Convict Autoethnography' explores the significance of insider perspectives in criminological research, situating his experiences within the broader framework of convict criminology (Newbold et al., 2014). His contributions to 'Prison as Seen by Convict Criminologists' further emphasize the importance of firsthand accounts in understanding incarceration (Richards et al., 2010). Newbold's insider perspective lends authenticity to the study of prison life, as he draws on personal experience to analyse the complexities of power, survival strategies, and the long-term effects of imprisonment. His work is particularly valuable in examining how the incarcerated navigate institutional power structures, resist dehumanization, and reconstruct their identities both during and after incarceration (see also Winfree, Newbold, & Tubb, 2002, Ross et al. 2014; Taonui, & Newbold, 2016; Newbold, 2016).

Articulating the Particularities of My Experience

Engaging with these and other studies allows for a nuanced comparison between documented experiences and my own. Richards' exploration of female inmates' experiences resonates with my observations of how institutional policies can shape identity. However, my experience diverges in terms of gender dynamics and the specific challenges faced by males while incarcerated, particularly concerning expressions of masculinity and

vulnerability within the prison context (see Chapter Six). Oldfield's reflections on the superficiality of prisoner-officer relationships and the impact of performance measures align with my experiences of navigating institutional expectations and the often-transactional nature of interactions within the prison. Yet, my perspective as an incarcerated person provides a contrasting viewpoint to Oldfield's as an officer, particularly in understanding the power dynamics and the lived reality of those subjected to these institutional policies.

Newbold's work provides the closest parallel to my own in that it represents an insider's perspective on incarceration in this country, even with our experiences occurring decades apart and in different prisons. His approach to criminology is shaped by his own experiences as a prisoner, allowing him to bridge the gap between theoretical analysis and the realities of prison life. However, his research primarily focuses on prison policies, power structures, and inmate survival strategies, while my work extends this discussion by examining how incarceration disrupts and reshapes temporal experience and identity beyond the prison sentence. Whereas Newbold emphasises the institutional mechanics of prison life, my focus lies in the lingering effects of incarceration—how the sentence never truly ends and how it continues to structure time and identity long after release.

By situating my narrative alongside these studies, I can articulate the unique aspects of my experience, particularly concerning the interplay of identity, power dynamics, and the temporal dimensions of incarceration. This comparative approach not only enriches the understanding of my personal journey but also contributes to the broader discourse on incarceration in Aotearoa New Zealand, offering insights that bridge lived experiences with systemic analyses.

3.7 Ethics & Challenges

Conducting any research involves a process of decision-making, within which ethical considerations, research design considerations, and challenges of the chosen design are paramount; this is especially prevalent with an autoethnographic approach (Ellis et al., 2010). An autoethnography demands that researchers engage with their lived experiences and situate those experiences within their chosen academic context. Due to the various elements of my multifaceted approach to autoethnography, specific ethical considerations, including the potential for researcher harm, were considered and managed to a degree that required constant reflection and adjustment. The following outlines the primary ethical and research design considerations of this process.

Ethical considerations for an autoethnographic thesis include personal and reflective elements. Specifically, a constant awareness of my own biases and perspectives is required to ensure I am interpreting and understanding my experiences and personal transformation in a way that feels authentic to me. As this research seeks to contribute to broader discourses, I have an ethical responsibility to ensure interpretations, claims, reflections, and insights are presented with integrity and in a form that respects those who share similar experiences.

Exploring the ethical implications for something as personal as this thesis presents various challenges. From the outset, I felt challenged by any notion that someone could tell me how I should tell *my story.* I felt confronted by the idea that I had to apply ethics to something I believe I own: *my story*. While the question of story ownership has been challenged in other ways throughout this process, when it came to ethics, I started this process with a firm mindset that no one had the right to dictate any aspect of my storytelling. It was not until I gained insight into the potential harm an exploration of this kind could cause a researcher that I reengaged with the relevant ethical considerations

and became less rigid about whom could tell me what. The possible harm I am speaking of here is the potential for researcher harm from an autoethnographic approach. However, before I could engage with those considerations, I first had to find my voice and ensure my research would be valid.

3.7.1 Finding My Voice, Researcher Harm, Vulnerability & Ethical Storytelling

Every research design has its own challenges. However, autoethnography demands a specific type of strength. Depending on what stories a researcher decides to draw upon, the constant revisiting of significant life events is, at times, extremely confronting. Previously grown-over scabs barely heal before they are ripped off once again. Revisiting the same story over and over often requires revisiting reimaginings of those stories because not only must the researcher recall the same memory, but they must recall other times when they recalled it and even other times when they must revisit multiple recalls seemingly mashed into one memory. Each revisit, recall, and interpretation adds layers to the experience. Even every potential interpretation deemed to be of no use to the argument adds layers. Scabs grow upon scabs, new sores emerge, and they all demand to be picked at almost down to the bone to drain every ounce of insight and intellectual goodness from the memories that inform the stories in this academic performance.

Confronted by this mass of reimagining, there were times when I felt conquered by this process. I have given up more times than I can count and ignored this work for weeks at a time. Many times, I have simply just been done with this. I have thrown my arms in the air in defeat, ignored my supervisors, and brushed off inquiries about the status of my PhD with a chuckle, a sarcastic quip, or a shrug. At other times I have found myself sobbing uncontrollably on my sofa, triggered by some random song on a Spotify playlist and raw from revisiting the same experiences and pain for the seemingly 1000th time. Even times when I know what I am about to read,

because I wrote it, can still hit me like a tonne of bricks as if I was experiencing the described moment again for the first time. Once a lived experience is unpacked from the metaphorical backpack we all carry through life, it cannot be stuffed back in the same form it was dragged out. Once that beast is opened, it must be confronted.

The act of sharing personal narratives, specifically those that relate to incarceration and grief, demands an awareness of emotional well-being. As I navigated through memories and experiences, I constantly weighed the potential implications of revealing certain aspects of those experiences. In Chapters Six and Seven, I refer to behaviours and attitudes I performed in prison to succeed in my performance as a heterosexual. I am ashamed of many of these behaviours and attitudes today, and the decision to reveal some of them in this work was not an easy one. The process of sharing experiences like this can be therapeutic, yet it comes with specific challenges (Etherington, 2007). Considerations were essential to ensure these revelations, or confessions, did no harm to myself or others. So, too, was the awareness of biases so that I could ensure I confessed my behaviours and attitudes as a contribution to this discussion, not just for the benefit of getting them off my chest. This awareness and constant check-in with myself came with a commitment to reflexivity and respect for both myself and the wider community to which I wish to contribute for the better.

My commitment to autoethnographic research meant revisiting, reimaging, and re-analysing experiences of grief, incarceration, shame, guilt, and identity concealment. This approach exposed me to the potential for emotional and psychological harm as I revisited the most traumatic, fearful, and heartbreaking times of my life. Approaching this storytelling with openness and vulnerability risked the reappearance of previously experienced emotions and the emergence of new ones, especially as the academic telling of a personal experience demands a different form than the usual approach one would take to sharing a memory. The process of analysing and dissecting my experiences and then returning to them to see if there is more to interpret, and then

returning to them once again to check previous interpretations enhances the risk of reliving the emotional and psychological challenges of both incarceration and the sudden loss of a loved one. Recalling moments when I adhered to heteronormative expectations as a mechanism of survival caused me to relive the emotions of guilt and shame I feel in respect of the actions and behaviours I engaged in to successfully portray myself as straight while incarcerated (see Chapter Seven).

In the context of the narratives in this thesis, the concept of ‘narrative wreckage’ is apt. Introduced by Frank (1995), specifically related to illness yet applicable to other narratives, this concept refers to what occurs when a person confronts an experience that significantly disrupts their life narrative. This disruption can create chaos in someone’s life story, interfering with past, present, and future perceptions. According to Frank, the act of creating narratives around that experience is not just about telling the story; it is also a way of reestablishing control over the chaos caused by the description. For autoethnographic researchers, such a disruption can challenge coherence and cause a crisis of meaning, which is as sociologically significant as the story itself (McAdams, 2001).

Additionally, regardless of how many people will read this work, once it is published, it is in text forever. Such a public sharing of a personal narrative exposes an autoethnographic researcher to potential social or professional harm, especially if confessed experiences involve acts and attitudes open to critique. At worst, this type of confessional writing can expose a researcher to stigmatisation, judgement, or even discrimination (Rambo, 2005). Accordingly, the potential for researcher harm extends beyond the act of writing or researching when employing an autoethnographic research design. An engagement with the autoethnographic approach can result in deep explorations of personal and sensitive topics, increasing the risk of researcher vulnerability (Dickson-Swift et al., 2007). This vulnerability can emerge when researchers publicise their personal experiences and subsequently invite scrutiny, judgment, and critique (Adams & Jones, 2011). Reactions from others

to a vulnerable autoethnographic piece of writing can affect emotional well-being and even identity (Etherington, 2007). A commitment to honest and vulnerable storytelling must be weighed against risks posed by revealing intimate details of personal experiences. Reflexivity and ongoing reflection of personal responses during the research process are strategies for avoiding or managing these risks (Boucher & Ellis, 2016; see also Sparkes, 2013). Personally, I do not fear how my words will be interpreted and am not concerned if I will be judged by my actions and attitudes while incarcerated. Most readers will have opinions, and some may even feel inclined to share those opinions with me. This does not concern me simply because no one could be harsher than I have been on myself.

Throughout this process, I have engaged in many internal dialogues questioning how I can make up for the mistakes of my past, especially after I convinced myself that my 'straight guy' behaviour and attitude contributed to the perpetuation of heteronormative privilege (see Chapter Six). The challenge is those specific actions have no direct victim; no one was specifically harmed by my straight performance in prison or by the actions and jokes that the performance required. That has left me with a question of to whom one should atone when there are no obvious victims of their wrongdoing. Engaging in these internal dialogues and self-critique exposed me to potentially significant researcher harm, especially as I wrote words around these dialogues and presented them to others. At its worst, the guilt became overwhelming, and I experienced a few panic attacks. I quickly sought help to address those reactions and am thankful that they stopped as quickly as they came on. Regardless, these experiences have taught me that the harshness of my self-critique cannot be surpassed by others' attempts to critique me, and I do not fear anybody's judgement of my words.

I am still, however, left with a question of atonement. As I became stronger and could deal with the emotions of my past less chaotically, my mind often drifted to how I could correct the imbalance and 'unperpeptuate' that to which I had contributed: the resounding societal norms around heteronormativity. I

eventually realised that the answer to the question of who it is to whom I can atone is future generations. Through the act of writing this PhD, I can challenge stereotypes and assumptions of sexuality and expose the harm caused by heteronormative privilege and the attached expectations of behaviour and attitude, both as part of incarceration and generally. I can offer my narrative to contribute to this discourse by writing in a confessional tone and with vulnerability. Almost ironically, my self-exposure to the dangers of researcher harm also exposed me to the mediums I could use to counter that harm: purpose and vulnerability.

It is vital that those engaging in an autoethnographic process acknowledge the potential for researcher harm and understand the strategies that best suit their self-care, support, and coping (Ellis, 2004; Ellis & Adams, 2014). Clear boundaries are one common strategy used by autoethnographic researchers (Wall, 2006). I have employed this strategy by keeping some experiences and memories to myself, regardless of how useful they might have been to this narrative and the core argument of this thesis. By keeping these aspects close to my heart, I could retreat within those protected boundaries when I needed to escape from the academic performance and the form with which my stories must be told to meet academic expectations. Keeping some memories in a more pure and unanalysed form built a secret garden from which my most treasured memories of James could never escape and to which I could retreat when I needed a respite. Other researchers establish clear boundaries around the details of the experiences they are willing to share and solidify these expectations and limitations with support from professionals, ensuring a continuous check-in on well-being and emotional health (Wall, 2006). I saw a counsellor before and during this process and will continue to do so as this process concludes. However, I mention this only to state the importance of this type of support as an essential coping strategy for the challenges that an autoethnographic approach can pose; I will not discuss it further than that.

3.7.2 Validity and Ethical Representativeness

While this discussion aims to offer a nuanced exploration of the long-term impact of incarceration on identity, it is essential to acknowledge and consider the limitations of the autoethnographic approach. One key limitation comes from the inherent and necessary subjectivity in this kind of research (Denzin, 2013). Personal experiences and perspectives significantly influence the interpretations deployed in autoethnographic research (Sparkes, 2024). While this subjectivity is essential to provide a nuanced understanding of the research area, it can risk over-generalisation and result in a misinterpretation that one's experiences mimic that of a population. The nuances of my incarceration experience are unique to my journey; they do not necessarily encapsulate the experiences of others who have also been incarcerated. I must, therefore, acknowledge that this research presents one example of an incarceration experience, and I make that acknowledgment in the first chapter. This narrative is distinctively mine, and I do not claim to speak for, understand, or represent the incarceration experience for anybody other than myself. Incarceration experiences are deeply personal and influenced by various factors, such as gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity. The personal nature of the narratives used in autoethnographic research can result in biased data interpretation and presentation (Ellis et al., 2010). The emotional connection to the stories being used and analysed can influence the emphasis of some experiences over others (Etherington, 2007; Chang, 2008). Accordingly, I have cautiously applied my experiences as one understanding to explore the key issues within this thesis.

Other potential limitations include data validity concerns (Chang, 2008), sceptical reception by targeted audiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), narrative complexity not necessarily maintaining scholarly rigour (Bochner & Ellis, 2003), the time-intensive nature of extensive introspection (Reed-Danahay, 2021), the influence of a researcher's background of their narrative (Spry, 2001), and interdisciplinary clashes (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2008). Regardless of the potential limitations of autoethnographic research, it proves

to be the most effective method for the discussions explored throughout this thesis, specifically because it leverages personal experiences to critically engage with and illuminate broader societal concepts, particularly temporal justice, in the context of incarceration (see Chapter Eight).

3.7.3 Consent & Representative Storytelling

In research designs with participants, informed consent is an essential ethical component (Sieber, 1992). Autoethnographic research presents different challenges as the primary data comes from the researcher's experiences (Tolich, 2010). The constant shift between the roles of researcher and participant requires an ongoing process of self-consent, not merely a one-off conscious decision, where the researcher must assess their comfort with that which they are disclosing (as discussed in the researcher harm section above, also see Custer, 2014). Furthermore, relationships with others are inevitably part of the narrative scripted in forms of research like this. While these others are not research participants in a literal sense, their inclusion in the researcher's narrative requires an awareness of consent. The ethical principle of doing no harm is applied when others appear as part of my narratives (Jone et al., 2016), as is a continuous and ongoing consideration of the rights to privacy and dignity. In my writing, I have used pseudonyms instead of real names and have excluded any identifiable characteristics or details to maintain anonymity. At times, I have employed a poetic license and added characteristics for a layer of detail to ensure the person cannot be identified, perhaps even by themselves (see Walford, 2005 for a discussion of the challenges in keeping descriptions of others anonymous, due to the richness required for authentic storytelling). The only person, other than myself in the stories on these pages who is referred to by their real name and without fictitious characteristics is James. I lied about his name and gender in prison, and I refuse to do that ever again. Thankfully, his sister agreed with this approach.

The ethical principle of beneficence, or the moral obligation to act for the benefit of others, influences the approach to narratives in autoethnographic research due to the broader societal impact these narratives can have (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2016). My sharing of my story, particularly with the confessional aspects, is driven by a desire and intention for social betterment and as a contribution to understanding the issues explored in this thesis, namely the incarceration experience and the long-term effects it has on identity. In considering this obligation, I remain aware of the potential for narrative work to perpetuate stereotypes and privilege (see Ellis & Adams, 2014). Accordingly, through critical reflexivity, I have constantly questioned how my experiences, perspectives, social and positioning influenced the form with which these narratives took. My work aims to contribute to discussions of positive social change, not to reinforce the status quo (see Poulos, 2008).

Ethical and representative storytelling in autoethnography refers to the accuracy with which experiences are recalled and told. Writing in a personal narrative form has the potential for a self-serving bias and opens space for a selective memory process that makes the researcher look good. This exposes specific ethical dilemmas around authenticity within the narrative (see Bochner & Ellis, 2016). I feel I have engaged with my narrative construction with honesty, openness, and vulnerability. As discussed above, there were times where I took my writing to the other extreme; instead of being self-serving, parts of my writing were self-critical. However, instead of this being an ethical concern within my research, it was always a conscious decision, and I remain aware of what I have shared and why I have shared it. Furthermore, I am aware of my bias about New Zealand's criminal justice system and clearly exposed my infuriation with the system from the preface of this thesis.

3.7.4 Ethical and Methodological Synergy

My approach to this research exceeds an adherence to academic standards. It is underpinned by a commitment to ethically and authentically representing

lived experiences of incarceration, grief, and identity transformation. My commitment informed the methodological decisions and ethical considerations that guided this research project, from the forms through which I engaged with the data to how I presented the narratives. The use of multiple autoethnographic styles enhances the fields to which I contribute by integrating personal, and often emotional, narratives with intellectual contemplation. This methodology illuminates the human elements of sociological and criminological data and offers a narrative that challenges the traditional confines of academic research. Accordingly, the approach I have taken to this work aims to make complex social issues like incarceration and grief not only more complete but also more relatable.

A synergy between ethical considerations and methodological challenges is a strong theme of this research. It reflects the conscientious effort on my part to maintain reflexivity and integrity throughout this process, to ensure that the narratives are both methodologically sound and ethically responsible. This approach upholds the dignity of all participants, primarily myself as the researcher, but also those connected to and who have shared these experiences. In doing so, this approach also maintains the genuineness of the narrative. Accordingly, through the navigation of ethical and methodological considerations in synergy with one another, my research adheres to academic standards and contributes to a nuanced and empathetic understanding of the prison experience.

3.8 I Must Resist

My act of writing this thesis transcends the academic performance; it is deliberate, conscious, and an overt act of resistance against the arrangement of my experiences. I write in resistance against the oppressive, violent, and life-destroying structures of incarceration. My work is not merely an academic pursuit; it is a statement against the systematic arrangement of the incarceration experience and its long-term impact on identities. Throughout

this thesis, I explore the impact of the complex dynamics of incarceration on identity formation and expressions of identity markers such as gender and sexuality. My narratives challenge the overreliance on and overuse of conventional concepts of time and space to understand a prison experience. My stories confront the bland and two-dimensional portrayals of incarcerated people and demand that the imprisoned be acknowledged as more than people who can be arranged by those who control the time (the sentence) and space (the physical boundaries) of imprisonment. By bringing into this discussion a lived experience of incarceration, my own, this thesis actively resists the normative discourse that surrounds incarceration and often renders experiences of imprisonment invisible or irrelevant.

The methodology adopted in this research is itself an act of resistance. At its core, autoethnographic research prioritises the voice of the researcher. In this situation, that voice is mine, someone who has experienced how imprisonment and the concealment of parts of myself while incarcerated affected my identity long after I was released. By offering my narrative in a form that intertwines the personal with academic inquiry, I actively resist the homogenisation of experience that is common in academic discourse, especially those discourses related to an analysis of the prison experience. My approach challenges those two-dimensional descriptions of an incarceration experience as time and space and contributes to a more nuanced understanding of imprisonment than many of those previously offered, which I believe have neglected the long-term impact of identity due to misunderstanding the experience. In some situations, this is because those writing about the prison experience have not lived through it themselves.

Furthermore, my act of writing this thesis is a reassertion of my agency over narratives that the justice system, and those in administrative power, have tried to arrange and control. I write to reassert my agency over my identity beyond the control of the societal norms and behavioural expectations that caused me to act in ways alien to a less fake identity but also to the person I want to be, not the person I performed while incarcerated. In an environment where

identity is suppressed, my act of writing about these experiences is an act of defiance against the power structures that seek to define and limit the self, and to reshape identity into a form that better meets outdated and stereotypical social norms and public expectations. My work is, therefore, more than an academic contribution; it is an act of resistance and a call to other academics to acknowledge that incarceration is not just time and space; it never ends, and to join me in resisting the arrangement of the incarceration experience because of the long-term impact it has on identity.

I must resist, even at a price.

3.9 The Academic Cell & Unforeseen Consequences of the Autoethnography

I have wondered if living through the incarceration experience was easier than writing about it.

While I left behind the physical and literal prison over a decade ago, the cell in my mind remains. My prison experience is yet to leave that cell because it has not served what I believe to be my ultimate purpose in response to that experience: influencing change in the way academics, policymakers, and the general public understand the experience of incarceration. I must believe that my prison experience was about more than the consequences of my offending. The lasting impact on my family and myself tells me it must be about more. While I have already been blessed with opportunities to share my experiences, within which my openness about my experiences has helped others, that is not yet enough. I want more. Thus, metaphorically, at least, a prison cell still encloses me, and I cannot leave it behind until the experiences related to it achieve something that will outlast me.

I started my PhD journey in a frazzled state. Driven by waves of guilt and shame that I did not yet understand, I was in a panicked-driven rush. I ignored advice and concern from supervisors, friends, and professionals (such as my long-term counsellor) and was determined to do it my way. I had convinced myself that I knew exactly what I needed to do and why. I was going to be the one to change New Zealand's criminal justice system, and I was going to achieve that in a hurry, succeeding where others had failed. In hindsight, the mess I made in the early stages of my PhD was a blessing. Something was not right, and looming failure forced me to confront what was influencing my frazzled state. It took the aforementioned panic attacks and emotional outbursts to identify the guilt I was carrying about my actions, the privilege I experienced in prison, and the shame I felt over the various decisions I made while inside. One such decision, which is covered in detail in Chapters Six and Seven, influences how I see myself today and my relationship with my sexuality. An awareness of the significance of this decision nudged me to the realisations and perspectives driving this thesis. Accepting the guilt and shame I was carrying made me realise that a prison sentence never ends and the long-term impact of incarceration on identity formation is considerable.

How someone responds to their experience of incarceration through the flux of temporalities that comprise 'the time' of a sentence is one reason why a prison sentence never ends because responding to a prison sentence also never ends. This thesis represents my ongoing response to my experience of incarceration. My identity formation continues to be affected by the year I sat in prison, the way I have responded to that experience since, and how I have resisted the arrangement of my experiences. However, deciding to use my prison experience to respond to it shunted me into another form of a prison cell, that which is formed by the expectations of academia and the demands of the academic performance.

An academic performance demands specific things. Similar to displaying 'good character' to decision-makers in prison to gain parole eligibility, certain characteristics and skills must be portrayed to demonstrate suitability for an

academic qualification. Using my experiences in this performance added layers I was unprepared for, nor were they easy to navigate. Receiving feedback on writing that includes my story can never be completely depersonalised. Regardless of the intention of the person giving feedback and irrespective of what that feedback says, my story is involved. There is always a risk that it will feel personal as if my experience is being critiqued, not my academic prowess.

These are my stories. This is my life. You weren't there. You don't understand.

My contribution to these academic conversations and my suitability to be a contributor relies on my ability to make the reader understand. This necessity demands a specific academic performance. It demands that I tell my story in ways that best suit the argument I am trying to make. Parts of my story must be left on the cutting room floor because they do not add to the conversation. Regardless of how important they are to me; they are not important to this conversation and so must be left out. Other experiences are so essential to the argument that they demand constant revisiting and reimaging to ensure I am telling them in a way that best suits the purpose and that they support the thesis argument. Those experiences have been relentlessly reread and tweaked, with every word considered and reconsidered so often that I have been thrown back and forth between those pasts and new presents, within which I have revisited those pasts too often to count.

Consequently, my memories of those lived experiences are forever changed by the performance on these thesis pages. I understand and view those experiences differently now. I remember them differently. However, through these retellings and performances, I have gained insight into my experiences and the consequences of my actions and choices. Through this academic performance, I have gained those insights in a unique way, and I am grateful for that. Nonetheless, I still wonder who it is that now owns my story. While that is not a question I can answer in this thesis, nor does the scope of my work cover it, it is a pondering that has required me to employ coping strategies

to avoid the conjecture behind it becoming overwhelming and restricting my ability to complete this work and, more importantly, to move on from the experiences I share.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, my primary coping strategy to ensure I retain ownership of at least parts of my story is simple: I refuse to share certain experiences, anecdotes, and memories on these pages. There are memories of James, experiences in prison, and moments since that could have been useful in this discussion, but I refuse to share them. They are mine and I will not use them in an academic performance. During those times when I have felt most challenged by the academic expectations of storytelling and most aghast at those parts of my experiences deemed irrelevant to this work, I can retreat within those untouched memories. A mere few moments in that walled garden is a coping strategy I will likely use well beyond this PhD experience.

I admit that there are times when I have avoided finishing this thesis. I have used work outside of academia as an excuse. I have used my time as the interim president of the national sociological association as an excuse. There are even times when I found it too easy to immerse into a binge-watching session on Netflix. I have heard others talk about feeling uncertain about the future beyond a PhD. In most of those conversations, the concern has been career related. My concerns and fears are not as easy to articulate. I know it is not about getting a job, because this endeavour has never been motivated by career aspirations. However, clearly articulating the concerns this PhD is leaving me with has been a challenge. I have returned to the closing paragraphs of this chapter many times. Each time I add a word or two, only to delete those upon my next return. I have known for well over a year that I finish this thesis with concerns about the future, yet it has taken until the very last days to be able to complete this thought.

As I return to finish this chapter in the final days of my PhD journey, I find myself confronted with a new type of discomfort. This process has not only

given purpose to my experiences, but it has also given me an outlet to talk about my grief and my experience of incarceration. It has given me multiple audiences who will listen to my stories of prison and my memories of James. It has been easy for me to stand in front of a group of my peers at an academic conference and claim that I am ready to move on and I am done telling these stories repeatedly. However, when this PhD is finished, that claim shifts from something to say to something to action. I will have run out of excuses for not moving on. It is time to walk the walk, and the only way to find out if I am fit enough for that hike is to take the first step. The PhD process has been a guide for me over the past few years. Learning how to engage with my experiences so to meet academic expectations has taught me how to live with those experiences. That guide goes away any day now and I am left alone again.

No one told me the autoethnographic process could do that.

I am left with a reshaped grief because the version of James who appears on these pages may die with the click of the submission button. I am not only losing this very specific way of keeping his memory alive, but I feel like I am losing the James who danced in this academic performance with me.

No one told me the autoethnographic process could do that.

Chapter Four

4. A Better Class of Criminal: Privilege & Opportunity in the (In)justice System

This chapter is a contextual and environmental discussion that analyses and provides insight into the impact of decisions by those in power on the incarceration experience. Through the lens of privilege, I highlight the impact of being Pākehā in a New Zealand prison, particularly concerning access to opportunities. By discussing these dynamics, I aim to illustrate the profound effect of prison management on how an incarcerated person experiences their sentence. Building on the Deleuzian theoretical framework discussed in Chapter Two, this chapter examines how institutional dynamics and prejudices shape the environment through which potentialities from the virtual can actualise. I argue that the privileges I received and the opportunities I was afforded played a significant role in constructing an environment that was conducive not only to the performance of dual sexual identities but also to my processing (or lack of) grief.

4.1 A Better Class of Job

"I've been here two days already, do I just get given a job or am I meant to ask for one? I hope I don't get sent out to the farms because I don't wanna do that type of work and I'm sure it will mess up my skin. I'm happy to just be a cleaner and know I'll probably do a better job than most others and will get in good with the boys."

Prison Journal

December 24th, 2011

I knew I had been allocated to a working unit and knew what that meant: everyone in the unit needed to have a job. Many worked on the prison farms,

with two shifts going out most days to tend to the cows, the milking, and whatever else happens on a working farm. Others in the unit had been approved for the ‘Release to Work’ programme, or ‘RTWs’ (*r-tee-dubs*). They would leave the prison grounds daily to work in positions in the community, such as stop-go on road works. One of the most sought-after jobs within the unit was in the in-unit kitchen. Kitchen workers were responsible for serving the food from the main prison kitchen, and the perks included extra food and trading with others in the unit. Other jobs included cleaning the unit, assisting in the prison library in an adjacent building, painting, and gardening. Additionally, the unit I was in had three trusted jobs: taxi (driving to the main prison and back for various reasons such as bringing visiting professionals to the unit), guard room (cleaning and keeping the guardroom tidy), and kit locker (responsibility for the unit and personal clothing, bedding, and washing). In the unit of 60 incarcerated, there were few accepted excuses for not working. The most common was if someone was participating in a course. Even then, most guys would keep their jobs. I observed that the primary reasons for continuing were the minuscule wage and simply having something to kill some time (see Goffman, 1961 for a discussion on killing time in prison and Richmond, 2014 for a discussion on working while incarcerated).

> *“It's after breakfast now and I’m back in my cell. I think I’m meant to ask for a job and that’s probably part of the process. Or maybe it is too close to xmas and they don’t really care. I’ll ask my mate when he gets back from the farms to see if I’m meant to ask. I really don’t wanna go out to those farms, my skin is bad enough already.”*
>
> Prison Journal
>
> December 24th, 2011

In my early days in that unit, I was unsure how to start working. I knew I was expected to work, but I was unsure if I was meant to ask for a job myself or if I was placed into one. I was still learning about the power dynamics in prison, but I already seen that those in charge did not always make decisions formally.

Some decisions appeared to be made on a whim and depended on the officer's mood. Some of my fellow incarcerated had a say in various decisions, which complicated the power dynamics I struggled to understand in those early days. I did not want to step on any toes by asking the wrong person or get placed in a job someone above me on the prison hierarchy coveted for themselves. My anxiety was increasing fast, and I felt it throughout my body. I was worried about being surprised by a placement I could not fill. I felt tension between doing something to alleviate that anxiety, such as asking for a job, the fear of annoying the wrong person, and the need for self-preservation by avoiding exposing my anxiety. In a prison environment, showing certain emotions is accepted more than showing others, with representations of what can be perceived as masculinity towards the top of the list and vulnerability towards the bottom (Crewe et al., 2014; Laws, 2016). While my fear of being sent to work on the farms was about the harm it would do to my eczema, I equally just did not want to do that type of work. I saw myself as someone suited to more intellectual work, and working with dirty, smelly cows was alien to my self-impression. At the time, I assumed few people would ask to be a cleaner, but I felt safe in that role and was prepared to do it even though it was not intellectual, a cleaner role could allow me to hide as much as possible. It was clear to me very quickly that the position you filled in the unit became part of your identity and influenced how others both saw and related to you—officers and fellow incarcerated alike.

Immediately upon arriving in the unit, I observed a sense of pride some carried concerning their jobs. Even though the pay was mere cents per hour, it was almost as if being responsible for something surpassed the monetary reward. During my first few hours in that unit, I was locked in my cell (as all were for a period after breakfast if not working that day—this was supposedly so that the unit could be cleaned). Glancing out my cell window, I watched the morning shift return from the farms. I noticed some of the guys walking back into the unit with a strut that I assumed waved over them from the sense of purpose they gained from the morning's hard work. There are fundamental issues with the prison work system and the pittance paid to inmates for their labour, yet

there are positives. For example, who the 'cowboy' was in each crew (the guy who rode the dirt bike when bringing the cows in for milking) was talked about throughout, and news of someone taking on this role for the first time spread fast. There are various ways to earn status within a prison unit, and being the cowboy was a role that contributed to status within our unit. I observed the status gave that person and the way it contributed to a sense of purpose in their day.

> *"I've never liked xmas and thought I would enjoy being able to skip it this year but fuck I was wrong, I was so wrong because yesterday sucked. I was going to write about it last night but I just wanted to go to sleep. I still don't have a job and the time is dragging. I wonder what my family did yesterday and I wonder what they're doing today. If I had a job I wouldn't sit around thinking so much. Maybe I'll just go start cleaning something, will they really stop me? The showers in this place are disgusting and look worse after they've been cleaned. These guys are so lazy."*
>
> Prison Journal
>
> December 26th, 2011

A few hours after this journal entry, I was informed by a guard that I would be starting on the farms the following morning and that I would need to be ready. I told him I could not work on the farms because it would flare up my eczema and asked if I could be a cleaner instead. He said it was not his decision and that I would need to speak to the unit's officer in charge of employment, Mr One. I immediately went to the guardroom to speak to him and was surprised that he believed me immediately. I expected there was somewhere on my file proving that I had issues with my skin, but he did not check, nor did he question me about it; he took my reason for not being able to work on the farms at face value and said: "Ok, I'll put you in the kitchen, you start tonight."

Externally, I thanked him and accepted my new role. Internally, I immediately felt a rush of panic, and my body chilled in response. I had been in that unit for less than a week. I could not go into a kitchen job that quickly. Other guys waited months, even years, for that opportunity. My immediate placement in one of the most sought-after jobs would not be accepted by those who had been in the unit longer. Which, at that stage, was everyone. I did not protest or even comment. Instead, I thanked Mr One and panicked quietly to myself. At that moment, I assumed there was a vacancy in the kitchen team, and I was the first body to fill it. I found out later that was not the case and wondered both then and many times since why Mr One was so quick to place me in that role. On paper, each role within that unit should be considered a level playing field with time in the unit one criteria. As a prison unit is a community (Garofalo & Clark, 1985), seniority (often in the form of time spent in the unit but also based on status outside and even types of offending) takes on a level of importance that I would expect officers to understand and respect to ensure order is kept within their units. Placing a newcomer immediately into one of the most sought-after jobs risked that.

Mr One often features in my memories, but I have tried to limit his inclusion in this thesis to only those appearances essential to the story being told because of the person I saw him as during my nine months in that unit. Tales of his brazen racism, evident through both comments and actions, were often told within the unit community. His prejudice went beyond that of ethnicity and seemed to emerge from anything that made him feel uncomfortable. He was open about his prejudice and seemed to almost wear it as a badge of pride. It appeared to me that his decisions were blatantly based on his prejudice which could be detrimental to the futures of those he had power over. While I cannot be sure of his intention and will never claim to be, I feel certain that his decisions became barriers to opportunities for those he saw as less deserving. I have no evidence of this, and my conjecture may be an example of me grasping for something to the privilege I experienced, in an attempt to ease my own guilt. However, I can recall various discussions with my fellow

incarcerated about this specific guard and his attitudes toward some over others.

Consideration for employment positions in a prison unit should, in my opinion, be based on aspects not related to ethnic identity or other factors that have no bearing on job performance. Aspects including behaviour in the unit, past job performance, and ability should be considered. Whether one is Pākehā should not factor into the decision. It is difficult to say whether my ethnic identity had any impact on being given a kitchen role on day four of my sentenced stay. However, when the three most trusted jobs in the unit were allocated to three Pākehā, it is hard to think that it did not. Furthermore, when those three Pākehā were in prison for dishonesty-related offending and still given trusted positions, it seems a reasonable conclusion that ethnic identity and decision-maker prejudice had a significant influence on the allocation of those jobs. Those identifying with an ethnic minority have already experienced discrimination through the existing social dynamics that play out in the New Zealand criminal justice system (Latu & Lucas, 2008; Jones, 2016; McIntosh & Curcic, 2020). The dynamics within a prison reproduce that discrimination daily, even before the personal biases of officers come into play (Tauri et al., 2005; McIntosh & Workman, 2017). Adding personal biases into the daily discriminatory practices of a prison perpetuates the unfair advantages given to some over others (Kerrison, 2017). These advantages are beneficial when parole decisions are made, security levels are assessed, and access to courses is granted (Duke, 2018).

4.2 The (In)justice System

The history of prisons and criminal justice in New Zealand is complex, reflecting the country's broader social, cultural, political, and colonial histories. The establishment of prisons followed shortly after the Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840. Settlers brought with them the British model of imprisonment and justice, which was applied to both settlers and the indigenous Māori

population (Baldock, 1938; Ward, 2023). Prisons, in the form we know them today, are heavily influenced by changes to the use of imprisonment during and after the Victorian era in England. Prisons did exist before the shifts that occurred during this era, but they were predominantly for custodial purposes rather than punishment (Wilson, 2014). The primary purpose of the prison was a place for someone to be held until something else happened, such as being held before an execution or until a fine was paid. An objective during this time was to get rid of the incarcerated person as quickly as possible (Downes, 2021). Before the Victorian era, those in control of responses to offending recognised how expensive it was to hold someone for long and unnecessary periods of time.

The idea of prisons being used as a form of punishment in and of itself, is still relatively young (Wilson, 2014; Johnston, 2016). This approach started in the late 1700s when convicts were being transported to the colonies, specifically Australia (Swiegers & Wessels, 2022). The Prisons Act of 1877 in England gave the state control over the penal system. This was partly in response to the end of the transportation of convicts to Australia approximately 20 years earlier, which increased the number of convicted criminals being returned to the community instead of sent to the colonies (Wilson, 2014). As a result of this shift, prisons became a place of punishment. The relationship between this new role for prisons and public policies to deter crime and deviance can be traced back to this Act (Vipond, 2023). This matters in the context of New Zealand because of the Te Tiriti o Waitangi signing approximately 40 years before the state took control of the penal system in England.

Before New Zealand became a British colony, Māori, as with most indigenous cultures worldwide, had no concept of incarceration (Jackson, 1990; Clayworth, 2012). The traditional Māori approach to wrongdoing is about healing relationships, not punishment, and some of this can be found in approaches to restorative justice (Daly, 2007), even though today's restorative justice is dominated by European values (Tauri, 2009). However, after the signing of Te Tiriti and in the decades that followed, incarceration was brought

to this country as another form of control and subduing. The first jails were built from wood in the 1840s (Davidson, 2023), and the first official prison opened in 1847 in Auckland, known as the Mt Eden Gaol (Pratt, 1992; Derby, 2020). This set a precedent and tone for the penal approach that would dominate for years to come. From the 1850s to the 1870s, prisons were controlled by the provinces, and in 1876, national prisons were established with harsh conditions (Boyle & Stanley, 2019). In the late 1880s, Arthur Hume, the first New Zealand Inspector-General of prisons, set up the first national prison system in this country (Clayworth, 2012). He modelled this system after those that Edward Du Cane had instigated, the person responsible for establishing national prisons in England after the Prisons Act of 1877 (Wilson, 2014). This approach imported harsh deterrence and the punishment-motivated British system into New Zealand, and the crown framed some of the associated policies as beneficial for Māori, even though the reality was the opposite (Meihana, 2015). This matters in any discussion of privilege and perceptions of crime and justice in the New Zealand context because the framing of policy is partially where the myth that Māori get special treatment comes from; these policies were instead intended to suppress and control Māori (see Meihana, 2015; Mutu, 2015).

These early New Zealand prisons followed the punitive isolation philosophy that reflected Victorian values, specifically ideals of penitence through seclusion and labour (Wilson, 2014). This approach included punishments such as the ‘dark cell’ or solitary confinement (which, shockingly, is an approach that is still used—see Lamusse, 2018). Conditions of prisons during this time were harsh, focusing on punishment rather than any form of rehabilitation or the healing of broken relationships (Baldock, 1938; Pratt, 1992). Starting in the early part of the twentieth century, around 1910, arguments for reform of the prison system grew louder (Clayworth, 2012). Still, it was not until the 1950s that significantly better treatment of the incarcerated was implemented (Dalley, 1993). These reforms made prisons more liveable, yet policies resulting in harsher punishments and increased sentences emerged, and prison populations subsequently increased (Inwood et al., 2015;

Gilbert & Newbold, 2017). The rapid colonisation of New Zealand in the late 1800s and into the early 1900s significantly affected the traditional Māori way of life. Applying the British legal and prison system clashed with traditional indigenous approaches, often leading to conflict. Around this time, specifically from the 1950s, the disproportionate representation of Māori in conviction and imprisonment statistics increased dramatically—a problem Aotearoa New Zealand still faces today (Buttle, 2017; McIntosh & Workman, 2017; Oldfield & Mills, 2022; Martin, 2023).

Significant reforms of the prison and wider criminal justice systems emerged in the late 20th and early 21st century. The Penal Policy Review Committee, first established in the 1980s, recommended a reduction of incarceration rates and an increased focus on rehabilitation (Pratt, 2017). This led to increased community-based sentences and a focus on reducing the overall prison population (Triggs, 1999). The 2007 launch of the Hōkai Rangi strategy aimed to address the high rates of incarceration of Māori by incorporating Māori values into the correctional system, acknowledging the Te Tiriti of Waitangi, and integrating a more whānau (family) centred approach (Hamer et al., 2021). However, despite these reforms, a concerted effort to reduce the prison population, and an increased focus on rehabilitation, similar challenges to the past still exist in the New Zealand criminal justice system—specifically, the disproportionate representation of Māori (McIntosh & Workman, 2017; Stanley & Mihaere, 2018, 2019). Reports by Amnesty International (2020), as one example, have consistently called for better treatment of prisoners, increased rehabilitation and mental health services, and to address the rates of Māori imprisonment.

I was incarcerated in Waikeria Prison, located in the Waikato province and one of 18 adult prisons in New Zealand. In 2013, Waikeria held 704 prisoners, contributing to a national prison population of 8,609 at the time (Corrections, 2013). The New Zealand prison system has since undergone fluctuations in its incarcerated population, with numbers peaking at over 10,000 before

decreasing to 8,376 by March 2023 (Lambie, & Gluckman, 2018; Corrections, 2023). Waikeria itself became a site of significant contestation in late 2020 when a six-day riot, initiated by a group of prisoners protesting inhumane conditions, resulted in significant damage done to the main part of the prison, known as the 'top jail' (Dillane & Kirkness, 2020). This damage reduced the capacity of Waikeria Prison to 455. The riot underscored concerns regarding the treatment of incarcerated people and the deteriorating state of New Zealand's prison infrastructure. In response, rather than addressing the deeper causes of incarceration, the government has chosen to expand the capacity of Waikeria, with a new "mega-prison" facility currently under construction to house nearly 1,865 beds by 2026 (Pearse, 2024). This development reflects a broader tension between punitive expansion and calls for decarceration, raising questions about how the state continues to structure and control the experience of time within the carceral system.

Recent debates in Aotearoa New Zealand have explored alternatives to incarceration in recognition that imprisoning people for offending behaviour does not address the causes of crime (Buttle, 2017; Hoek, 2020; Markham-Nicklin, 2020; Lamusse, 2021; Martin, 2022; Roberts et al., 2023). Approaches like restorative justice are increasing, and the country has established specialised courts, including for Rangatahi (young persons). These two examples resonate with traditional Māori approaches to justice and culturally align with those most disadvantaged by the British-based system (Devere & Te Maihāroa, 2021). However, the disproportionate representation of the Māori population within New Zealand's criminal justice system remains, underlining systemic issues and inequalities in justice policies and practices and the country's entire social management system (McIntosh & Workman, 2017). Disproportionate representation occurs at all stages and involves the police, courts, and prison system. Māori are more likely to be stopped, investigated, and arrested by police and are up to eight times more likely to be subjected to the use of physical force by police (Ministry of Justice, 2023). In the court system, Māori are disproportionately represented in conviction rates and receive harsher and longer sentences. Māori men are up to 11 times more

likely to be incarcerated than non-Māori men, while Māori women are up to 19 times more likely to be incarcerated than non-Māori women (Stanley & Mihaere, 2018).

When considering the state of the justice system in Aotearoa New Zealand, specifically how it privileges some groups over others, it is too easy to claim that the system is broken. However, in borrowing a line often repeated by scholars, including Moana Jackson, the system is not broken; it works the way it was intended (Jackson, 2016). The British settlers instigated the justice system in New Zealand to control and suppress Māori, and those objectives still exist as undertones in the form with which the system operates today (Meihana, 2015). It follows that if some within a system are disadvantaged, then others are privileged. I was the latter. While this thesis shows I have experienced discrimination because of my sexual orientation, there is no doubt that I have experienced privilege as a Pākehā male going through the justice system.

From day one, I was treated as a better class of criminal. I was treated as someone who had simply made mistakes, not committed crime with intent. While I made mistakes, I also consciously broke the law. I have often said that I committed approximately half of the offences I was charged for with some conscious awareness. The remainder were mistakes fuelled by my arrogance and unwillingness to ask for help. However, when I entered the police station to hand myself in (there were warrants out for my arrest as I had missed a court date), I was treated differently from those who were also in the police cells on that day. After a brief wait in those cells, we were transferred by prison van a few hundred meters to the court. Dressed in a nice shirt and pants, I was told I should sit in the segregated part of the prison van, not with "the rest of them" in the back. That was only the beginning of the special treatment I received while on my journey through the criminal justice system. It happened while I was on remand, through my cell assignments, and right up until sentencing; it even happened in the assignment of a legal aid lawyer (as I somehow ended up with a Queen's Counsel). Most importantly and relevant

to this story, however, it happened throughout my sentence when I was given opportunities that I was not due, those which should have been offered to others first. In that unit, and involving Mr One, it started with the kitchen job.

4.3 Working my Way Up

I went to the kitchen when I was told and was greeted with looks and comments from others questioning why I was there. It did not take long until the boys realised that I would work hard, and they could do less with me around, and I was quickly accepted by my fellow kitchen workers. Attitudes in the unit were different, and some asked how I had ended up in the kitchen when I just got in the unit. One specific conversation sticks in my mind—most likely because I was terrified of the guy who the conversation was with, but also because it would later lead to increased acceptance in the unit. He questioned how I had ended up in the role and suggested I had offered Mr One various sexual favours to get the role in return. I responded negatively to this suggestion (one of the first overt 'straight guy' acts I can clearly recall—see Chapter Six) and told him I could not work on the farms because of my skin, and he used some harsh language to make it clear that he did not believe what I was saying.

A few days later, for the first time in my life, I was thankful for having sensitive skin.

> *"I've been in the kitchen a few days now and my hands are getting really bad. I've never had this problem with these gloves before but I am now. This sucks because I dunno how long I can stay in there if this keeps up cause the nurses here are useless."*
>
> Prison Journal
>
> January 5th, 2012

While working and cleaning in the kitchen, my hands reacted to the combination of water and whatever material the cheap kitchen gloves were made of, and they turned bright red. They were so red that it was obvious from across the unit. The guy I had the previous exchange with came over and asked the person I was sitting next to if we had been playing slapping games. I replied that my skin reacted to the gloves like I expected it to react to farm work. The look on his face suggested he now believed me, and I suddenly felt like I was telling the truth again, even though I had never lied in the first place. It is strange to believe how others might perceive you, even when you know their perceptions are inaccurate. I knew I was a hard worker. Granted, I never wanted to work on the farms, but that preference is irrelevant because I could not even if I wanted to give it a go. Regardless, I knew I had never lied. I wish I did not feel the need to prove myself to that scary guy, but I am glad I got the opportunity to prove I was telling the truth. I am also glad that his distrust of me was not shown in any physical way.

The kitchen job involved two 'shifts' each day. At the bare minimum, these shifts required plating, putting out breakfast and dinner, and cleaning up. Additionally, wrapped sandwiches were given to everyone at breakfast, and that took care of lunch (see Chapter Five for my experience of this from the other side). It could be a rapid 'shift' because, while the definition of the cleaning required was open to interpretation, expectations were limited, and most did the bare minimum. After those bare minimums were complete, we were free to return to our cells and to spend the time between shifts as we pleased within the normal boundaries of the unit. I often stayed in the kitchen and dining room areas after others had left and did extra cleaning, especially in the previously neglected dining room. It was not that I had a fetish for cleaning or enjoyed what I was doing; instead, I had two specific motivations. Firstly, I learned quickly that staying busy and distracted while incarcerated was important. Secondly, I knew from my time in remand that cleanliness and hygiene were respected by those who matter, specifically those who had longer sentences and were subsequently revered in the unit. As quickly as I learnt the rules of the game, I was playing it.

My extra effort was quickly noticed. Days later, when the scary guy noticed my red hands, I felt vindicated and that my sacrifice had been noticed. My hands were on fire, itching and extremely uncomfortable. It would be days before I could see a nurse, and even then, I was given cream for 14 days that would barely last three, yet I received fewer negative comments and aggressive looks about my placement in that kitchen job. The impact of decisions made by officers like Mr One is varied. Not only did I learn that employment roles influence parole decisions and other opportunities, but they also affect group dynamics within a unit. It was a risk to my safety for me to be placed in that kitchen role. Tension can explode without warning in a prison unit, and I saw explosions when jealousy appeared to be the cause. In those early days, by keeping my head down and just getting on with the work, I could not necessarily avoid that tension but could skirt my way around it without facing any repercussions or physical expressions of jealousy.

I was often surprised at how the smallest things in prison meant the most to my fellow incarcerated. While hygiene is not a small thing, the way feelings about hygiene manifest often seem to be major. Nevertheless, they represent a specific aspect of a unit's sub-culture, extending to the values and preferences of those with the most significant influence over the sub-culture of the unit (see also Kitzis, 2023 for a discussion of incarcerated bodies). In the case of my unit, the manifestations of this sub-culture varied from violent threats toward those who belched at the dinner table to someone getting verbally abused for not keeping their cell clean even though only its occupant should be entering that cell. A prison unit is a community, and the leaders in my unit heavily influenced the standards within our community. Those leaders had high personal standards of cleanliness and hygiene and ensured their expectations of similar standards filtered throughout the unit. I entered this unit during a time when expectations were considerable. The guy seen as the unit leader for most of my stay had previously worked in the kit locker (clothing and bedding allocation), bringing the standard in there up. He eventually was approved for the RTW programme but still cleaned parts of the unit on his days off, regularly raging at the unit cleaners if the showers were not up to his high

standards. It was not unusual to see standards lift throughout the unit after one of his outbursts. I can recall more than one instance of this unit leader telling a fellow incarcerated to “have a shower, c**t” or some other comment that sounded less like a request and more like a warning of harsh consequences if obedience was not forthcoming. My anxiety was extremely high in those early days. It was not that I was desperate to fit in; instead, I was desperate to blend into the background and to do that, I needed acceptance into the community formed within the unit. I took that path because I knew that the experienced prison stayers in my unit respected cleanliness. I lucked out that it was valued as highly as it was and that my efforts were noticed instantly.

I lasted a couple of weeks in the kitchen job. It was not because I got fired or replaced; instead, it was because I was told to ask to be shifted to the kit locker.

4.4 Becoming the Kit Locker Guy

After breakfast one morning, I was walking back to my cell when I was called over to the door of the kit locker. To the left of the kitchen sat a very old unit, where no incarcerated had been housed for over two years due to deteriorating conditions (although that description could be used for various sections of Waikeria prison still in operation during the period of my incarceration—including the top jail that was destroyed during the riots). During my stay, that building remained open for storage, the kit locker and washing machines, and the visitor room that sparked into action most weekends. That day, the guy currently in the kit locker position, who we will call Vince, called me over to the open door. I knew he was a close friend of the previously mentioned unit leader, who we will call Chris, so I felt a rush of panic throughout my body and settle in my stomach. I immediately assumed I had done something wrong or had been seen to neglect my kitchen responsibilities. I assumed that Chris had delegated Vince to tell me to get my act together, and various scenarios raced through my anxiety-ridden mind.

Vince: “I’m leaving in two weeks, bro; you should ask for my job.”

A fraction of the anxiety I felt in that moment was released. The fear that I had done something to breach an unspoken rule had faded and was replaced with caution that I was being set up to participate in something I did not want to be involved with. I had heard rumours that the kit locker was used to bring in contraband, and I wanted no part of that. I asked why I should ask for the job, and Vince responded, “we think you’re the man for the job”. I asked who “we” included, and Vince simply said, “me and Chris, bro”.

Many thoughts and feelings flooded me at once. I knew I was not being set up for anything because Chris did not tolerate that. However, beyond that, I felt an immediate rush of acceptance. The unofficial unit leader noticed the effort I had put into the kitchen and wanted those standards in the kit locker of his unit. I had been struggling in the kitchen. Not because the work was particularly challenging but because the use of gloves and my hands being in soapy water so often was playing havoc on my skin. My hands were constantly itchy and the meagre allocation of ointment from the nurse would never alleviate the irritation. Access to appropriate healthcare in prison is a fickle thing. At times, it is excellent; at other times, what is provided (or not) risks breaching fundamental human rights (see Mariner & Schleifer, 2013). I learned quickly that complaining can worsen the situation, yet when health is jeopardised, it is perhaps reasonable for someone to not remain rational amidst their suffering. I returned to the nurse as often as possible and was eventually given more cream; still not as much as I needed, but more than I had before. Asking for the kit locker position in just the right tone was my way out of the kitchen. I knew the boys in the unit would accept it because Chris was asking for it. I just needed to ask Mr One. Yes, him again.

I knew how to ask for the job because I knew it was a position that required trust from the officers and demanded someone who could work independently. I knew I could use that knowledge to my advantage by indicating that I wanted more responsibility than the kitchen job provided and that I would do well at

keeping up with the demands of the kit locker role. I even knew who to ask. I cannot recall if I knew of the special treatment I was receiving because of my ethnicity or not. I must have been aware that something was unequal about how jobs and other opportunities were handed out because of how I got that kitchen job, and evidenced by how I am able to recall these details. Still, part of me likely believed that I deserved these opportunities because I was polite and of 'good character'. Perhaps that is now what I tell myself to ease the guilt. Regardless, I knew who to ask for that job, and I did ask, perhaps with some manipulation and just the right tone.

I got the job and was told, "You probably can be trusted more than some of the other guys around here". I interpreted this as a compliment and still believe it was at least partially, but comments like that leave little doubt of the existence of the racism, prejudice, and special treatment I was benefiting from. The leader in the kitchen was annoyed (possibly because it meant he would have to do more work once I was gone), but he knew this had come from Chris. He knew not to say anything against that regardless of his high status within the unit (he features again in stories in the following chapter). I started in the kit locker the next day, and after approximately a week of working with Vince and learning the role, I was on my own. My status in the unit, with the officers as well as my fellow incarcerated, increased immediately. I was suddenly responsible for not only the unit uniforms and everyone's bedding but also for others' personal washing. I suddenly had some power and influence barely three weeks after arriving in that unit.

> *"I started in the kit locker today. Its so quiet over there and gonna be so easy to get heaps done and get time for reading and just being away from the noise. Today I folded one of the boy's personal washing and it was like he'd won lotto when he picked them up then he came back later and gave me a Moro. It was so easy to do and meant so much to him. I turn 30 tomorrow so I'll eat that Moro for breakfast."*
>
> Prison Journal
>
> January 18th, 2012

I quickly learned that status in a prison unit is a multi-layer phenomenon; at least, it was in the unit where I found myself. Admiration came from the offences that landed someone in prison through to how they carried themselves and actions committed within the unit. Respect came from fellow incarcerated and officers themselves, and I observed this dynamic to be a delicate balancing act for maintaining respect from both groups. In my experience, a comfortable time in prison requires this constant negotiation of tensions. Yet, the expectations from each group differ, at times sitting at two extremes of a spectrum. One group, the fellow incarcerated, may have expectations of violence in a situation where disrespect has been levelled at one from another. In contrast, the officers may respect restraint in such a situation. I experienced on more than one occasion that, in a scenario like this, acting one way can increase respect from fellow incarcerated and, thus, increase one's in-unit status. Yet, it can result in decreased respect from the officers and a loss of trust. I explore expectations regarding behaviours and the societal expectations around these norms further in Chapter Six; for the discussion in this chapter, I mention this balancing act to give further context to my role in the kit locker.

I struggled to maintain respect from both the fellow incarcerated and the officers and the balance could shift on an almost daily basis. Further complicating the balance is that any situation is rarely as linear or binary as this discussion suggests. It may very well be that some officers prefer violent retaliation because they are aware that a retaliatory act would be the end of the conflict due to grudges amongst the incarcerated being a rarity rather than a norm, if dealt with within the unspoken rules of a prison unit (Trammell, 2012). Without a violent ‘receipt’, tensions could easily fester over time and change the vibe in the unit. I can only assume that could make their roles as corrections officers more difficult based on the changed behaviour amongst the incarcerated, this being a tension I felt. Flare-ups in the unit felt easier to deal with in the long run, even as a fellow incarcerated not involved in the altercation. While violent and uncomfortable at the time, the situation was usually resolved after the altercation, and everyone appeared to move on.

Again, I can only assume this was easier for officers to manage than ongoing emotionally charged tensions. However, I cared about what both groups thought of me, and maintaining respect from both my fellow incarcerated and the officers watching us was complicated and went beyond the exceptional situations that involved violence or required some other choice of response to a situation. This balancing act was more likely to manifest in daily activities. In the unit I was in, employment and attitude toward work significantly impacted those levels of respect.

My ability to excel at the kit locker job exemplifies the complications involved in the ongoing negotiation of tensions between groups. There was a misconception in the unit that the job was easy. I cannot assume that others would not also have excelled. However, regardless of the manipulation I used to get that role and regardless of the probable impact of my ethnicity on being given it, I believe I was the right person at the right time to be in that kit locker. I made the prison experience slightly better for many of my fellow incarcerated, and I was proud of that. Furthermore, having that role improved my prison experience because I felt safer than I would have in another role. It was unlikely anyone would mess with the person responsible for giving them clean clothing and bedding, although it did come close a few times, and I relished the safety that came with that. Throughout my prison time, I often bought into the notion that I was a better class of criminal and that perception manifested in an arrogance that turned my kit locker role into a paradox; I was safe because of having it, while at the same time, I was at risk because of having it. I was safe because no one would mess with the kit locker guy, yet I was at risk because others wanted that job and my attitude sometimes betrayed that thought I was better than everyone else. I explore my role performances and responses to expected behaviours further in Chapter Six.

4.5 A Better Class of Opportunity

Depending on someone’s ROC*ROI score (Risk of Reconviction and Risk of Reimprisonment) and assessments by sentence planners, courses like MIRP (Medium Intensity Rehabilitation Programme) (and today’s variations) are required for parole eligibility. If an incarcerated person has a course completion requirement on their sentence plan and attends a parole hearing without having completed that course, the likelihood of being granted parole drops dramatically, almost to zero. I was not successful at my first parole hearing because I was completing my one course-related requirement, MIRP, at the time. Accordingly, getting accepted into a course can be a waiting game and frustrating for those who sit on the waiting list for a significant period. Various factors are taken into consideration by decision-makers when deciding who gets selected for courses. These aspects include assessment criteria, bias and racism (both systemic and blatant), institutional negotiation and unit dynamics, and role-playing theatre (see Johnstone & Gilbert, 2023 for a discussion of the role of sentence planners).

Preferential treatment can apply when deciding who can access courses like MIRP. Often, access is only offered to those who have demonstrated the required characteristics to be deemed suitable for participation—referred to by Watson (1982) as the required ‘change’. Almost paradoxically, the incarcerated must show some character change, or at least a willingness to change, before being considered for participation in a course designed to elicit these growths in character. While on paper, the specific expectations of change are based on policies and institutional assessments such as ROC*ROI; they will likely vary from person to person. Behind these variances are the rational aspects such as offending and past behaviour, yet mixed in are the personal biases of those making the decisions and associated assessments (Watson, 1982). The perceptions and subjectivity of various people in positions of power influence someone’s ability to access the necessary support to achieve the expected moral changes.

I have often compared my situation to that of a fellow incarcerated who had been on the waitlist for 18 months compared to my four weeks; we will call him Peter. Peter was a patched gang member and one of the leaders (amongst fellow incarcerated) within our unit. I observed a few instances when his behaviour challenged the officers and the system overall. Regardless, he had been identified as a candidate for the MIRP course, which requires a specific security level (as defined by ROC*ROI) that he had achieved. All other things being equal, Peter should have been given access to that course before I was—he had been waiting longer. However, these decisions are not made only based on the prescribed criteria, as bias and irrelevant aspects of daily life in the prison environment invariably impact access. Decision-makers' attitudes unduly impact decisions about who gets course access and who is left languishing on a waiting list (Butler & Maruna, 2009; Harmes et al., 2019).

I can recall changes in Peter's behaviour over time and comments from him that he played the game. He once told me that his sentence planner had told him that he would not gain course access if he continued to behave in the way he had. It appeared that Peter was being told to stop getting caught with contraband such as cannabis and lighters. At least, that was how he appeared to interpret it if his changes in behaviour and our brief conversations were the best indicators. Watson (1982), building on Goffman's conjecture that "prisoners mobilise activity so that it will convey impressions to others" (1959, p. 4), suggests that behaviour by inmates can be manipulated to create an appearance of change. The most common way this occurs, again using Peter's shift away from holding cannabis as an example, is to act in a non-criminal way, thus communicating to decision-makers at least a willingness to adjust behaviour and move towards moral change that would indicate good character. Actions taken by people to portray these characteristics can be influenced by their understanding of the system (Gacek, 2015). In Peter's situation, this came from his understanding of behavioural expectations and the noted attributes of their behaviour. Watson describes this as "proving the unprovable" (1982, p. 249), as a fine line exists between being successful in the attempted character portrayal and appearing manipulative.

Ironically, those seeking course access must play a role to get admission to a course within which they will then play other roles. Those other roles, portrayals of a changing person, are required to depict someone who is no longer a danger to society. The audience is ultimately the parole board. A series of roles are played over time to present oneself in the best possible way to those assessing character. It is almost as if each stage of role-playing fits within an act of theatrical performance (see Goffman 1959 and Chapter Six for further discussion of my performances). I learnt quickly that if I behaved, was polite, and 'sucked up' to the right people, I would get noticed and earn rewards. At the time, I thought that was because I deserved rewards such as course access in response to being a model prisoner. I expect an element of that is true. However, it is the opportunity even to play those games and manipulate any situation to receive the desired outcome that is in question. Entering the justice system as Pākehā is not the same as entering as Māori. While both identities come with a set of assumptions and stereotypes, one set sees someone treated as a better class of criminal, and one does not.

I thoroughly believed that I deserved to be on that course. I knew others had been on the waiting list much longer than my few weeks, yet I assumed decisions were made based on merit and not by only running down the waitlist. I had come into that unit, immediately into work in one of the most trusted jobs, and I was keeping my head down. I had earned and deserved my position on that course, and my positive attitude was being recognised. My sentence planner even told me that I would "obsess over it" if I did not get on the next offering of MIRP, suggesting that my self-promotion had an influence as much as my eligibility. While I believed I deserved access to that course when I received it, my unease at being treated like a better class of criminal grew over time. I had noticed occurrences of privilege throughout my time on remand and early months of sentence; of course, I had. Everyday instances of nuanced prejudice were exhibited in how certain officers spoke nicer to some over others, through to blatant comments such as "I'm speaking directly to you Māori boys here" when discussing poor behaviour in the unit. It was all around me and difficult to ignore even before venturing into or understanding the need

for broader conversations regarding disproportionate representations and prejudice in the wider justice system. I noticed daily occurrences of special treatment before I even knew this was a topic of conversation. My unease grew over time, but I deserved access to that course.

I make much of access to that course, both because it contributed to my parole board success and because it became the location of the pinnacle of my straight guy performance. My participation in that course would threaten a certain part of my identity and sense of self, my sexuality, and would cause me to question my willingness to be open about that part of me and my relationship with James. This is something I still struggle to accept today and is the clearest example of why a sentence of imprisonment never ends because of the long-term impact it has on identity.

My participation in that course marked a pivotal moment not only in my incarceration experience but in my life. This is not because of its intended rehabilitative and self-reflective purpose but as a site for the perpetuation of my unresolved grief. This aspect of my prison experience inadvertently became a space where I performed a role that would reshape my identity in ways I still can barely grasp, even with the aid of this thesis. My grief was already unresolved before I entered that room and was, likely, already disenfranchised by my incarceration, yet it took on different layers across the 12 weeks of the course. The type of unresolved grief I still experience in waves today was born in that room out of a confrontation with myself, as well as the reshaping caused by my straight guy performance. I now realise that I mourned not only for the layered loss of James—complicated by my fantasies of a future I could never have and the lies I told in that room—but also for the person I was both when I was with him and before prison, the choices I made, and the irreversible changes to my identity that were occurring in those moments. I have regularly criticised that course on these pages and at other opportunities, yet not even the narrow-minded and judgemental course facilitators could have foreseen the identity transformation I experienced in those sessions. I was already embedded in my straight guy performance

before the commencement of that course, yet in that room, it was solidified, and my performance of dual sexual identities really took hold. I return to this discussion in Chapters Six and Seven.

The hierarchical stigmas and stereotypes based on offending types among the incarcerated are also held by guards (Kreager et al., 2017). When a prisoner is on the receiving end of stigma and stereotypes that they feel are incongruent with where they perceive themselves, the results can be painful and threaten their sense of self. In line with observations made by British criminologist Carlen (1983/2021), the officers in prison draw on normative discourses, often based on stereotypes and biases, in their interpretations of inmate behaviour. Specific impressions of what it means to be a good prisoner often appeared to dominate interactions, and the behaviour they would expect equally appeared to be influenced by the stereotypes in play. Positioning incarcerated into specific roles and expectations expressed officers power over prisoners. This expression of power can manifest as labelling prisoners in specific ways and keeping records of behaviour and actions within the unit (see Carlen, 1983: Crewe, 2007). This is the power dynamic between officer and prisoner embedded in the assessment practices utilised within a prison by making the subject itself highly visible (Foucault, 1977).

My experience with MIRP included being challenged by facilitators in a way that led to me questioning the meaning behind the answers I gave. I understand that is partially the purpose of these courses, especially concerning reasons for offending. However, I observed and experienced these challenges on more than one occasion, causing unresolved questions or lingering lines of thought. These challenges, often in the form of probing, can impact how course participants see themselves and their actions, and not always in a good way. As I recall being challenged by my MIRP facilitators, I also recall how others were challenged. Frustration would grow when either myself or a fellow participant felt that what they were saying was being heard differently than what was intended. It can be an extremely frustrating experience not to be heard in any setting; this is intensified in an environment

where the person mishearing, whether intentionally or not, is assessing character in that moment and for future considerations. Those assessments eventually land in front of the parole board, which in turn decides eligibility for release. Accordingly, being questioned in a way that felt as if it was pointless or (what seemed like) merely for the facilitator's sport can threaten the meaning associated with the experiences being spoken of and an person’s perception of their self-worth. This matters in my overall discussion as I work to link specific experiences during my incarceration with my argument that the sentence never truly ends because of the lasting impact it has on identity.

I recall various instances of myself and others merely accepting the facilitator’s interpretations. Complicity in the game being played between the course facilitator and participant felt more manageable than the risk of being labelled as argumentative, disruptive, or unwilling to engage in a manner deemed appropriate (one of my reports mentioned that I like to have the last word—there may be some truth to this, but I did not want the parole board to know that). The effect of this type of submission to those in power resonates with Foucault's analysis of the prison as a producer of ‘docile bodies’ (1977)—bodies that are subjected, used, transformed, and improved through various means of power and control. Compliance with the expected behaviour can aid prisoners in their survival, regardless of whether they accept or even understand what is expected of them or the associated stereotype. This kind of performance of accepted behaviour can reshape someone’s perception of self, especially when the performance includes elements of performance to please those who were watching.

In courses like the MIRP, participants are expected to share, often in ways that must draw on aspects of identity that institutional processing and control practices have stripped (Goffman, 1961). Incarcerated people are expected to live in a state where outside roles have been stripped from them, yet for a period within which they are a course participant, they are expected to recall the “I” while performing those roles. For me, and I expect for others, those outside roles are, at the time of course participation, alien and barely

accessible because of the calendar-measured time that has passed since the associated roles were performed. Yet, assessment requirements dictate that course participants are judged based on how they share when drawing on memories of behaviour and actions while playing roles left outside. It is almost as if the only acceptable way someone can engage with their past is through the lens forced upon them by those judging their participation. One’s past is not one's own in this context; it is muddied by institutional expectations and by the portrayal of their personal passage from past to present in a way that will be presented in the facilitators’ assessments to the parole board. Furthermore, it is presented to those deciding on freedom and whether someone will be released back into society where former roles must once again be performed, forcing situations where the past again becomes the present, regardless of how a person’s relationship with their past has been changed by institutionalisation.

4.6 Privilege & I

I am convinced that I can track my current position in life back to those big decisions that were made for me while incarcerated. None of what I currently have in life, including the opportunity to write this thesis, would have been possible if I had not gotten my parole when I did. I was incarcerated for 12-months of a 28-month sentence (the remainder was served on parole with specific conditions) and, irrefutably, I would not have been successful at my second parole attempt if I had not completed the MIRP course. If I had stayed on that waiting list longer, then my parole eligibility would have also taken longer. I also believe that my in-unit employment helped considerably when I came in front of the parole board (as it was mentioned in a positive light). These two examples of in-prison opportunity and the ways I have discussed the likely influence of privilege evident in these being open to me illustrate the importance of environmental factors in the story I tell in this thesis.

If I had not gotten course access when I did or been placed into the kit locker, I would not have gained that early parole. If I was not released from prison when I was, I would not have been in the right place at the right time to meet those who have been the most influential on my academic journey. Professionally, I would not have met the client who eventually became my colleague. This matters because those things positioned me to tell this story in this way. The causes and conditions that positioned me to engage in this PhD process depended on my getting parole when I did, which depended on the decisions that were made. While grateful, I cannot help but wonder how many others missed out on similar opportunities and circumstances as they sat on waiting lists, waiting for access to courses that the system demands they participate in yet make access so unnecessarily restricted and complicated. This matters because of the importance of privilege not only in my prison experience but also in shaping the temporal experiences of incarceration.

By engaging with personal narratives and institutional critique, this chapter illustrates how privilege in the criminal justice system not only opens access to opportunities but also significantly shapes and reshapes temporal experiences for those in prison. Through my examples of in-unit jobs and course access, I have provided insight into and first-hand experience of the privileging effects of being Pākehā in the New Zealand prison system. The impact of the resulting decisions extends beyond access to coveted jobs or parole-eligibility courses. It has deeper implications for interactions with others, a sense of purpose while incarcerated, and identity. The disorientation of temporal experiences while incarcerated, a central theme of my thesis and evidenced by the journal quotes shared in this chapter, exposes the complex ways in which prison time contrasts with the linear measurement of time meant to represent the imposed sentences.

The narratives I shared around in-unit jobs displayed my initial uncertainty and anxiety over both placement and what I was meant to be doing. Eventually, I was placed in roles that conferred respect and a reasonably high level of

autonomy for a prison. This journey from anxiety to some stability over a mere few days is one example of the profound temporal disorientation and reorientation of perceptions and experiences of time for those incarcerated. These shifts in roles from kitchen work to the coveted position of the kit locker guy underscore the significant departure from linear time, revealing a carceral temporality characterised by moments of standstill, acceleration, and transformation—all while embedded in the challenge of in-unit politics and attempting to manage others' impressions of me.

Drawing on the Deleuzian concepts introduced in Chapter Two, this discussion exemplifies the virtual and actual in action within a prison. My job shift narrative is one example of potentialities within a prison setting actualising in ways that are contingent on environmental factors, including privilege, power, and agency. Therefore, this narrative and the related dynamics provide a lens through which an understanding of wider temporal disorientation faced by those incarcerated is possible. In this understanding, it becomes clear that time is not merely sequenced moments, as the prison sentence would suggest, but a complex landscape of potentialities, disruptions, and reconfigurations. The temporal experience of prison, as shown through the narratives in this chapter and others throughout this thesis, is not limited to the incarceration period; it reshapes identities well beyond release.

Chapter Five

5. Weet-Bix, Grated Carrot Sandwiches, and Sculpting Abs: Temporal Friction and Everyday Resistance During Incarceration

In this chapter, I introduce the concept of temporal friction as my conceptualisation building on Deleuze's three syntheses of time: habit, memory, and future (discussed in Chapter Two). While the notion of temporal friction has previously been used in other fields, including in labour studies to describe the challenges of balancing work and family time (see Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Almeida, 2014 as two examples), I introduce a different conception to explore the clash between the linear, regulated time of prison institutions and the non-linear, virtual time experienced during incarceration. In applying temporal friction within this Deleuzian context, I specifically focus on how the scheduled routines of prison life intersect with the non-linear experiences of time.

Linear time in prison is characterised by scheduled and repetitive daily routines that control and regulate behaviour. These routines are measurable and impose a mundane rhythm used by administrators of power to regulate behaviour and bodies, aiming to shape those incarcerated into what Foucault (1975) would refer to as docile bodies. Non-linear time encompasses the subjective experiences that much of this thesis works with, which can differ significantly from schedules. It includes memories, aspirations for the future, and the moments that break from the mundane character of prison life. These experiences, what Deleuze (1968) would refer to as the virtual, represent a realm of potentialities where newness might be imagined or actualised, challenging the temporal regime imposed by the administrators of power within the prison system.

This chapter draws upon personal narratives and observations to explore how temporal friction plays out during incarceration, illustrating how the roles and behaviours demanded by those in power influence actions and perceptions. Through examples of prison life, including birthday celebrations, exercise, and body modifications, this discussion shows how everyday acts are both subtle forms of resistance and coping strategies. By delving into these experiences, this chapter highlights how temporal friction not only challenges immediate conditions of incarceration but also asserts personal agency and influences both identity formation and prison dynamics beyond.

5.1 The Mundane Repetition of Prison Life

"If I never eat Weet-Bix again, it'll be too soon."

A thought I had countless times between Sept 2011 and April 2012

The incarceration experience is arranged by repetition, and mine was no different. Most of my prison experience was mundane and repetitive. This thesis draws on some of the experiences that broke that mundane repetition. Yet, for the most part, prison life is a daily drag from one signifier of routine to the next measurement of expected behaviour. Repetition and routine become so ingrained in the prison experience that the daily schedule is expected by both those arranging the experience and the incarcerated themselves. However, the essence of temporal friction emerges when deviations from this structured repetition occur. Some of those deviations are unexpected and what would be a simple variance from routine on the outside can be disorientating and catastrophised on the inside because it breaks from the expected. This means the situations an incarcerated person must react to are multi-layered, because breaks in the routine often demand an immediate response or action.

Paradoxically, in my experience, it is often those controlling the daily schedule who trigger disruptions most often, yet they scrutinise the responses of the

incarcerated and these responses can have lasting consequences. This dynamic creates a layered reality where both the mundane nature of the daily routine and its interruptions serve as catalysts for temporal friction. Both the daily repetitive routine and breaks from it, especially those aspects that are vastly different from life on the outside, can cause temporal friction. There are various ways in which those moments can be responded to and coped with during the incarceration experience while the experience of time is being controlled through the aforementioned routine. Before exploring examples of temporal friction that were evident during my experiences, I further explain elements of the repetitive nature of prison life.

Mealtimes and menu items are examples of the repetition and routine in prison. What I was served for each meal was as routine as the time of the day I was served it, an example of the control through an enforced temporal regime. The Sunday night schedule was a piece of chicken, usually dry, with some potatoes and other vegetables, usually overcooked. The Sunday chicken came with a small apple pie once a month. On other nights during the week, I would find a piece of barely edible meatloaf on my plate or some gravy-soaked stew with a couple of pieces of what could barely be described as meat floating in it. Every dinner came with two pieces of prison-produced white bread and a small sachet of butter that tasted more like the plastic it came in than actual butter. These two slices were in addition to the pair of two-slice sandwiches handed out for lunch and the three pieces of toast with breakfast, totalling nine slices of bread per day. My knowledge of nutrition back then was not what it is today, but even then, I knew that the volume of carbs and my stomach would not be friends for any significant length of time. I am pleased that this is no longer the case in New Zealand prisons, as the menu was redesigned in 2020 (Lines-MacKenzie, 2020).

One of the guards handed out the daily sandwiches for lunch. This was the least routine of the meals and the most likely to break from schedule yet still had elements of control. These were given out at the same time every day, with breakfast, yet could be consumed at any stage of the day. Some of these

sandwiches were surprisingly tasty. I quite enjoyed the peanut butter that came to me twice a week and will admit to saving that morning's meagre packet of jam to turn it into a PB&J (peanut butter and jelly/jam). It would have been more enjoyable if I received the twice-weekly jam sandwiches on the same day as the peanut butter, but I imagined whoever was designing the sandwich menu thought a PB&J with equal parts of each ingredient was too much of a luxury. The egg sandwich was not bad either, and I ate those on most days I received them. Other fillings tasted as if they were made purposely to punish those who received them, and I either gave them away or deposited them in the nearest rubbish bin unopened. If I never see another sandwich filled with grated carrot again, I will be thankful for that. No, that is not a missed typo; we were served grated carrot sandwiches. Not the fresh kind of carrot either so please do not picture the type of tasty, grated carrot you would include in a salad or send to school with your child for a yummy lunch, possibly even with a touch of mayonnaise in place of that prison butter. These carrots were past their best before they were grated, unwashed I should add, and dumped between two pieces of bread.

Breakfast and dinner were equally routine. At the same time each day, these mealtimes coincided with a muster check (headcount). These meals were served in the same location, the dining room attached to the old building where the kit locker hid in the corner. It had the same old musky smell as the rest of that building and should have been put out of its misery before I was even born. The dining room was laid out with ten tables equally distanced, each sitting six diners. Off to the left was the kitchen, once used to prepare meals and now relegated to serving what was prepared in the main prison kitchen and sent down by truck twice daily. The kitchen was joined to the dining room by a single door and two serving windows with grated shutters. In Chapter Four, I described my brief time on the other side of those shutters, serving my fellow incarcerated and wishing I was in my own kitchen sharing portions of my famous apricot chicken or lemon meringue pie, yet most of my stay in that unit saw me on the receiving side (of the prison food, not a specialty dish from one of my unit mates).

It was via one of those windows, the smallest, that I would receive breakfast and dinner each day. The window was only partially opened at the bottom, preventing those serving the food from seeing whom they were serving. I was told that this precaution was intended to ensure that everyone received the same portion. However, I did not have to watch for long before witnessing the odd hand signal, tap, or even grunt that resulted in an extra potato or piece of meat floating in that brown watery slush they labelled gravy. This illustrates that, even within the constraints of routinised mealtimes, the incarcerated can find small ways to assert agency over their temporal experience; in this example, that assertion was through the navigation of subtle social cues that could result in an extra serving. In these occurrences, a keen eye and analytic mind could spot both small acts of resistance against the control of mealtime and acts of coping with the boring and often too-small meals. Although, if I could see them happening then I am sure some guards noticed as well. It is moments like these, and the allowing of these small acts, that lead me to question how much the guards believed in the routines they were installed to enforce. Regardless, an extra potato or piece of rubbery meat could easily feel like a win in the middle of being controlled and herded through the dining experience. These moments of resistance and coping highlight the complex interplay of control schedules and the personal temporal experiences; an interplay that I refer to in this chapter as temporal friction. Like the rest of that building, the dining room was no longer living up to its potential and was barely functioning. Thankfully, that building is gone now, demolished, along with the unit that sat next to it (where I lived for nine months). Although, I have laid awake at night wondering if those carrot sandwiches and the breakfast sludge I am about to tell you about survived the demolition and sit in the dirt as a memorial to the countless prisoners who suffered through the digestion of that rubbish.

The menu items were consistent most weeks, a further example of the institution's efforts to impose routine and a predictable, linear time on prison life. For breakfast, three days a week, I would be handed a bowl of porridge that could, some days, be used to plaster my cell wall and likely survive the

aforementioned demolition. One day a week came the cornflakes, a favourite of many of the boys. The other three days were reserved for a generic Weet-Bix impersonation. The porridge, cornflakes, and wheat bricks were all served with a small carton of milk (essential for my daily tea intake) and a sugar sachet. For those who did not eat the toast and were willing to deviate from the norm, the tiny packet of jam intended for that toast (never enough for the three pieces) could be mixed into the bland porridge to spice up the flavour (another example of a small assertion of agency over temporal experiences). The initial weeks of this routine were a challenge for me. Mornings are often the hardest in prison and can hit like a tonne of bricks littered with memory and the type of emotion that takes over the body, even before the day's expectations kick in. Waking to a silence that is deafening enough by itself becomes crippling when you know the sound you would fill it with if given the option. I found both foe and friend in that silence, depending on what thoughts dominated. Yet, the start of that day’s routine almost always interrupted any morning thoughts. Traipsing to the dining room for a frequent confrontation with the institution’s control over my experience and lining up to be checked off a list only to receive food I did not want was a challenge I did not anticipate. The prison experience has many of those unanticipated challenges. I got used to most of them because my survival demanded that I did.

Navigating the routine of daily prison life, while coping with memories and the emotional dynamics of imprisonment, illustrates the ongoing conflict between the linear time imposed by administrators of power and the non-linear, subjective time that the incarcerated experience. This sustained clash, an aspect of temporal friction, highlights not only the tension between different conceptions of time but also the effect it has on identity.

5.2 Resistance, Temporal Friction, and The Prison Experience

Exploring resistance and friction in prisons provides additional understanding of prisoners' lived experiences, revealing examples of how a prison’s power

structures are navigated by the incarcerated, how they cope with their experiences, and how they develop a sense of self amidst systemic control. Incarceration involves a loss of personal autonomy. In terms of the common concepts of time and space against whose hegemonic status within institutional life this thesis argues, this loss of autonomy relates to how time is spent and the physical spaces someone can occupy. Transcending those common interpretations, the agency of temporal experience is limited by incarceration (in this context, agency refers to the ability to control, influence, and make choices about perceptions and experiences of time). This interruption of lives is fundamental to the way power in prisons is exercised, as those incarcerated are stripped of their ability to control much of their daily lives. However, within these forms of control, the incarcerated find ways to assert their agency. Whether through acts of everyday resistance or strategies of coping, these actions can serve as a means to reclaim some control over their experiences.

Incarcerated people are faced with daily interactions that require a response. Regardless of the controlled environment, people still have an option when choosing their response (Driessen et al., 2023). These choices range from automatic responses to carefully balanced acts aimed at navigating the performance of a good character for authority figures and maintaining respect among fellow incarcerated. An examination of these choices through the lenses of resistance and temporal friction illustrates that the attempt of the prison to regulate experiences and perceptions of time and space is often met with subtle but significant pushback from those it intends to control. An exploration of these responses highlights the inadequacy of common concepts of time and space for a full understanding of the prison experience and exposes the ongoing impact of incarceration on identity.

The control and imposed schedules over aspects of the incarceration experience, such as access to meals, exhibit the daily dynamic and multilayered struggle between autonomy and power in prison life. When those incarcerated engage in acts that subtly push back and undermine this control

(including altering their routine and using spaces for reasons other than intended) they are both resisting the arrangement of their experience and inserting a sense of autonomy, even in limited ways. Accordingly, acts of everyday resistance and temporal friction are not just about responding to the prison's power structure but also about finding moments within the incarceration experience for self-expression and autonomy. Within these daily responses, the significance of the intersection between time, identity, and power emerges. The incarcerated negotiate and reshape their relationship with experience and perception of time and space and challenge the structures that are intended to control their experience of incarceration. Therefore, the various connections between combinations of resistance, friction, temporal friction, power, and time during incarceration are pivotal for a comprehensive understanding of the prison experience. As this chapter continues, and I explore not only ideas of resistance and temporal friction but also examples from my experiences, this discussion reveals how control over the experience is an essential aspect of the exercise of power by those in charge of prisons and how the incarcerated can reclaim control over some aspects of their own experiences.

5.3 Foucault, Resistance & Friction

Power is pervasive throughout social relations (Foucault, 1977, 2019). Everyone participates in various power relations; people are never entirely powerless or completely stripped of agency (Dews, 1984; Allen, 2002). This idea is essential for understanding resistance from through a Foucauldian lens, as resistance is seen as a response not only to overt domination but also to the subtle ways in which power shapes thoughts and behaviours (Pickett, 1996). Resistance, much like power, is also pervasive, and the two are locked in a battle that does not have a binary relation. This non-binary interaction implies that both power and resistance are continuously adapting, where each simultaneously shapes and is shaped by the other, blurring the distinctions between oppressor and oppressed (Franěk, 2014).

This Foucauldian perspective enriches my discussion by shifting the focus from a clear dichotomy of roles between oppressor and oppressed to examining resistance as part of everyday negotiations within and responses to various power relations (Crewe, 2011). It highlights the agency that people maintain within these power networks, actively engaging with both the subtle and overt structures that shape social norms (McKendy & Ricciardelli, 2018). In the context of prisons, what Rubin (2015; 2017) describes as friction is evident in daily acts that are not traditionally recognised as resistance. These acts still significantly influence the non-binary dynamics between power and resistance, contributing to potential shifts within prison power structures as each force is shaped and reshaped by the other. Understanding the behaviours and the ways incarcerated people respond to specific situations through the lens of power and resistance, especially rooted in post-structuralist perspectives, offers an in-depth exploration of prison life. Additionally, what emerges through this lens is a deeper understanding of the power component of the intersection of time, power, and identity which underpins much of the discussion in this thesis.

Prisons, as Foucault (1977) describes, are examples of structural power within which control and surveillance are explicit. The institution employs overt and subtle forms of discipline to control those incarcerated. Even in such a constrained environment, agency still exists. The routine controlled by administrators of power exemplifies a temporal regime that aims to regulate behaviour and create docile bodies. However, within this regime, the incarcerated find ways to assert their humanity and agency. They engage in everyday resistance—minor acts such as sharing resources, maintaining personal habits counter to institutional schedules, or coded messages—often going unnoticed but crucial for a person's sense of self. These acts can similarly be regarded as 'weapons of the weak,' resembling the strategies used by oppressed peasant farmers, as explored by Scott (1985) in his analysis of agrarian peasant communities in Malaysia. While ultimate control resides with prison authorities, there are intricate power dynamics amongst unit hierarchies (what Goffman (1961) would refer to as ‘micro-societies’). Identity construction

within prisons also reflects the productive nature of power. Specifically, it relates to resistance against the 'good character' expected of the incarcerated through alternative narratives. This is explored further in the following chapter through the lens of Butler's (1990) performativity. While the structural domination of prisons is undeniable, incarcerated people continually navigate, resist, and sometimes even subvert this power.

The resistance offered by these practices can be a reclaiming of time, challenging the linear, controlled time of the prison with personal non-linear temporalities that include memories of the past, the lived reality of the present, and hopes for the future. This conflict between the experience of time imposed by the institution and personal temporal experiences constitutes temporal friction. Each act, or absence of an act, not only contests direct control but also manifests as a struggle over the control of time itself, illustrating how incarcerated people navigate and subvert the temporal and spatial limitations forced upon them. An act of resistance against a power figure within a specific moment is instant. In contrast, resistance towards changing the power structures that an agent is working under has a time lag (Lilja, 2018). Foucault discusses these various forms of resistance throughout his work, including technologies of self.

> *"The technologies of self involve remembering the past and narrating the present, as well as embracing ethical considerations that involve the future."*
>
> (Foucault, 1988, p. 428).

Resistance is commonly thought of as opposition to something through action. However, resistance also occurs in staying loyal to oneself or through practices of self-critique and ethical consideration (Lilja, 2018), and this is most commonly in response to the aforementioned antagonisms in the prison environment. In prisons, the performance of this form of resistance is repeated

via remoulding oneself and connecting the past to the present and future (Foucault, 1988). Acts and thoughts of self-development and various other technologies of self are opportunities for a person to transform themselves in a manner that is counter to existing dominant norms and expectations of agents of power and control—in prison, predominantly those who arrange the incarceration experience. These transforming practices are, ultimately, performed in search of some level of autonomy. Furthermore, practices in technologies of self also allow people to transform themselves in pursuit of desired states, including happiness, wisdom, and contentment (Foucault, 1988). The care of self, as one example, can be understood as a resistance to the subjective elements of relations between administrators of power and those being controlled (Allen, 2011; Lilja & Vinthagen, 2018), and the expectations of those in power when the space is unequal, thereby liberating the subject from state prescribed individuation and the institutional expectations of good character (Foucault, 1977).

These practices are forms of resistance that not only oppose immediate conditions but also engage in a deeper contestation of time as experienced within the prison system. They represent a significant aspect of temporal friction, where the act of reimagining oneself challenges the dominant narrative and reclaims autonomy over temporal experiences and existence. The intersection of time, power, and identity within the prison context highlights the impact of temporal friction. In resisting the controlling temporal regimes of the prison by engaging in acts that allow for alternative temporalities, the incarcerated can maintain a sense of self and have a greater degree of autonomy over their identity formation. This ongoing negotiation of time and power illustrates the complexity of temporal friction as an aspect of daily life within the prison system.

5.4 Weet-Bix and a Good Cuppa

I do not remember ever having a breakfast routine or a go-to meal before prison. Even as a kid, I could choose from various options each morning (this assumes I was out of bed and ready early enough, rather than running for the bus having left everything until the last minute, again). As a teen and into my early adult years, I never gave much thought or attention to breakfast. If I was hungry, I ate. If not, I would feed myself closer to lunchtime. You would never find the typical breakfast foods in my home; no Weet-Bix (not even the real thing) or Cornflakes in my cupboard. I was always partial to boiled eggs and toast cut into fingers, but that symbol from my childhood could be consumed at any time during the day (I still enjoy this and must admit I paused proofreading this chapter at least once to partake in this favourite of mine). Breakfast was never a priority for me, nor was it a part of my routine before my incarceration. The routine around breakfast in prison was a significant break from my pre-prison ordinary behaviour and the control over that aspect of my daily routine was something I initially found confronting. However, I was soon given the job in the kitchen and then, two weeks later, the job in the kit locker. Upon starting in the kit locker, the breakfast routine became a pit stop while commuting from my cell to my job. My role in that position influenced how I navigated the power structures of the prison and my interactions and grasp of personal space. The routine around breakfast soon became part of my daily routine despite how foreign it was to my pre-prison behaviour. This can happen in prison as the arranged become the arrangers and eventually self-manage the routine forced upon them. Foucault (1977) would call this the production of docile bodies and I draw further on this analysis in Chapter Six.

I never once ate the prison porridge. My avoidance of this menu item was not an act of rebellion, nor was it ever taken from me by a fellow incarcerated, and I was never late for breakfast. There is no story here. I never ate that porridge because I do not like porridge, and, as I discuss later in this chapter, the support I received from the outside world gave me choices and the option to shun this grotesque excuse for food. Still, there is no story here. The wheat

bricks were different; there is a story there. After a few weeks, I was over it. Not only was 7:30 in the morning too early for me to eat, but I was also tired of strolling over to the dining room to receive three pieces of impersonation Weet-Bix in scratched old white plastic bowl. Even after the morning dining room pit stops became part of my self-imposed schedule and management of my own routine, the stops felt unnecessary and my frustration with the institutional control evident in that process grew. We had to take the food. We all had to drag ourselves in line through the dining room doors to satisfy the muster check and accept the food. The logic behind the control in this forced start to every day escaped me at the time; I now understand it as an element of power imposed by those controlling people's experience of time while incarcerated. I now understand it as temporal friction, due to how the schedule around breakfasts contrasted with my pre-prison life. This shift from breakfast consumption without routine to a strict schedule underlines temporal friction: the linear time of the institution clashed with my personal, non-linear time regarding when-to-eat. This forced me to adapt to the prison's temporal regime and highlights how a schedule and the arrangement of the experience of time are used as control mechanisms in prisons. The transformation of something as mundane as breakfast into a part of my daily routine illustrates how institutional time can shape and reshape personal experiences. My acceptance of this routine and ownership of it, highlights how some agency is always possible even in limiting environments like the prison.

I accepted the porridge three days a week. I accepted the wheat things three days a week. I even accepted Saturday's cornflakes. I lined up like a well-behaved, almost docile body with the good character expected of me and accepted the daily repetitive signifier as the start of another day in prison. I then placed every bowl on the table I shared with five others and walked out. I walked out to start another day in the kit locker, walking with a sense of purpose and a rush of importance through my body as my status grew in the unit, walking with a sense of almost invincibility because of my role as the kit locker guy. Every day was the same routine…for months. Over 200 bowls of breakfast slush and bricks of wheat, along with more than 600 pieces of toast,

all accepted with reluctance and shared with my fellow incarcerated who either enjoyed the food they served us or had no other options. It did feel good to place those bowls on the table and walk out, even though I was not consciously acting with any resistance against the routine. While I do not label these acts as intentional resistance, I recognise that my decision to pass on these rations was a form of subtle resistance and personal agency within the controlled environment. These daily acts, although minor, were a subtle challenge to the imposed order and expectation of my behaviour.

My morning routine did not go unnoticed, and I was questioned by guards a few times. Their main concern was that I was being 'stood over' (threatened) for my food and that someone demanded I hand it over each morning. I knew this happened in prison, but I rarely witnessed it. I heard of various deals and demands in the unit and knew some of the gang prospects were expected to give certain items to those ranked higher than them. Still, I never witnessed anything beyond food sharing (if that sharing was involuntary, I did not see that). I was never threatened for my food; I just did not want the breakfast I was forced to take every morning. I kept the milk, though. We were allowed to take that from the dining room, and I took it daily for multiple cups of tea. The unit was provided with a large urn of tea daily, but I had my own tea bags. Bell branded tea, of course, because the brown liquid in the tea urn tasted more like water from a muddy river than anything resembling a good cuppa. As previously mentioned, I quickly learnt that the small things can take on heightened importance while incarcerated and a good cuppa was one of those things for me. A Bell tea bag, the correct amount of milk, and ideal brewing time resulted in the perfect shade of brown in that old prison cup. I can almost feel that essential warmth entering my body as I type this anecdote. Conversely, I can almost still taste that brown slush the prison tried to label tea. I observed that practices of simple luxuries, like a good cup of tea, are vital for well-being in prison and offer a feeling of normalcy, further illustrating the clash between personal and institutional restrictions.

Passing off my unwanted daily breakfast allocations to my tablemates earned me some goodwill. That is not why I did it, but it was a bonus. Food is a currency in prison that comes with both bargaining power and risks (Valentine & Longstaff, 1998; Godderis, 2006). The shifting and fluctuating value of certain items illustrates the negotiations and exchanges that occur as part of complex social dynamics within the institutional limitations. Some items also had a higher value, with the monthly apple pies and weekly pieces of chicken being toward the top of the list. Outranking every other food item were the meals served for those with specific dietary requirements, especially vegetarian ones. It was as if a personal chef prepared those for the few who received them because the quality far exceeded the rest of the menu. I even heard rumours that experienced prisoners would say they were vegetarians when they first got to prison to receive the most coveted items on the prison menu. Vegetarian meals were in short supply, so the apple pies were the prison equivalent of gold. The rewards were plenty for those who did not like the pies and parted with them easier than most. For others, a decision would need to be made between eating their pie or trading it for something else they wanted more or for something they needed because they did not have support from the outside and could not survive with the meagre prison soaps and hygiene-related provisions.

Food could also be a token of validation and reward in my unit. I received many chocolate bars and tokens of appreciation for going the extra mile with some washing or providing an extra sheet to those who asked. One fellow incarcerated, who was part of the release-to-work programme, appreciated that I dropped his washing at his cell each night so greatly that a Whittaker's Peanut Slab would appear in my cell every week, thrown through that tiny slit in the window. Every single week. For months. I never had the heart to tell him I did not like them, and I quietly passed them on to my friends, which generated goodwill and reciprocity in those relationships. These aspects of control over food appear to be in contrast with the control of the experience of mealtimes. Though administrators of power seek to create docile bodies that merely submit to the prison routine, this can be disrupted by not only overt behaviours

but through acts of gifting, sharing, and togetherness. In my observation, the sharing and trading of food and the use of items as an unofficial reward system was not done as acts of resistance. Rather, these experiences are additional examples of the importance of small things while incarcerated. While trading, sharing, and gifting food items sit outside the controlled routine represented by that old dining room, I suspect for most in my unit these acts were more of a way of coping with the routine that differed so much from the outside, rather than any form of resistance against the herding through that dining room. Regardless of the gifts of appreciation I received from my fellow incarcerated, I was never short of a chocolate bar or some biscuits. I always had food, and I could reject those breakfasts because I had support from the outside.

Those incarcerated in New Zealand prisons can be sent money from the outside to be held in a trust account. These accounts can hold up to $200 New Zealand dollars per prisoner, with a spending limit of $70 per week. These were the figures when I was in prison in 2012 and are still (Department of Corrections, 2020). They have not changed in response to the rising costs of the small number of items prisoners can purchase. Essentially, this means prisoners today can purchase less per week than I could in 2012. This weekly limit meant I could purchase a good stash of supplies, including muesli, biscuits, noodles, shampoo, soaps, and moisturiser (important because of the meagre allocation given to me by the medical team, as discussed in Chapter Four). My privileged position and the social capital I was blessed with meant I could reject that repetitive breakfast menu. Others were in the same position, but many were not and had no choice but to consume what they were given or go without. I can still see some of their faces when I recall mealtime in prison. While I was to some degree aware of my privilege while incarcerated, I did not understand the extent of the positive consequences until many years later. These aspects add a layer of understanding to the concept of temporal friction by illustrating how economic status can affect someone’s ability to manoeuvre within the limiting structures of prison life.

The ability to choose approximately half of my meals was afforded me because I had various people sending me money and because of the $27 a week I earned from my kit locker job (the second-highest wage in the unit). Most of this support came from my parents, and I also had multiple friends who would send me the odd $20 here and there. More than once, my account exceeded that $200 limit, and the excess money was returned to where it came from. Purchasing these items and planning a significant portion of my diet gave me some control over my prison experience and allowed me to act 'ordinary' by choosing what to eat as I would on the outside, even if only from choices limited by incarceration (I never did make that lemon meringue pie while inside). This took on increased importance as I felt my control of my sexual identity slipping, and I grasped onto anything I could control in response. Some of these choices of what to eat and when to eat were mainly about coping and temporal friction yet had elements of subtle resistance in hindsight. While not every act like this that subverts a norm or expected behaviour can be considered resistance, these actions played a significant role in managing and coping with the psychological and emotional effects of prison. This distinction also helps to clarify the scope of resistance in the conceptualisation of temporal friction.

5.5 Everyday Resistance and Temporal Friction

Resistance, a complex phenomenon, has been extensively studied in various fields of scholarship. While providing a universal definition of the term is challenging, Hollander and Einwohner (2004) describe resistance as acts in opposition to an authority or force. Scott (1985) provides a more nuanced understanding through their framing of 'everyday resistance', which positions actions within the context of the actors participating in the act and within a specific time and space. Scott's concept is insightful and relevant for understanding the subtleties of behaviours while incarcerated, yet it can overly focus on the intentionality behind actions before they are categorised as resistance (see Johansson & Vinthagen, 2016). Rubin (2005) introduces friction as a concept to explain actions while incarcerated that may appear as

resistance but are driven more by coping with specific circumstances than by intent to oppose. This differentiation between everyday resistance and friction is helpful as it considers the complexity of how those incarcerated respond to the control over their temporal experiences. I draw on both of these concepts to explore how actions and behaviours manifest agency and coping strategies, each impacting identity, the sense of self, and relationships. While these concepts may seem distinct, they often intersect and overlap, illustrating the wide array of adaptive behaviours employed in response to the varying degrees of control faced within the prison environment.

Building upon these foundational concepts of everyday resistance and friction, I reintroduce temporal friction, my conceptualisation of Deleuze's three syntheses of time. This concept, one that represents the interplay between institutional and personal time within the prison environment, arises from the clash between institutionally controlled linear time and a person's subjective experiences of time. Highlighting how incarcerated people navigate and contest temporal boundaries to seek autonomy within a system that intends to regulate them, temporal friction adds a layer of understanding of the nuanced ways those incarcerated resist and cope with institutional constraints. It also underscores the profound impact temporal conflicts have on identities and relationships. Examining the intersections of everyday resistance, Rubin's concept of friction, and the broader temporal friction offer further insight into the complex dynamics of power, agency, and identity within the prison. These concepts provide unique insights and lenses to comprehend the incarceration experience. Collectively, they offer a spectrum of adaptive responses and coping strategies during incarceration, highlighting how the incarcerated negotiate the layers of control imposed on them.

The agency of the incarcerated challenges any notion that incarcerated people are passive recipients of the controlled routine of the prison (Arford, 2016). Acts of everyday resistance, friction, and temporal friction are how incarcerated people navigate and subtly contest the arrangement of their experiences. These acts highlight creative and adaptive coping strategies

within the limiting environment of the prison (Gamman & Thorpe, 2015). These strategies, including both internal adjustments and external behaviours, illustrate the ongoing negotiations of power within the prison (Crewe, 2012). They reflect attempts to preserve some form of control within a limiting environment like the prison (Dennard et al., 2021; Cunha et. Al, 2023). These strategies are significant, especially compared to the freedoms afforded to those beyond the wire (Levin, 2023). Accordingly, those incarcerated find ways to not only experience some sense of control but also maintain and develop their sense of self (Garner, 2019).

Coping strategies can manifest in different ways, both internal and external, depending on the specific aspect of the incarceration experience with which someone aims to cope (Reed, et al., 2009; Gonçalves et al., 2021). These strategies, from trading food to forming social networks, represent more than mere survival tactics; they embody forms of everyday resistance to the institutional power aiming to govern their lives (Rubin, 2015). An understanding of these various coping strategies highlights ways in which well-being can be preserved during incarceration (Dennard et. al, 2021). Exploring interactions between guards and prisoners exposes how power is both negotiated and contested in a prison environment (Crewe, 2012). Everyday acts of resistance, friction, and temporal friction can challenge the power and control of the prison and those who run it (Rubin, 2015).

Scott (1985, 2016) describes the covert aspects of everyday resistance, referring to the subtle and informal acts people employ to resist and subvert power. In contrast to open and more direct forms of resistance, such as protests, everyday resistance is often hidden or disguised (partly to avoid retaliation) and characterised by its non-confrontational nature. Everyday resistance can take forms ranging from small acts of defiance to organised forms. Small acts include verbal defiance, such as mumbling under one's breath or complaining. Organised forms may include sabotage and foot-dragging. Regardless of the size or any premeditation of the act, these acts of everyday resistance are usually carried out or organised secretly, which makes

them challenging to detect (see also Vinthagen & Johansson, 2013; Ugelvik, 2014; Johansson & Vinthagen, 2016). Those engaging in these acts may not seek to change anything about existing power structures, yet they serve a vital purpose in helping incarcerated people maintain dignity and autonomy, thereby subtly subverting the imposed control (Scott, 2016). Rubin's (2015; 2017) concept of friction describes that not all disruptive acts within the prison setting are intended as resistance. Rather, many are natural responses to the immediate needs and desires of those incarcerated. This perspective offers a further layer to this discussion, demonstrating how daily behaviour can impact identities and interactions within prisons, even though they are not directed at challenging those in power. However, these actions can be misinterpreted as resistance even when they are primarily used for navigating and coping with the prison environment (Rubin, 2015).

Because acts of everyday resistance are often disguised, Scott (2016) argues that they can be easily missed by those in power. This non-confrontation and subtle aspect of everyday resistance is important for the safety of those committing the acts (Johansson & Vinthagen, 2016). This means that participation in such acts can often feel more accessible than open acts of resistance because they are safer for participants (Scott, 1985). Regardless of whether these acts are covert or hidden, they are important because of their ability to undermine the stability of oppressive control over time, as well as the aforementioned benefits for agency and autonomy. By engaging in ways that resist domination, and the arrangement of experiences, people and groups can assert autonomy, retain dignity, and challenge and interrupt existing power relations (Crewe, 2007). Scott's concept of everyday resistance highlights the importance of understanding how power operates in society. By focusing on the hidden and subtle forms of resistance that exist in everyday life, Scott suggests that we can gain a deeper understanding of the power relations that exist in societies and how power is contested and negotiated in everyday interactions. This can, in turn, inform our efforts to create more just and equitable social arrangements by highlighting the agency and creativity of

those who are often marginalised or excluded from formal political processes (Kinman & Clements, 2016).

The concept of everyday resistance offers insight into how incarcerated people resist the power of the prison and provides a lens through which to recognise the agency of those who are often marginalised and excluded from formal society. Prison operations are characterised by asymmetric power and control (Bone et. al, 2016), and incarcerated people are controlled through disciplinary practices and limitations on both their autonomy and control (Marquat & Trulson, 2016). Despite these limitations, prisoners can resist in various ways. A common form of everyday resistance in prisons is non-compliance (Rubin, 2017). Often occurring through a refusal to follow orders, non-compliance can appear in sabotage or in more organised forms to resist policies or practices as a group (Arford, 2016). Everyday resistance in prisons can also appear through the development of networks made up of relationships between prisoners to provide support and share resources (Buck & Tomczak, 2024). These networks can serve as a source of resistance to the disciplinary power of the prison system, enabling inmates to resist or evade the control of prison officials (Bosworth, 2017). More subjectively, everyday resistance appears in prisons through cultural practices and rituals, including language (see Mayr, 2003; Laursen, 2017) and art (see Ryder, 2018). These forms of resistance challenge the dominant culture and can provide prisoners a sense of belonging and identity. These types of everyday resistance are explored further in the remainder of this chapter through examples from my incarceration.

A response to a need or desire can result in a violation of prison rules. Rubin's concept of friction (2015) draws upon the theories of power and prison by Foucault (1975) and Goffman (1961). Foucault emphasises the presence of power dynamics in society, where resistance can be as creative and productive as the power itself. Within prisons, punitive power aims to transform prisoners into obedient citizens, with a close connection between punitive power and oppression. However, power relationships in prisons are not fixed (Crewe, 2012), and people respond to domination with a range of behaviours,

from rebellion to submission (Maier & Ricciardelli, 2019). Prisoners engage in various strategies to carve out spaces of freedom and challenge power dynamics. Entering a not-so-total institution like prison leads to a loss of identity and control over one's life, as people are separated from their natural social environment. Frictions are natural and automatic actions driven by human needs occur within this intensely controlled environment (Rubin, 2015).

If rules are violated by a incarcerated person, this can be about shaping the prison experience (Rubin, 2015) and creating personal space (Bosworth & Carrabine, 2001) rather than an intentional act of rule-breaking or an attempt to change something about the system. Furthermore, overt and everyday adjustments can reflect a specific prison culture, such as abiding by a prison code (see Sykes, 1958, 2007; Trammell, 2012; Mitchell et al., 2023). These adjustments can be as nuanced as abiding by or rejecting the expected behaviour set by those most dominant in the unit through to upholding prison hierarchies (Toman et al., 2015; Symkovych 2018; McKendy & Ricciardelli, 2018). How people respond varies significantly—some prisoners might choose compliance, leveraging obedience for safety or privileges, while others resist, challenging the status quo, seeking autonomy or peer status (see Flanagan, 1991; Adams, 1992; Kruttschnitt et al., 2000; Zamble & Porporino, 2013; Skarbek, 2020).

The complex dynamics of power within a prison, both the formal power from the institution and informal from in-unit hierarchies, demand a range of responses, from overt resistance to subtle forms of friction and temporal friction. These actions reflect an interplay between imposed control and personal autonomy, highlighting how incarcerated people not only react to but also shape their incarceration experience. This furthers our understanding of how temporal friction impacts identity formation and the social structures within prisons and specific units.

Actions that become everyday behaviours in a prison unit often break prison rules, whether that is the intention or not (Haggerty & Bucerius, 2021). Motivated to satisfy a craving rife within the prison system, activities such as the brewing of prison alcohol or the creation of 'teabacco' (tea leaves cooked in a nicotine patch to create an alternative to tobacco) to satisfy a craving (see Ugelvik, 2011 for a similar example from a Norwegian prison). These acts contrast with expected behaviour, yet I observed that they can be overlooked by guards because, perhaps, in satisfying a need, they contribute to unit harmony and are often better than the alternative. Evidently, what can appear to be an act of resistance can often be a coping strategy, survival tactic or what Goffman (1961) refers to as 'make-dos'.

5.6 Food, Resistance & Temporal Friction

As illustrated in the stories that began this chapter, food is important in prison. From the signifiers of routine to the currency it provides, the importance of food while incarcerated is as nuanced as the prison experience itself. Access to food is not as barrier-free as fundamental human rights would demand, as it can be used as a tool for power (see Locchi, 2021). From the demands on the portrayal of good character just to gain access to the dining room before receiving a meal to the restrictions placed on the access to weekly orders as a form of punishment for rule violations, guards and administrators are aware of the importance of food in prisons and, in my experience at least, will not hesitate to use it to elicit a desired outcome (Valentine & Longstaff, 1998). Administrators can also use food choices as a reward or to elicit positive behaviour, in addition to being a tool for punishment (see Vanhouche, 2015 and Kaap-Deeder, et al., 2017 as two examples). Food is also a tool for both control and reward amongst prisoners. The aforementioned stand-over tactics, trades, and tokens of gratitude are just three examples. Because of the importance of food in prisons, it also provides many opportunities for acts of everyday resistance and temporal friction.

I ‘celebrated’ my 30th birthday in prison, less than a month after being sentenced. Birthdays in prison are bizarre experiences as they are marked by confinement rather than the type festivity seen outside. While many things are intensified during incarceration, the ability to throw a birthday party is limited by the bounds of the prison and the arrangement of the incarceration experience, which makes celebrating a birthday inside in any meaningful way often both undesirable and challenging. However, regardless of the limitations, I learned that the importance of a birthday can be heightened while incarcerated because it is something that would be celebrated with loved ones outside. The constrained acknowledgment of personal milestones within the prison setting underscores a defiance of the prison's control over the experience time. The ability to acknowledge the passing of another year is limited just by being inside prison walls and I observed the importance of small moments of acknowledgement as a replacement for the parties that might happen if the celebration was on the outside.

In my unit, and in many other prisons worldwide, that something is a prison cake. Created with ingenuity and a ‘can-do’ attitude, the prison cake is usually made by combining biscuits, the imitation butter handed out with breakfast, sugar, some chocolate, and whatever else is handy at the time. The result is a surprisingly tasty cake that allows those consuming it a respite from the repetitive overcooked bland prison food consumed at other times. Someone made me a prison cake for my 30th birthday. It was not quite as good as the cake I would share with family and friends 10 years later at my 40th, but it tasted fantastic. That moment of shared celebration, using two blanket-covered 60-litre rubbish bins as our picnic table, was not instigated by anyone as an overt challenge to the prison system. Yet, in the act of acknowledging my birthday, we engaged in a subtle form of resistance. This resonates with Scott’s (1985) foot-dragging, personifying a form of temporal resistance that pushes back against the prison’s intention to control how time is experience—and, in this example, valued. Just as foot dragging is a non-confrontational refusal to conform completely with dictated schedules, so does marking

personal milestones in prison challenge the control of the experience and perception of time.

In moments like these, engagement with time becomes multidimensional and reflects both a resistance to the prison structure and a reclaiming of personal agency. The celebration of a birthday while incarcerated is not just about pushing back against the control, it is also an affirmation of individuality and a grasp on the continuity of identity beyond the prison walls. The duality of resistance and affirmation found in an acknowledgement of a birthday in prison illustrates the complex interplay between imposed structures of time and agency in navigating and, at times, pushing back against these structures of control. I witnessed a few of these birthday celebrations and partook in a couple, and what always struck me about them was that, even for the briefest of moments, the attendees appeared to share a common thought that normality was with us[2]. It was as if we were in somebody's home on the outside, just hanging out, sharing the occasion and enjoying a moment of togetherness. I knew that the feeling would not last, as it used borrowed time with the unspoken permission of the guards for some rule-bending, yet it was our time, and it was a response to a need we had at that moment. We were not trying to change anything about the system. We were simply just coping with missing our families and friends.

What emerges from the combination of prison limitations and the heightened importance of something such as a birthday while incarcerated is the need to do something to mark the passing of another year. This something emerges as a form of temporal friction, an assertion of a subjective time over the objective, imposed measured time of the prison routine. The celebration of my birthday within the restrictions of the prison setting illustrates how the

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[2] An example from popular culture that provides another perspective here is the scene in *The Shawshank Redemption* where the prisoners drink beer on the roof after the main character, Andy (played by Tim Robbins), negotiated this with one of the prison guards. The narrator of the film, Red (voiced by Morgan Freeman), frames this experience as the boys feeling normal again, even for the shortest time. "It lasted twenty minutes, that beer-break, and for those twenty minutes we felt like free men."

institutional control of time limits personal experiences. In prison, time is more often marked by measures of routine, not by personal milestones. By finding a way to celebrate a birthday while incarcerated, I, and others who also found a way, were able to assert personal time over institutional time and create some room for personal continuity even amongst restrictions. Furthermore, the acts of making a cake from available resources and improvising furniture is an example of reclaiming some agency over how time is experienced. These acts of ingenuity are direct responses to temporal constraints and reflect a form of subtle resistance to the mundane nature of prison. Any resistance in these celebrations was not overt; it was subtle in the act of maintaining personal practices. The celebration of a birthday in prison is a navigation of prison control to reinforce identity and continuity of life beyond the prison walls.

Sharing food while incarcerated is not just for a celebration; that is less frequent than other common occurrences. Almost daily, I witnessed groups of prisoners come together between mealtimes to share what they had. Most commonly, this occurred in groups joined together by shared affiliation (such as a gang), and the resulting sense of belonging was obvious to me as I observed these rituals. These gatherings represent a nuanced form of temporal friction, where the shared moments transcend the schedules imposed by the institution, inserting a slice of personal time within the regimented prison structure. These acts of coming together appeared to me as ways of reclaiming some control over their environment and daily lives, subtly resisting the mundane grind of the prison routine. I expect that the odd rule was violated, yet perhaps the guards were aware enough of the importance and benefit of these moments to leave the food sharers to their ritual. Again, it is unlikely that anyone partaking in these exercises was trying to change anything about the system. There was unlikely to be any intended resistance here. Rather, these moments of togetherness were formed by a group of guys coping with their situation, responding to the arrangement of their incarceration experience, and maintaining some autonomy through the use of food (Simanovic & Gosev, 2019). However, as these rituals become part of the routine of the incarceration experience for those who participate in

them, they shape the overall experience as specific behaviours and actions that can create a sense of control over time (Maier & Ricciardelli, 2022).

Other acts related to food can demonstrate a clearer intention. Although it is not my place to definitively define the motivations behind the choices of another, I observed several people refuse to accept certain foods offered to them from under that serving window. These refusals were often accompanied by a verbal barrage directed at no one in particular but loud enough for all to hear. While the motivation of these people remains unclear, comments such as "I'm not eating this f**king sh*t again" leave little doubt about what was being rejected. These moments of refusal exhibit a significant aspect of temporal friction, where a person pushed back against the routine control of their diet while incarcerated. By rejecting the scheduled meal, those people not only expressed their frustration but also reclaimed a moment of agency. This disruption of the expected and instilled routine allowed for the temporary insertion of a different temporality—personal time—into the schedule imposed by the institution. These acts are a form of resistance that subtly shifts temporal experiences from strictly controlled to an experience that aligns closer with personal preferences, even if only momentarily. This example further illustrates how temporal friction functions within the constraints of the prison, where even the briefest deviations from the norm can manifest as profound statements of self-determination.

The unit I was in had a 'shop', that being one guy hoarding various supplies in his cell to 'sell' to other prisoners. The price was 'take one, bring two back'. For example, the one time I used the 'shop' was for a box of tea bags. The following week, when I received my weekly order, I repaid my debt with two boxes. This pricing model, essentially, was how the guy running his shop was able to build up his stock and keep the system running. I am sure he traded items for other things (such as contraband), but my only experience with the shop was the one-out, two-back system. Everything he had available was able to be purchased through the in-prison system. However, as previously mentioned, wages are minuscule in prison, and not everyone has support from

outside. That is one reason a shop like this becomes a needed service while also preying on the disadvantaged. The in-prison hierarchy mimics that of the outside, with the in-unit shopkeeper comparable to loan sharks. Guards knew about the shop; there was no chance they could not be because of the weekly cell searches. They let the shop continue and only stepped in when there was trouble. Most trouble was hidden from them and during my nine months in that unit, I saw the shop shut down by guards once. It was then back up and running within a couple of weeks.

The person running the shop was approved by the gang controlling the unit. He was not a gang member but had their approval and, I suspect, was paying for that. However, because the unit was minimum security, we had a higher turnover rate of prisoners than other units. That meant it did not take many shifts for residents in the unit to change enough for one gang to have the numbers over another. On most occasions, a shift in numbers did not change the unit's culture much. There was little jostling for power because most seemed thankful to be in that unit over others with tighter rules and less freedom. What those moments of shift did offer, however, was a slight window of opportunity for the non-affiliated of us to enjoy brief moments when there was not one gang clearly on top of the in-unit hierarchy. During one such shift, another prisoner set up a shop to compete with the existing one. He offered better rates and some specialist items that could not be sourced from the in-prison list (because of his job outside of the unit he had access to these items). His entrepreneurial spirit was not celebrated by the existing shop operator or by either of the two main gangs in the unit, and he was, not-so-politely, told to shut down. He shut down quickly but did continue to provide some of those specialist items to a select few of his friends, of which I was one. One of those items was, quite possibly, the most amazing sushi I have ever tasted — although, I am sure that was influenced by how long it had been between bites of such a meal. Food, and the control of it, can disrupt power dynamics in a prison unit (Peterie, 2022), and prisoners are usually just as aware of that as the guards watching them. However, at least in my experience, the accepted

social hierarchy within a unit usually readjusts those power dynamics with haste, assertiveness, and sometimes physical coercion.

The concept of temporal friction is woven throughout this narrative of the informal in-unit shops, illustrating an interplay between Deleuze's synthesis of future as a performative temporality and the fragile nature of credit systems within a prison. This shop system highlights temporal aspects of credit and underscores the fragility of such systems, specifically those that depend on power structures—both formal, the guard, and informal, gang hierarchies. In this example, the in-unit prisoner-run shop functions as an economic system with its own type of credit and currency, operating on a delayed exchange. This system includes a future-orientated aspect to everyday transactions, incorporating the future into a present moment of borrowing. Each transaction was a promise that extended into the future, creating a timeline that each participant in the trade would, or should, comply with. In this interplay, the institutional linear time overlays with a more fluid, personal temporality of credit, debt, and payment.

The fragility of a system like this is exposed by its dependency on shifting power dynamics. The existence of the shop and the ability of someone to run it depended on the gang in control. This illustrates how the future—evident here by the promise of payment—was always dependent on power alignments. This aligns with Deleuze's notion of the virtual, where future potentials are shaped and reshaped by present settings. Furthermore, an introduction of a competing shop during a shift in power dynamics is a moment of temporal disruption, during which the temporal order of credit and power is challenged. If the new shop offers different terms and options, as it did in my narrative, the established flow of economic and social interactions within the unit can be briefly altered. This further disrupts the power dynamics and temporal rhythms. These shifts and the responses to them—including closure by guards or gangs and subtle trade between friends—highlight the fluidity of temporal experiences during incarceration. They illustrate how temporalities can be both imposed and generated. Each layer of temporal experience

interacts with the others, sometimes reinforcing and other times resisting the temporal regime of the institution.

Understanding the prison experience solely through common interpretations of time and space overlooks the intricate dynamics surrounding specific aspects like food, a critical element in the incarcerated experience. Food intersects with power, time, and identity, transcending its basic purpose. In prison, food can be a control instrument, a means for reward and bartering, and a vehicle for belonging and celebration. Food can embody resistance and temporal friction, offering a means for coping with and surviving the prison experience. Food and the part it can play in the prison experience is another exemplification of why prison is never just time. The psychological associations formed around these dynamics and the impact these have on well-being and identity is another reason why the sentence never truly ends.

5.7 Sport, Exercise, Resistance & Temporal Friction

Social hierarchies in prisons can form and be influenced by physical strength. Acts of strength are often displayed through working out (often with makeshift equipment) and other acts of bravado. The hierarchies that form around who works out and who does not often result in prisoners considering exercise to be a necessity, especially if they are to be accepted into their chosen groups (Müller & Mutz, 2022). During my incarceration, I saw and experienced the importance of working out and exercising.

Various groups worked out together, often on a schedule and with set workout plans. This did not just occur in gang groupings, although that was the most common. Each group had a leader who would direct the exercises, bark orders, and often chastise those who were not keeping up with others. These rituals tended to remind me of a sports team training for a big game or, at times, like a group of fighters preparing for a looming battle: disciplined,

focused on the end goal (whatever that was), and pushing each to their limits. For gang-affiliated prisoners, working out in the group appeared to be expected, and there would be consequences if expectations were not met. Some of the older or more senior members were not expected to work out in groups and often exercised alone or with a couple of friends. Their workouts were lower in intensity, as if it appeared less about preparing for something and more about just keeping fit or passing the time. For other groups, working out together appeared to be a shared experience and a common form of coping with the physical limitations and demands of incarceration. The workouts were lighter, and the atmosphere more jovial. If someone was encouraged to push through another set or beat a previous best, it was done with a supportive tone and less aggression. Regardless of the group or the intensity, fitness in my unit was a focus for many, and I wanted some of that action.

I lost seven kilograms during my first three months in prison and ten overall. I needed to lose this weight; it was one benefit of my incarceration that I was grateful for when I eventually left prison. Around five months into my sentence, I noticed that my stomach was flattening and dared to dream of visible abominable muscles. I had been relatively fit in my late teens and early twenties but had let that drop in the years before prison. I saw prison as an opportunity to get that fitness level back and my aspirations for the future were evident in that hope. There was an extremely fit guy in my unit (the leader in the kitchen job, first introduced in Chapter Two). For the purpose of this story, we are calling him Mike.

Mike had been in prison most of his adult life, and his body was chiselled by constant exercise and discipline. His abs were rock hard with no fat in sight. Mike had a reputation for taking the unspoken rules of a unit seriously and while he was not affiliated with a gang, he was well respected by the boys because of the time had been incarcerated (as well as rumours of his participation in dealing out prison justice to those who broke unspoken rules or found themselves at the wrong end of the hierarchy because of their

offences). You did not touch Mike's property, and you did not question him when he asked (told) you to do something. I respected Mike because I sensed that I should. Quietly to myself, I was amused by the way he strolled around the unit as if he was running some sort of Hollywood mafia compound. He had a swagger with arm movements and a hip twist that appeared to me as an act. He walked briskly, and, at times, his walk looked like something out of a cartoon. Regardless of this amusement, what I genuinely respected about Mike was his dedication to fitness. I wanted abs like him, so I asked his advice. He scoffed at me and told me I needed to burn fat and just get on with it. I had expected or hoped for advice about specific exercises to focus on to achieve my goals. However, for whatever reason, Mike did not deem me worthy of his time. I gave up on the idea and if it was not for some good timing a few weeks later, I may have never worked out in prison.

There was one senior gang-affiliated guy in our unit who almost always worked out alone; we will call him Richard. Richard was the leader of his gang within our unit. He was quiet but highly respected by the younger members. He casually glided around the unit with a calmness that I found rare in prison, and I never heard him raise his voice or have an aggressive stand-off with any prisoner (he did, however, argue with the guards a few times, yet still never seemed to raise his voice). Like many prisoners, Richard had children at home. He spoke of them often, and they were an obvious motivation for him to get out and then stay out of prison. However, unlike many others, he did not appear to use this motivation or his children as a box-ticking exercise for gaining parole. At least, that was how I interpreted his words. He did not loudly voice that he would stay out of prison for his kids the way others did, and, to me at least, it felt so much more sincere and genuine because of that. Richard worked out with his group a few times, yet to me he seemed above the bravado and aggression of this ritual. Most of the time, he exercised alone, and one of his routines used that old, cracked basketball court in front of the building where the kit locker was. The same court I strolled for distraction. The same court we all walked over multiple times a day to that smelly dining room.

One day, as Richard engaged in his routine of short sprints broken up by various sets of burpees, press-ups, star jumps, and squats, I leant in the doorway of the kit locker building and watched this all unfold. It was mere weeks after Mike had rejected my plea for advice, and I was getting the urge to exercise again. Because Richard appeared to exercise for, what I perceived to be, the right reason, I watched him in an attempt to learn exercises or a routine I could try. At the end of one of his sets, he saw me watching and came over. Richard and I had a friendly relationship and had even bet a chocolate bar on the odd game of rugby league. I respected Richard because of his calm energy and because of his position in the unit. Accordingly, his washing was done in the first loads of the day and always ready for him early. I sensed that he appreciated that and it likely contributed to our friendly exchanges. He came over to me and asked what I was up to. I replied that I was thinking about doing some working out, so I was watching his routine. With sweat pouring down his face and while sucking in big gasps of air, he replied, and I can still hear it so clearly as I write this, “join me, you lazy c**t”.

That day Richard was near the end of his workout, and I had the washing machine going, so I could not drop everything and hit the concrete. Two days later, I did join him. Richard patiently took me through the exercises, commented on my form, and gave me tips. I pushed it too hard that first day and nearly passed out. In one moment, I stopped mid-exercise and sat down in the middle of our concrete exercising area before I collapsed. Instead of chastising me or pushing me beyond my limits, Richard found it hilarious, called me a dumb c-word, put his hand on my shoulder, and offered me some water. It was a rare moment of compassion in a place where you experienced little. It also represents a moment of friction. I remember this moment so clearly because of the significance of Richard’s act. That moment of bonding and human interaction disrupted the regime of control under which both Richard and I were held and my connection with him in that moment transcended the environment. I believe that gang members get an unfair portrayal in this country, especially through the mainstream media and political rhetoric. Some of the nicest guys I met in prison were the patched gang members whom the

media and politicians teach and encourage us to fear, and Richard was at the top of that list.

I worked out with Richard approximately half-a-dozen times and learned the routine reasonably well (I still do some of those exercises today). After those first few times, Richard went back to working out alone, and I sensed the unspoken decision that he had helped me all he was going to, and he wanted his space again. I continued with that workout a few times a week and did it alone for the rest of my incarceration. I never did achieve those visible abdominal muscles, but I did leave prison as fit as I was in my teens. Richard had taught me another coping strategy and response to the control of incarceration. I had a new tool for distraction, and I was grateful for that. I still think about him often. He was one of the people I met during my incarceration that I found myself missing upon my release. I had hoped to see him again one day and often wondered if he made it home to his babies. While writing this thesis, I found out that Richard had been killed in a car accident a few years ago. Rest in peace, Richard; I'm glad you made it home to those kids, even for a little while.

My working out did not go unnoticed. I received positive comments from some of the guards and various fellow prisoners. For me, I felt more in control of my body through that exercise and was, subconsciously perhaps, preparing my health for an uncertain future. Working out can be understood as a response to the prison environment (see Müller & Mutz, 2022), as another coping strategy, and as a small rejection of the arrangement of the prison experience. This is especially relevant in units without exercising equipment as it forces prisoners to construct equipment using whatever they can get their hands on, and even each other's bodies. Sport and exercise during incarceration are shown to have various benefits for those serving a prison sentence, including morale, health, and feeling some sense of control over their experiences (see Martinez-Merino et al., 2019; Norman & Andrew, 2019; Norman et al., 2021).

My experiences and observations of working out while incarcerated are illustrations of how the practices of exercising and group activities are not merely acts of fitness, they are instances of temporal friction as they introduce different temporalities into the daily routine of prison life. By engaging in group workouts, informal coaching sessions, and personal exercise practices, the incarcerated negotiate their temporal experiences by forming routines that parallel yet contest the schedule imposed by the institution. Forming workout schedules and the social dynamics involved are examples of the incarcerated using exercise to claim agency over their time and space, subtly contesting the institution's control over their days.

Furthermore, these examples of working out while incarcerated intersect with Goffman's concept of role-stripping in prison, where the identities of those incarcerated are stripped and dismantled by the institution (Goffman, 1961). In response, incarcerated people can seek to reconstruct their identities through the roles they can perform while in prison, such as being someone who works out and participates in associated group activity. Shared physical activities become an avenue through which the incarcerated can resist the institutionally imposed and expected passive compliance, instead manifesting both a personal and group identity based on strength and fitness.

Therefore, the interplay of workout groups and engaging in exercise can be seen as a form of temporal friction, where the acts represent an assertion of personal and collective agency against the controlled time of the prison. This friction is both a clash between the different temporalities and a negotiation of time, within which the incarcerated insert periods of autonomy, redefine their roles, and subtly shift power dynamics. These acts are temporal in that they reshape the experience of time from a mere progression to an engagement, using the body as a tool to mark time in a way that differs from what the institution imposes. Beyond the working out I witnessed and participated in during my incarceration, which was just as much about social hierarchy and culture as it was about fitness, I also witnessed organised sports-based activity.

Sitting next to the unit were a few empty fields. Perhaps surplus to the farm requirements or intended for another purpose, these fields are typical for a rural area in the Waikato province of Aotearoa New Zealand. Approximately once a month, one of the guards would take a few of the boys to one of those fields for a game of touch rugby. It was a highlight for many, and I could feel the excitement in the unit. A game like this presented as another example of feeling a sense of normality even just for a few moments. A few times, these games of touch turned into tackle, and as long as it remained friendly, the guard let the increased intensity of the game happen without intervening or any later repercussions. I wonder if he recognised the benefit of this release of energy, as the calmness in the unit was felt after a good game of footy.

I dreaded when these games would happen because it always meant more dirty clothes for me to deal with, but I now understand the benefit and am grateful to that guard for letting it happen. He did not have to, and I expect it pushed the limits of some rule. However, in turning a blind eye to those rules, he gave the people who partook in that activity another response choice to the controls of incarceration. Furthermore, this type of sporting activity, regardless of how rarely it occurs, provides an opportunity for prisoners to experience some agency over their experience (Norman & Andrew, 2019). Playing a game of touch rugby on a field with mates is a typical activity in Aotearoa New Zealand culture and, in prison, presents an opportunity for incarcerated people to temporarily escape the physical limitations and boundaries of their surroundings, and perhaps even reconnect with outside roles or identity markers.

These shared experiences not only allowed for a temporary escape from the physical and temporal confines of incarceration but also for brief moments of genuine human connection. These interactions highlight the significance of collective activities to reinforce bonds and affirm identities that transcend the mundane of prison life. In these moments, as with the above narrative about my birthday celebration, the incarcerated are not just people serving a prison sentence; they become part of a community that can momentarily escape the

physical boundaries that hold them, demonstrating how these interactions are vital for maintaining a sense of personhood and continuity beyond each person.

In reflecting on the examples I have offered in this chapter so far, including experiences of eating, sport, exercise, and interactions within prison, it becomes evident that these activities were not merely ways to pass some of the measured prison time; instead, they represent a profound engagement with the concept of time itself; challenging the control of the experience and perception of time within the prison system. As Serge (1977) observes, prison time is characterised by “swift hours and very long seconds” (p. 35). This astute observation exposes prison time as a departure from the traditional linear view of time that encompasses event after event. Within prison, this kind of duration-based focus that dominates the world outside losing some of its meaning. This idea gives me pause to reconsider my experiences and interactions while incarcerated and positions each of these examples not as separate events, but as a dynamic interplay of temporal friction.

The prison birthday cake, the routine of exercise, the support of a friendship between those who would be unlikely to even meet on the outside, and the camaraderie of shared sporting activities are all examples of a complex interplay of temporalities that challenge the institutionally imposed linear time. These moments of intensified experience insert a sense of normalcy and autonomy into a prison environment that is designed to strip the incarcerated of both. By reclaiming some control over the experience and measurement of time, whether through acknowledging personal milestones, sculpting the perfect abs, or enjoying a simple game of footy, the resistance of the prison’s attempt to morph the incarcerated into passive subjects of its temporal control is possible. The significance of these examples is not found only in the immediate respite from the mundane daily prison life but also in their capacity to disrupt and reshape the experience of time itself. These activities represent a form of temporal friction that actively pushes back against the prison’s control over daily life and illustrates resilience behind the prison wire. Additionally, the

habits, disciplines, social skills, and hierarchies learned through these activities do not necessarily dissipate upon release; instead, they often shape reintegration into society and stay with the formerly incarcerated well beyond the end of their measured sentence. Moreover, the physical and psychological refuge found in exercise can remain a coping strategy outside, as someone grapples with the freedom void of structured routine. Sports and exercise while incarcerated is not only an example of coping while incarcerated, the long-term effects of engaging in these physical activities are another example of how the sentence never truly ends.

Prisoners can partake in various other bodily acts of control while incarcerated, either to retain some control over their bodies or for other reasons often only known to them. Another example of this is one of the moments during my incarceration experience that shocked me the most.

5.8 The Body, Resistance & Temporal Friction

On one particular day, a fellow prisoner came into the kit locker looking for a plastic spoon or fork; we will call him Victor. These utensils were not meant to be taken from the dining room, but some always made it out and some ended up in the kit locker with me. Plastic spoons were particularly in demand because they were easier to use than a finger when making a hot drink. Forks were also sort after because they were used to consume cooked noodles. On this day, however, Victor was not looking for a utensil to make a cup of coffee or eat his noodles. He was looking for a plastic spoon to melt down into small balls to make 'marbucks'. At the time, I had no idea what he was talking about, and my confusion must have been etched on my face because Victor explained that 'marbuck' was prison slang for a penile pearl, the small round balls that men have placed under the skin of their penis for various reasons. I had never heard of such a thing and as I was trying to both navigate my body shuddering with thoughts of the pain from such a thing and understand what I was being educated on, Victor pulled down his pants and showed me that he

already had two marbucks under the skin of his penis. I did not ask to see his penis and would have declined if he offered, for obvious reasons pertaining to my masculine performance (I return to this discussion in the following chapter), yet I must admit that I was curious, and my curiosity had nothing to do with my hidden gayness.

He proudly stated that his girlfriend loved them, and he wanted to get a few more before he was released from prison. The clearest way I can describe what I was seeing is to picture the back of a Stegosaurus. The marbucks stuck out on angles that could only be described as spike shaped, and I was sure, even with my lack of experience with genital additions, that this was not how they were meant to look. Covered by obvious scars that could only come from amateurish prison-style body transformations, it looked, quite frankly, horrible. I asked Victor why he would do such a thing, especially in prison, and he, once again, proudly stated that his girlfriend loved them. I shrugged. Gave him a plastic spoon, and he went about his business. The image of what I had seen stuck with me for days, and not at all because I was a gay man who had just seen the penis of one of the few guys I found attractive in my unit.

A couple of days after I provided Victor with the spoon, he was walking very cautiously. He had inserted the latest penile pearl himself. He soon developed an infection where no man wants an infection and had to see the prison nurse. Victor was still proud of his latest marbuck and told anyone who would listen of the amount of blood he lost by inserting it, including the guards. It healed well, and not long after, he was all set to try for a fourth. He was transferred to another prison before I could find out if his next attempt was successful and how dinosaur-ish his penis eventually looked before his release.

Marbucks are more commonly known as ‘penile pearls’, penile implants, or ‘Yakuza beads’ (Nacher et al., 2018). They are a form of body modification that is not exclusive to incarceration, yet offer opportunities for self-expression, identity, and expression of prison sub-cultures to the incarcerated. These

implants usually involve the insertion of small beads beneath the skin of the penis and, as Victor claimed, purportedly do enhance sexual performance. However, in the prison context, penile pearls embody deeper socio-cultural significances, highlighting complex narratives about masculinity, hierarchy, and resistance. Individualism is often suppressed in prisons, and body modifications like penile pearls and prison tattoos offer a medium through which the incarcerated can navigate power dynamics, cope, respond to moments of friction, and even resist the loss of individualism. Additionally, these acts can establish and solidify social status within a prison unit (Sykes, 1958).

Practices of body modification while incarcerated can be interpreted as reclaiming the personal agency of one's body and a form of resistance against the exerted control of the prison and the prison systems (Foucault, 1977). Through acts of altering the body in forms that are hidden from the view of those in power, yet are known within the prison community, an incarcerated person can subtly subvert the authority of the system that is designed to strip their autonomy (DeMello, 2000). Furthermore, modifications like penile pearls can function as symbolic capital in an environment where respect and power act as currencies. As noted by Bourdieu (1989), symbolic capital refers to actions, not traditionally recognisable as capital, but that generate influence, respect, or status. Within a prison, where traditional expressions of masculinity and power are disrupted, the incarcerated may complete body modifications to negotiate status and construct identities that conform to ideals of strength and resistance (Atkinson, 2004). The pain of the act contributes to this narrative, showing others toughness and resilience in an environment where these traits are not only valued (Phillips, 2001) but often needed for survival (see also Andrae et al., 2017).

At the extreme end of the body control and modification spectrum are those who self-harm in prison. Perceived by some researchers as a way of gaining or maintaining control over one's own body (Liebling, 1999; Dear et al., 2000; Carli et al., 2011; Lamusse, 2017; Walker et al., 2020), self-harm in prison is

far too common. I witnessed a few occurrences of this, including one suicide attempt. However, these are not my stories to tell. I simply acknowledge this as something that happens in prison and is a choice that many see as their last resort or the ultimate act of resistance when the arrangement of their prison experience becomes too overwhelming.

Limiting an understanding of the prison experience to conventional understandings of time and space neglects the profound personal narratives and psychological implications embodied by body transformations while incarcerated, including marbucks and tattoos acquired during incarceration. In the restrictive environment of a prison, these transformations go beyond mere body modification; they become a form of self-expression, a documentation of time, experiences, or affiliations, and a way to reclaim control over one's body in a space where autonomy is severely limited. These enduring marks can signify resistance, allegiance, or coping responses to the intense pressures of prison life. The story of my interaction with Victor is another example of temporal resistance while incarcerated and the complex interplay of persnal agency within the controlled environment of the prison. His determination to alter his body in such a risky way underscores an attempt at autonomy in a place that seeks to suppress individualism and control daily life, including how time is perceived and experienced.

In this sense, Victor’s actions, and the other examples I offer in this chapter, transcend the act itself—in Victor’s case, body modifications—instead, they represent the nuanced forms of resistance and friction against the homogenisation of time as experiences within prison life. By choosing to engage in this form of self-expression, Victor was not only challenging the prison’s control of his body but also reclaiming part of his identity that will forever remain untouched by the prison’s control mechanisms. Furthermore, similar to my desire to have abs for the future, Victor’s forward-thinking and planning for future time with his girlfriend, deepens the layers of temporal resistance and autonomy within this context. Through this transformation, as with others sculpting and preparing their bodies for the future, Victor was not

just asserting control over his body while incarcerated, he was also engaging in acts of preparation for the outside world; essentially, a mental transcendence of the temporal constraints of the prison and an example of Deleuze's three syntheses of time introduced in Chapter Two and explored further in Chapter Seven.

Victor's engagement with body modifications while incarcerated, including the creation of something to insert into his body, a marbuck, is a further example of temporal friction while incarcerated. His act of body alteration is a strong assertion of agency against the temporal controls I have discussed throughout this chapter. Furthermore, Victor's actions demonstrate a profound engagement with Deleuze's third synthesis of time, future. Victor was not only asserting some control over his circumstances but was also preparing his body for a future aspiration; a future within which he would be reunited with his girlfriend, and she would approve of and enjoy the additions to his body. This represents an engagement with a future-orientated temporality and is a further challenge to the control of the prison environment. Similar to working out and exercising in groups, Victor's actions can be viewed through the lens of Goffman's (1961) role-stripping. His self-imposed body modifications act as a challenge to the stripping of his pre-prison identity, specifically his role as a boyfriend. This type of resistance goes beyond Victor reclaiming his physical body and reasserts a personal narrative that the control of the institution attempted to strip from him.

Upon re-entry into society, transformations completed while incarcerated can symbolise more than what is visible. They sit as a permanent reminder of incarceration and can potentially affect identity, social interactions, and even opportunities such as employment. Conversely, they may serve as reminders of survival, past mistakes, and even strength. Body transformations epitomise the lingering aspects of the prison experience and are another example of the sentence extending beyond the temporal and physical boundaries of the prison itself.

5.9 Fantasy and Temporal Friction

My tendency to drift into fantasy of what might have been and of a future that could never be became a coping strategy during my incarceration. Those coping strategies acted as a site of productive temporal friction against the complete arrangement of my prison experience and as a response to the role that I felt had been stripped from me: my sexuality. I relied on fantasies that were expressions of my sexuality to cope with my daily performance as a straight male. I allowed myself to imagine full conversations with James as an antidote for the straight man utterings and scripts from that role performance (see Chapters Six and Seven). While the few things I had control of, such as what I ate, were also responses to the arrangement of my experience in a controlled environment, the impact my lies were having on my identity needed a stronger form of resistance to negate the long-term impact of my portrayal of a heterosexual. That is where fantasy and the hope for a better past gave me strength and manifested as a resistance against the complete arrangement of my experience and against morphing into a docile body of good character. Simultaneously, as my mind drifted further into a relationship that no longer existed, my performance as a gay male in those fantasies kept me in touch with that aspect of my identity, even if I could never be the person I imagined and could never again be with the person accompanying me in those imaginings. Unfortunately, and paradoxically, the coping strategies to which I defaulted to protect aspects of my identity had a longer-lasting impact on my identity than my lies ever could have done, as I struggled with my sexual identity for a decade after prison. I return to this discussion in Chapters Six and Seven.

Because my sentence was 28 months, and I was certain I would get out on parole before serving that time, everything felt temporary, and I could remind myself that my time (the sentence) did have a finite measurement. John was right about prison being ‘just time’ in that sense, and I found comfort in that. The days of lining up for mundane and repetitive menus consisting of often tasteless and poorly prepared meals were limited because I would get out. And

I knew I would get out. That made some of the mundane repetition easier to deal with and some of the antagonism I experienced more manageable. I expect if my sentence was much longer, my attitude towards thrice weekly wheat bricks would be different. Mid-2022, approaching ten years since my release from prison, I had Weet-Bix for the first time since my incarceration experience. I had it because I wanted it, and I ate it for dinner because I could. I gave most of the box away and it might be another ten years before I eat it again, but that will also be my choice.

The stories I shared in this chapter are not merely recounts of past events. Instead, they explore the nuanced dynamics of time, identity, and power within the prison. In that sense, the exploration in this chapter ventures beyond the physical boundaries of the prison to investigate the ways in which time, identity, and power are navigated and contested by incarcerated people. Through these personal narratives, the repetitive nature of daily prison life is interrupted by moments of resistance, coping, and friction that reshape a person's relationship with time and self. The discussions of food, exercise, and body transcend the immediate contexts within which they were situated to reflect on broader themes of autonomy, control, friction, and small everyday acts of resistance embedded in choice and practice. These examples reveal how physical and psychological realms become sites of self-affirmation and represent the struggle of those incarcerated to reclaim their identities from the control of the prison system.

Furthermore, the concept of temporal friction highlights the clash between the linear, scheduled time imposed by the institution and the personal, subjective time experienced by those incarcerated. This friction is illustrated throughout this chapter through practices and actions ranging from social hierarchies around fitness to engaging in body modifications as preparation for a hoped-for future and reconstructing identities through resistance to role-stripping. Through various choices and practices, incarcerated people can manipulate and experience time in ways that challenge the control imposed by the repetitive linear-based daily prison schedule. As this chapter embeds with the

other chapters in this thesis, it furthers my argument that the impact of prison reaches beyond the court-imposed sentence. The experiences shared on these pages resonate with the larger themes of identity transformation and the long-term effects of incarceration on a person's sense of self, as well as their navigation of time and space within and beyond prison.

Chapter Six

6. Straight for the Stay: Identity, Sexuality, Guilt & Shame During and After Incarceration

In this chapter, I explore the complex interplay of sexuality and gender within the prison setting and beyond, in the context of alternate temporalities and their potential to reshape personal identity. Drawing on works by Foucault and Butler, in addition to the previously introduced Deleuzian concepts, I navigate the dynamics of gender role performance, particularly focusing on the straight guy performance I committed to during much of my incarceration and the related societal pressures and constructs of compulsory heterosexuality. This analysis reveals how my performance of dual sexual identities, underpinned by societal conditioning, enables a nuanced understanding of the long-term impact of incarceration on identity, specifically gender and sexuality.

"I've changed so much in the past few months. I can feel it.

I even think differently. I dunno if that's a good or bad thing."

Prison Journal Entry

January 24th, 2012

"*Lippy, you gota watch out for the fags that come in here. Never put both of your hands on the bench at the same time cause they can hold you down*"

Less than a month into my sentence, I was learning my responsibilities in the kit-locker when Vince, the previous holder of the role whom I introduced in Chapter Four, warned me of the dangers gay men posed in prison. The kit locker had an old white wooden bench with many of the unit clothes in cubby-holes underneath. At times, that bench reminded me of a bar top in scenes of a movie, especially when my fellow incarcerated would share their troubles

with me while I served them a fresh t-shirt instead of a whiskey on ice. Vince suggested that placing both hands on that bench, as if leaning on a bar top, would leave me susceptible to being held down. I mostly found his warning to be quite ridiculous and took his remarks as a joke, yet still quietly wondered if he suspected I was gay and was testing me in some way. I did not know Vince for long but found him to be quite sarcastic, yet he also appeared keen to impart his prison wisdom upon me. In that sense, he seemed to assume his role was to teach me more than my kit locker responsibilities. He was jovial most of the day, yet in that joke, I felt the acrimony he had towards gay men, and it took considerable strength for me not to show that. In wondering if he was testing me, I also wondered if he was warning me not to be open about my sexuality. I will never know his intention; it does not matter for this recall. I heard his warning, or my interpretation of it at least. I doubled down on my decision to be straight in prison and made some crude joke that I have since struck from my memory in disgust at myself.

As discussed in the introduction, upon arriving in prison, I had been coming out as gay for 12 years. At that stage, I was open about my sexuality, and there were very few people in my life who did not know me as gay. This was despite the coming out process never ending because heteronormative privilege demands continuous coming out. One can never be fully out because there is always someone else to tell or somebody's assumption to correct. Outside of the physical boundaries of the prison, being a proud gay man was part of my identity and one of the roles I performed daily.

During one of my earliest court appearances, while sitting in the holding cells, the door to the cell opened, and in stormed a furious and huge young man. Upset at the result of his appearance, he mumbled to no one in particular, “that judge is such a faggot”. There are few words that can metaphorically cut me to the bone as that f-word can. Wherever I hear it, it is as if the speaker has balled up as much animosity towards me as they can and spit it directly in my face. It always hurts. I always feel that word. When used as an insult, which is most of the time, the connotation is that the person on the receiving end of the

term is less somehow because they are being compared to a homosexual, to a homo, to me (see Corbett, 2008). The specific context influences the degree the thrower of this insult intends to compare the recipient to a homosexual, yet the connotation is always there. The heteronormative element of our society demands that it is. That day in the court holding cells, the insult thrower implied that the judge was somehow less because he had delivered unacceptable news. He was not only somehow less, but he was also as low on the rung of what is accepted of a man as I was. He was a faggot. I am, too.

It was early experiences like those, and maybe I had seen too many movies or heard too many crude prison-themed jokes, that led me to a decision. I was to be straight in prison, and I knew I could pull it off. This does not mean I would simply hide my sexuality. No, I was to change my sexuality and pretend to be heterosexual. The difference is significant, as hiding my sexuality merely required keeping my mouth shut. Pretending to be straight demanded a performance. I knew I could play that role. By the time I heard Vince making jokes and sharing warnings about gay men in prison, I was deep into my role. I knew how to perform the role of a straight male. I knew how to act like a 'real man'. I had seen it enough. As a teenager in the 1990s, the straight man dominated my media consumption. Show after show, movie after movie, told me that a real man was sexually attracted to women. I suspect this is also where the roots of the conflation of masculine gender performance with straight sexuality first took hold. The performances I describe throughout this chapter leant heavily into stereotypes around gay men being more feminine and straight men more masculine or macho. I had heard enough gay jokes to last a lifetime before I even knew I was attracted to men. I had been conditioned to know how to act like a man, and switching into that role was far easier than it should have been. I had often been told that I was 'straight-acting' and somehow had taken that as a compliment. I could act 'normal'. I could act as others expected me to as a man. I had been preparing for that role since birth, and I was ready to do what needed to be done to meet the expectations of others while incarcerated. Prison became the stage to see how effective my

training for that role had been, and I acted to an Oscar-worthy standard. I'm still, however, waiting for my nomination for that award.

6.1 Performativity and Repetition

Identity formation is a fluid and ongoing process that has been extensively explored through various theoretical and discipline-based perspectives. Foucault and Butler have not only been influential in identity formation discourses, providing critical insights into how identity forms and is negotiated, but their work also provides lenses through which the impact of incarceration on identity can be viewed.

Foucault's analysis of power and knowledge posits that power is not merely exerted from the top down but is propagated across various social institutions, shaping identities through practice and discourse (Foucault, 1977; 1980; Evans, 2024). He argues that identity is constructed, not intrinsic, and emerges from the interplay of power structures, historical contexts, and language (Foucault, 1980; Weeks, 2005). This is particularly evident in his exploration of identity and sexuality, where Foucault delineates how medical, social, and legal discourses have historically manufactured sexual identity categories. During the 19th century, as Foucault details, sexuality was scrutinised and categorised by authoritative bodies, leading to the distinct sexuality labels we know today, such as 'heterosexual' and 'homosexual' (Foucault, 1978; see also Brickell, 2006). His scepticism towards 'sexual identity' stems from his critique of how these identities serve as tools for regularity power and facilitate the subjectification of a process where people enact and internalise these constructed identities and, thereby, participate in their own subjection. This conjecture underscores the significant roles that societal discourses and structures play in the formation of identities, illustrating the intricate ways power operates upon and through a person.

Historically, sexual acts between people of the same gender had been perceived as behaviour rather than something indicative of an inherent aspect of identity (see Halperin, 1989). ‘Homosexuality’ as a distinct category emerged in the late 19th century through psychiatric and medical discourses underpinned by scientific knowledge (Foucault, 1978; Halperin, 1989; Brickell, 2006). These disciplines categorised homosexuality as a medical condition, thus forcing a sense of identity on people who engaged in same-sex relations. Similarly, legal discourses (through legal frameworks) have contributed to the construction of sexual identities. The criminalisation of specific sexual acts contributed to social norms around what is deemed normative or what is instead labelled as deviant (Foucault, 1978; Frank & Camp, 2010). This approach influenced both the defining and policing of sexual categories and identities (Weeks, 2005), influencing what societies deemed to be acceptable sexual behaviour and reinforcing both identity categories and accepted hierarchies of these categories. These hierarchies, where some sexual behaviours are privileged over others, are perpetuated by social norms within which dichotomies of ‘natural/unnatural’ and ‘normal/abnormal’ are still prevalent (Mosse, 1982; Mondimore, 1996; Corvino, 2019). Furthermore, the resulting heteronormative privilege and assumptions prevalent in these norms creates a constant need for those who identified as anything other than straight to constantly ‘come out’ (Sedgwick, 2008). I make a similar claim multiple times in this thesis.

The constant theme, however, within works drawing on Foucault's theories of sexuality is that sexual identities are not fixed. Rather, sexual identities are performative and require constant negotiation. This fluidity and performativity become particularly evident in the prison environment. Acting as heterosexual in prison is a means of conforming to the prevailing norm and ensuring safety (Yap et al., 2020; Srivastava et al., 2023). The acts, behaviours, and attitudes required for this performance to succeed can also be seen as a response to the power dynamics within the prison, between guards and the incarcerated, and within the hierarchies among prisoners (Robinson, 2011; Brown & Jenness, 2020). This speaks to Foucault’s conjecture that institutions can

shape and regulate identity (Dean, 2013). In my situation, my straight guy performance did not indicate my true sexual orientation but was a strategic adaption to the pressure, expectations, and volatility of the prison environment. Butler's work adds to this discussion of performance and provides another lens through which to view sexuality and gender in prison.

Butler (1990, 2004) challenges the notion that gender is innate. Instead, they argue that gender is an ongoing process shaped by constituted social temporality and is something a person does rather than something one is. In *Gender Trouble* (1990), Butler argues that gender is not an inherent state of being but is continuously enacted through repetitions of behaviours within societal contexts. Identity is established and realised through repetitive acts that are stylised to the performed gender. Butler's theory complements Foucault's perspective, specifically the constructed nature of identity, through a nuanced understanding of internalising and reenacting social norms around gender and sexuality. However, there are significant, even if subtle, distinctions between the approaches. Whereas Foucault focuses on how power structures and institutions, like prisons, influence and control behaviours and identities; Butler delves into the performative aspects of identity and argues that people, through repetitive acts and performance, actively participate in the construction and reformation of their identities. According to Butler, identity is not merely a response to external power but a personal process that asserts a person's sense of self. While both Foucault and Butler acknowledge the performative and constructed aspects of identity, Butler's work emphasises a person's agency to express their identities, regardless of external powers.

These repetitive acts are significant not only as performances but are also fundamentally temporal, continuously reiterated to reinforce and occasionally destabilise gender identities. This interpretation of gender as a fluid process aligns with Deleuze's concepts of difference and repetition (Linstead & Pullen, 2005). Deleuze argues that repetition does not merely duplicate but diverges, introducing variances that can challenge prevailing norms (see Chapter Two). Incorporating Deleuze's perspective adds a layer of understanding to Butler's

framework in emphasising that each performative act, through seeming to reinforce a societal norm, also embeds the potential for divergence, thereby reshaping identity in nuanced ways that assemble over time. This theoretical intersection offers a particular lens into the controlled prison environment, within which the repetitive (re)enforcement of gender norms and expected behaviours can perpetuate performative identities but also, paradoxically, foster conditions for their destabilisation.

Butler articulates that gender is shaped through the temporal reiteration of behaviours that conform to and meet societal norms and should be viewed as performative (Butler, 1990, 2015). Much of this performativity is unconsciousness and an enactment of norms that are ingrained in people from birth. This is one reason I was able to perform my role while incarcerated because, as mentioned above, the expected behaviour of a straight guy had been ingrained in me, and I conflated the performances of straight and man into one set of expected behaviours. These repeated behaviours can appear to solidify identities but can make them unstable because of their repetitive character. Drawing again from Deleuze, this repetitiveness, while appearing to be affirming, subtly incorporates potential deviations with each repetition, thus challenging the illusion of a fixed identity.

Performative acts of gender and sexuality in prison can be seen as both coping and survival strategies and sites of potential resistance. The gender and sexual norms and expected behaviour can be intensified in the prison environment due to a dominant hyper-masculine culture that values strength and dominance (Ilea, 2009; SpearIt, 2011; Yvonne, 2017). An intensified heteronormativity in prison further stigmatises any deviation from the norms and expected behaviour of masculinity, especially homosexuality (Kupers, 2017). Drawing on Butler, my ‘straight real man’ performance can be understood as a series of repeated behaviours, attitudes, and actions that satisfied both the societal and institutional expectations of heterosexuality and masculinity. Similar to my comments related to Foucault’s work, through Butler, it is clear that my performance was not an expression of a fixed identity; rather,

it was a strategic response to the environment I found myself in and an adaption of behaviour and attitude to meet expectations.

However, repetition includes the potential for difference (Gendron, 2008; Williams, 2012). Accordingly, even in my highly regulated performances, opportunities for resisting and redefining norms could emerge. Each performative act, while predominantly a tool for coping and surviving, simultaneously offered a moment where the performance could diverge from the norm, subtly undermining the rigid categories enforced behind the prison walls. These kinds of deviations, while subtle, allude to the inherent instability of performative identities. Furthermore, the lasting effect of these repeated performances on my identity was evident upon my release. The temporality of my 'straight guy' act did not simply end when I left the physical boundaries of the prison; instead, the attitudes and behaviours I had repeatedly enacted had embedded into a performance that continued to influence how I navigated and performed my identity as a gay man. My repeated performances of heterosexuality, initially to cope, became part of my social presentation and complicated my return to a gay identity because it no longer felt as accessible as it did before my incarceration experience. What were acts borne out of what I perceived to be necessity transformed into an element of self-conception, highlighting the profound impact of performative repetition on identity, and illustrating Butler's assertion that identity is temporal and continuously shaped through performative acts and behaviours.

6.2 Newspapers and Apple Pies

I have been told that my 28-month sentence was harsh for my offences. Various reasons for this go beyond the scope of this discussion, yet the outcome was that a few people in my unit doubted that I had been honest about my offences. I was told that it is common for convicted sex offenders to lie about their offences upon arriving in prison, and the most frequent choices are dishonesty-related offences, offences similar to mine. I did not know it until

after, but I was being talked about during my early days in that unit, and questions were asked about the true nature of my offending. Suggestions were made that I may be a sex offender masquerading as a fraudster. I was mere days away from receiving some in-prison justice when fate or just plain luck intervened. An old newspaper appeared in the unit, and a write-up about my sentence was in that paper. I went from receiving dirty looks to gaining sympathy for my sentence because some of the boys perceived it as harsh. My offending was acceptable to the boys, and I climbed a few rungs on the social ladder. Upon hearing this, I was vocal about my disgust that others had made those assumptions about offending and used rather harsh language to voice my displeasure at the assumption. Subconsciously, I perhaps saw those moments as a chance to further portray my 'real man' character to meet the expectations of this social role. Internally and consciously, I was just thankful for newspapers. However, six months into my sentence, a similar situation happened to someone else, and I found myself involved in a different way.

Clearly, he was lying because his sentence was far longer than mine. I knew he was lying, as did most other unit members. It did not take long for the true nature of his offending to be exposed, and I suspect a guard had some part in that exposure. I will not repeat details here of what he did because his story is not mine to tell, and I do not want to type those words. However, his offending placed him at the bottom of the prison hierarchy, and his safety was at risk. The culture within each prison unit can be shaped by those incarcerated within it as much as it is by those arranging the experience (Rubin, 2015a; Goodman, 2008), and it was clear his presence was not accepted in our unit. I had no sympathy for this person and certainly did not want to protect him. However, not only do I detest violence, but every time there was an act of physical aggression in the unit, we all suffered with either less freedom more generally or longer time in our cells. Furthermore, at his arrival, the unit had been rather harmonious as far as prison units go, and I wished that to be maintained. This created a tension in me. I wanted others to know that I loathed his acts as much as anyone, yet I never wanted to see anyone receive the type of physical response that was being threatened. Violence against sex offenders is

common in prisons, as is the shunning of those convicted of these crimes and other offences ranked lowly (see Bottoms, 1999 for a discussion on reasons for prisoner-on-prisoner violence). Acts against these people uphold masculine aspects of a prison unit, with sex offenders (especially those who have offended against children) ranked as the worst and as not abiding by the unwritten prison code (Copes et al., 2013; van Den Berg, 2018). I felt I needed to voice my disgust for that man and vocally support the beating he was about to get, but I really just wanted him out of the unit.

Accordingly, I warned him. One day, when he came into the kit locker for a change of clothes, I warned him that he was in danger and should immediately go to the guard room and ask to be put in ‘segs’ (the segregation unit). He did, and he was gone within the hour. I suspect (without any proof) that the officers knew what was about to happen and could not ignore it once it had been expressly brought to their attention. I was nervous that my fellow incarcerated would find out I had warned him and feared that I would receive the backlash and be the outlet for the tension that had started to interrupt the aforementioned in-unit harmony. Instead, coincidently being apple pie night, over a dozen apple pies appeared on my table after dinner. I was a hero. I had been responsible for getting the lowest of the low out of our unit. The tension in the unit that had arrived with him also left that day, and we all returned to our daily routine of ordinary prison behaviour. Looking back on these moments, I now view my acts as another successful performance. To others, it seems I was able to successfully support violence that I detested and hoped would not happen, while internally, I just wanted to situation to go away.

If it happened again today, I believe my motivation for warning him out of the unit would be different. I used the expected language and acted disgusted by his alleged offending. I was disgusted, but that was not why I wanted him out of my unit. Voicing support for the beating he was about to get was my way of playing the role I thought was expected of a straight male in a men’s prison. How I had previously chosen to respond to connected situations influenced how I was expected to act at that moment. I did not need to make crude jokes

about female anatomy to maintain my straight guy facade. But I had done so many times. I did not need to fake interest in old National Geographic magazines with topless women from some tribe I had never heard of and cannot recall today. But I acted interested along with others in my unit. I did not need to be vocal about my sexual interest in women at all. I did not need to do those things, but I did do them. There were consequences for my decisions and behaviour choices while role-playing a heterosexual, such as the shame and guilt that lasted long after I left the physical boundaries of prison behind. Concerning that man, one consequence was that I perceived I needed to play the macho straight guy and voice my disgust. I was disgusted and still am today; the thought of his offending makes me shudder, but I could have easily kept those feelings to myself without diminishing the disdain and disgust I did feel. The verbal expression of how I was feeling was only for my fellow incarcerated to hear and was primarily to satisfy their expectations of my performance. At least, what I thought those expectations were.

Based on the response I received, others most likely perceived my motivation to get him out of our unit the way I performed it, and I played that role so well that I enjoyed temporary hero status from the success of my actions. To him, it was a friendly warning that he was in danger and needed to get to safety. Internally, I framed the warning in that I was living to one of the Buddhist moral precepts and preventing violence. However, none of these justifications represents my true motivation. I did not warn him for any reasons of disgust, machismo, spirituality, or to be the big man. I warned him for selfish reasons. I did not want to see the violence, I did not want to see any resemblance of harmony in the unit being interfered with, and I did not want to deal with the inevitable lockdowns that come from those situations. I just wanted him gone. However, the various roles I was both playing and that had been stripped from me demanded that I not only justify ‘the warning’ in various ways, even to myself, but also that the warning and my performance of it needed to come across in specific ways in different interactions and to different people.

This narrative exemplifies my theoretical discussions of identity and performativity, as explored through Butler and Foucault. In the controlled and scrutinised prison, every act can be a tool for survival or something more significant, and shapes identity and standing within the unit's hierarchy. Drawing on Butler's performativity, my actions underscore how identities are constructed by context and expectations are reinforced by performance. My acts while incarcerated—such as warning someone out of my unit, the jokes, and sexual comments—while appearing to be personal choices, were influenced by the norms and expected behaviour of the hyper-masculine and heteronormative in-unit culture. While motivated by safety and survival, my performance also inadvertently solidified some of the norms I internally resisted.

Foucault's work on power structures furthers this analysis by illustrating how power dynamics within a prison are played out, shaping behaviour and self-conception. My decision to warn my fellow incarcerated, while on the surface may have appeared to be a gesture of solidarity or even friendship to him, is also an act of navigating the power structures of my unit. Accordingly, this act of warning serves multiple purposes: an alignment with expected behaviours of masculinity and strength, a manipulation of power dynamics, and a reflection of my internal desire to conform to societal expectations and avoid personal repercussions.

Furthermore, this narrative provides a lens through which to understand Butler's concept of temporal layering of identity. My repeated acts of gender and sexuality while incarcerated were not merely my response to my immediate environment but also those that had accumulated over time, impacting how I perceived myself beyond the prison context. This temporal aspect is essential in my overall argument, as the effects of these performative acts are not confined to the temporal or spatial context in which they occur. Rather, they extend into future interactions and self-identity. I return to this discussion in the following chapter through further exploration of Deleuze's syntheses of time and my conceptualisation of temporal friction.

An experience of incarceration, particularly for a gay man role-playing a heterosexual for safety reasons, illustrates how the impact of such an experience extends beyond the common concepts of time (sentence) and space (physical boundaries) used to understand the experience and into discourses of identity construction. Drawing on Foucault's analysis of power and Butler's performativity, it is evident that the incarceration experience transcends the temporal and physical limitations imposed by the courts, influencing a person's sense of self during and after incarceration. In a controlled and volatile environment like a prison, where power dynamics and norms dictate expected behaviour, coping and adaption strategies, such as the performance of a sexuality or gender role, are not merely situational or one-off decisions but have long-term consequences and impacts on self (Foucault, 1977; Butler, 1990). This illustrates the inadequacy of linear time in explaining and understanding the incarceration experience.

In exploring the long-term impact of imprisonment on identity, Deleuze's concepts of the virtual and actual, introduced in Chapter Two and drawn on throughout this thesis, can offer additional insight. This framework offers nuance to understanding identity as a continuous process of becoming reshaped by the incarceration experience. With the aforementioned roles and expectations, prison culture can force people to perform acts that are dissonant with how they see themselves, existing predominantly in the actual. However, the virtual aspects of identity—potentialities and becomings—are continuously shaped and reshaped by both the pressures and the confinement of incarceration (and, of course, by experiences of loss and grief). The performance of identity, or identities, within the prison walls exhibits the Deleuzian process of becoming. This process is not a linear transition from one static identity to another (Massumi, 1996; May 2003; Grosz, 2005). Rather, it involves a series of transformations that emerge during incarceration and beyond and challenge the binary oppositions. In this sense, the incarceration experience can be seen as a complex interplay between the actual and virtual (further reshaped by grief, as explored in the following

chapter), within which enforced performances prompt continuous negotiations with the virtual potentials of whom someone might become.

Upon release from prison, when the common concepts of time and space predominantly used to understand the incarceration experience cease, a transition from identity performance within the physical prison boundaries can be polluted with internal conflict, social stigmas, and the challenges of reintegration into society (see Goffman, 1963; Keene et al., 2018; Harding & Harris, 2020). A sustained performance while incarcerated, such as a heterosexual, has a long-term impact on self-perception, mental health, relationships, and future aspirations, thereby ensuring that the prison sentence never truly ends as it remains appended to the formerly incarcerated's identity (Aresti et al., 2010). Therefore, the actions and attitudes required to perform a role that meets expectations to survive time in a carceral space contribute to the persistence of the punitive measures of a prison sentence. This lingering and irreversible impact on identity illustrates that a prison sentence never truly ends and is not just time.

I draw heavily on my sexuality in this thesis. The consequences of the stripping of my outside openly gay role and the threat of openly expressing my sexuality leaked into other gender and sexuality performances while I was incarcerated. Identifying as anything but 'straight' in prison is a risk. Some have the choice to lie, and I had that choice. I fit the stereotype of 'straight acting', and I could keep my sexuality hidden from most. While prison is a hostile environment with little protection for the most vulnerable and not a safe space to be openly homosexual, it ultimately was my choice to keep this hidden. However, regardless of my acceptance of this role at the time, performing the straight guy demanded various responses and ways of acting and speaking. Those demands and expectations significantly impacted how I see myself and my performativity today.

6.3 Incarcerated Roles & Compulsory Heterosexuality

Once outside roles are stripped, the incarcerated person loses something (Goffman, 1962; Davies, 1989). Depending on what constitutes the thing that is lost, I believe it can matter little to that person whether something is tangible or innate. It matters even less whether the role lost is categorised into a fixed aspect of identity or something performed. What matters most is how it feels, and the loss of a role that a person attributes to their identity means that the loss can feel as if something innate or permanent has been stripped, at least in my experience. Accordingly, again in my experience, the roles that can be maintained while incarcerated are often intensified, with those representing something fixed often rising to the top, regardless of their importance to the person before or after incarceration. Maintainable roles take on a heightened sense of importance and can provide opportunities for expressions of self that cannot be found in the roles lost. During my incarceration, a role I could maintain and lean heavily into, thus filling a gap caused by the stripping of my ‘proud gay male’ identity, was that of ‘Buddhist’ (for similar examples, see Hallett & Johnson, 2014; Skotnicki, 2014; Ellis, 2020; Wilkinson et al., 2021; Jang et al, 2021; Routley, 2023).

Safer roles can provide opportunities for the incarcerated to have some agency over their identity construction without risking safety, attracting the gaze of those in power, or attracting unwanted attention from those above them in the prison hierarchy. Since my early 20s, I have followed a Buddhist path. To me, that means I follow the teachings of the Buddha and incorporate Buddhist philosophy into my everyday life. I have rarely called myself a ‘Buddhist’ before or after prison. However, while incarcerated, I leaned into that label more because not only was it a part of my identity that was safer to express than my sexuality, but it also had a novelty factor as I was the only ‘Buddhist’ in my unit.

Performing the role of ‘Buddhist’ in prison manifested as long hours of meditation and teaching others various techniques (including a Corrections Officer). A friend inside drew for me an artistic impression of ‘Om mani padme hum’ in Sanskrit that I tacked to my cell wall. This Buddhist mantra literally translates to ‘the jewel is in the lotus’ and is commonly recited by those who follow a Buddhist path as a way to clear the mind. While I completed practices such as meditation and mantra recitation both before and since prison, inside was the only time I sought acknowledgement from others for that behaviour or that aspect of my identity. I was a ‘Buddhist’ in prison, and I performed that role to the expectations of others because it was safe and unique. Consequently, the Buddhist path and philosophy took on higher importance for me internally, even if my intention was not as pure as it perhaps could have been. I went from playing that role for others because I got positive attention from the label to believing my own story. I was a Buddhist in prison. I still follow the path today, but I have never again called myself a ‘Buddhist’. Labelling myself that way in prison influenced how I responded to specific situations, similar to performing the role of a straight guy, such as that time I warned that man out of my unit.

My instinct to perform in certain ways that met expectations of what it means to be a man came from my socialisation into the norms and characteristics defined by normative sexuality (Butler, 1990, 1999, 2009). From birth, expectations of ‘right’ behaviour and ‘right’ speech are placed on us so that we perform our genders in ways deemed appropriate and proper for that gender. Butler (1990, 2004) suggests that our acts are determined for us, rather than by us, and even though we can trouble these expectations with shifts in our performances, the determination of appropriateness comes from our place within social convention. Our response choices, behaviour, and actions are expected to meet the norms for our gender. Accordingly, one does not form oneself; each person’s identity is formed by conforming to the predetermined gender role (Butler, 1990) and through language and discourse (Foucault, 1978). We become subjects via our positions and through our linguistic representations of our roles. The dominant expected discourse is created and

perpetuated by systems of knowledge and power (Foucault, 1978), and we conform to and perpetuate these discourses through our participation. Our identities are illusions created by our performances and gender does not exist as a natural thing. The only gender is in the performance of the gender role. A body becomes the gender it is assigned "through a series of acts which are renewed, revised, and consolidated through time" (Butler, 1990, p. 274). There are no natural behaviours. Rather, any belief in natural behaviours originates from both blatant and subtle coercions and corrections (Butler, 1999).

'Compulsory Heterosexuality', a term introduced by feminist Adrienne Rich (1980), identifies the societal expectations of heterosexuality as the norm. This term, originally used to describe the lesbian experience and later expanded to understand the experience of straight men (see Tolman et al., 2003) and gay men (see Flowers & Buston, 2001), explores the idea that heterosexuality is imposed on society as the enforced and assumed norm (Rich, 1980, 2007). Understanding experiences of sexuality within a prison setting through this lens adds nuances to an incarceration experience narrative due to the specific dynamics of gender and sexuality in these environments. As already discussed, prisons intensify particular societal norms and expectations around masculinity. However, with heightened controls over behaviour and potential for violence, the enforcement of heteronormativity within the prison context is particularly sensitive, offering a nuanced view of compulsory heterosexuality that adds an additional layer to the understandings offered by the work of Rich and Butler.

Understanding prison dynamics concerning gender, sexuality, and heteronormativity through the lens of Butler's theory of performativity highlights the non-linear form in which heteronormative roles are enacted within the confines of prison. While incarcerated, playing the role of a heterosexual is not a singular one-off decision or act. Yap et al. (2020) explored the experiences of gay and bisexual men in prison, particularly their disclosure of sexuality. They found that the men they interviewed had continually managed their sexual identities while incarcerated, often responding in different ways in

different contexts through a constant negotiation of heteronormative expectations. This mirrors my experience, as the success of my performance demanded a series of acts to sustain the performance, reflecting Butler's view of gender as learned and repetitive. The process of maintaining the straight facade required me to repeat specific behaviours and often change my mindset to think like the straight guy I was performing. While I could usually draw on my pre-existing knowledge, there were other times when I would simply copy the actions and attitudes of others at a specific moment. Essentially, this meant I was not only drawing on the heteronormative norms I already understood, but I was also participating in creating new enactments of these norms (see Hefner, 2018; Maycock, 2018; Morse & Wright, 2019). This series of acts and behaviours were further complicated by my attempts to grasp onto and still perform my sexual identity as a gay man through fantasy and outside relationships. I return to this discussion in the following chapter.

Deleuze's distinction between the virtual and actual, his three syntheses of time, and my conceptualisation of temporal friction, offer further lenses through which the non-linear performance of heteronormative roles while incarcerated can be viewed. The virtual, consisting of a realm of potentialities that are actualised through interactions and events, can be paralleled with the continual negotiation and re-negotiation of sexual and gender identities within the prison. Each decision I made to perform a heteronormative act was an actualisation of the virtual rather than a singular act. Therefore, my ongoing performance of 'straight guy' while incarcerated involved a constant shift between virtual potentialities and actual manifestations in response to my immediate environment. Their manifestations were not merely repetitions of past actions but responses to the present context, influenced by both remembered past performances and anticipated future necessities. The fluidity of identity is highlighted by this continual shift between virtual potentialities and actual performances. Identity is not fixed; it is always in a state of becoming and in the process of formation and reformation in response to changing circumstances and environments.

My justification for these performances of the straight guy was predominately for safety, yet elements of a desire for social acceptance were evident in my behaviours. Even though same-sex interactions, including consensual, transactional, coerced, and forced, occur within prisons (Hensley & Tewksbury, 2002; Sit & Ricciardelli, 2013), the overarching expectations of heteronormative behaviour prevail, mirroring the gender and sexuality norms of the outside. This combination of expectation, self-preservation, power dynamics, and social hierarchies within a prison environment highlights the performative aspects of gender and sexuality as posed by Butler. Through both Rich's concept of compulsory heterosexuality and Butler's gender performativity, sexuality in prison can be understood as a continuous and complex reenactment of heteronormative behaviours within the power structures and social dynamics of the prison environment.

6.4 Am I still Gay?

My experience playing the straight guy in prison instilled guilt and shame in me. Consequently, I have struggled with my sexuality since that experience. That is the overall story, the overall picture of the consequences of gender performance and role stripping during incarceration. However, the nuanced demands of the performance trigger the most reaction in me today and still leave a scar. Those crude sexual jokes that rely on degrading women for a successful punchline still ring in my ears. Those times I laughed at the crude jokes shared by others still make me cringe. Worst of all, that one time I laughed when a fellow incarcerated retold the story of the physical pain he inflicted on his partner as if he was reenacting the most violent scenes from the Once Were Warriors movie. Everyone else was laughing, so I joined in. Recalling that element of my performance still makes me feel nauseous today.

A performative is "that discursive practice that enacts or produces that which it names" (Butler, 1993, p. 13). An act of speech like my crude jokes or participation in the aforementioned discussion produces what it names.

Through our language, we incorporate norms into our realities and bodies through the performance. These norms remain a social construction. Once incorporated into our bodies, the conventions and expectations associated with gender norms feel natural and even necessary. Our performance and repetition of gender norms perpetuate the power of heteronormative hegemony, and the continued repetition of our gender roles makes those roles real to us and exposes us to the consequences.

For most of my incarceration, my performance was successful. However, there were a few rumours towards the end of my sentence, and I was questioned several times. On one such occasion, I was approached by someone I had been on remand with, and we ended up in the same sentenced unit (accordingly, we had known each other for approximately 11 months at this point). He asked me, "Are you a fudge packer, Lipsey?" I knew this was a derogatory term for a homosexual (just not a very creative one) and laughed because of how ridiculous I thought he looked with his chest puffed out. It appeared that he was trying to look extra masculine when questioning my sexuality, and I now recognise this as a performance of social norms to which he may have been conditioned. My natural laughter gave me a second to consider how I would respond. Around that period of my incarceration experience, I was at the height of my feeling of self-importance in the unit and felt almost invincible. For the briefest of moments, I considered answering in the affirmative and calling him out for his insult. Perhaps it was common sense, self-preservation, or even some cowardice. Or perhaps I was so embedded in my 11-month performance as a straight guy that I had started to believe it myself because I felt a confusing sense of anger at his question. I stayed within my straight guy role and called him out for questioning me, telling him I was "no faggot".

I had used the word I loathe the most. I used the word that I always consider an insult. I used the word I can never laugh off, even when pretending to be straight. That exchange was not an isolated situation. I can recall at least one other experience during which I had an opportunity to choose a softer

response and still appear straight. Nevertheless, that was the only instance when I used that word. My incarceration experience is littered with responses that included language I did not need to use and actions I did not need to take. I assume I was overcompensating at times and, even subconsciously, making sure I presented as straight and met the assumed expectations of being a man. Or I was simply drawing on the influences and examples around me because those words and that type of language were common in my unit. It is possible that I was so embedded into that performance that after almost a year I became just another prisoner perpetuating the hyper-masculine and heteronormative norms and expectations surrounding me daily. Regardless of how right or necessary they felt in the moment, many of my behaviours and words now seem alarmingly unnecessary in hindsight. I return to this thought in the following chapter.

Performing a role under duress, or a sense of duress, can add layers to the performance (Pomerantz & Altermatt, 2002). In some situations, the duress can create an illusion that more is needed from the role for it to be successful. This was particularly evident for me when I observed that I was repeating the same jokes and comments about the female body. In my mind, this repetition could expose my act and more may be needed to keep up the facade. In other situations, giving more to a performance could have the added benefit of winning a struggle for status as the most masculine or 'alpha' (Butler, 2004). The above example of using that word in response to being questioned about my sexuality highlights how, at times, I perhaps felt that I needed to give more to my performance to maintain success. Almost as if I was acting in a sequel to my original Oscar-winning portrayal, and assumed my audience now demanded more from the character. Regardless, each act constitutes the overall performance. The long-term consequence of playing a gender role can be fragmented into a pile of consequences, even as many as one consequence for each act performed. Thus, the long-term consequence of performing a role under duress comes from the role itself and each choice needed to successfully portray the character in that role. These additional layers of consequence and long-term impact add to what must be corrected

or dealt with later. In terms of the negative consequences and in relation to my story, those individual acts that were needed to play the straight guy in a successful way added to the guilt and shame I still struggle with today.

6.5 Shame and Guilt

A contemplation of shame and guilt, specifically in the context of my experiences, includes existential and socio-cultural narratives that shape and negotiate human emotions. Fundamentally and at a basic level, emotions like shame and guilt can be seen as a reflection of morality, self-awareness and even an understanding of the impact of one's actions (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). However, questioning whether emotions like guilt and shame innate or socially constructed responses blurs any understanding of the place of these emotions in this discussion. Specifically, whether my experience of shame, guilt, or both, was merely something I leant into as a socially acceptable response or a genuine expression of emotion. What is not in doubt, in my mind, is that my experiences of these emotions have had a long-term impact on my identity and how I see myself more than a decade after the events to which my shame and guilt are reacting.

Compulsory heterosexuality suggests that the societal norm of heterosexuality can instil a form of internalised homophobia among homosexuals, potentially resulting in elements of shame (see Allen, 2011). Identity integration is pivotal in navigating and coping with distress and emotions like shame and guilt, especially for those who grapple with conflicting identities (Anderson & Koc, 2020), and especially in situations where those identities are performed to meet expectations and to adhere to societal norms. Complicating this further, the act of concealing sexuality, particularly when driven by fear of consequences for breaching societal norms, is a significant source of shame and guilt among homosexuals (D'Augelli & Grossman, 2001). An environment like a prison, thick with the aforementioned gender norms and homophobic tendencies, can intensify feelings of guilt and shame. In my situation, this was

multi-layered as I experienced (and still experience) those emotions both in relation to my sexuality and to hiding it (see Halperin & Traub, 2009 for a discussion on the discourse of gay shame).

Sociologically, any discourse around shame and guilt among gay men, whether that relates to the sexual orientation itself or the performance of it, and especially within a prison, offers insight into and a reflection of broader societal norms (Brickell, 2006). The intersection between societal expectations, self-acceptance, awareness, coping and safety, and a natural human tendency to want to belong generates complex narratives surrounding both the experience and the expression of emotions like shame and guilt. Viewing such narratives through the lens of understanding the prison experience beyond ineffective concepts of time and space highlights the impact of societal norms and heteronormative privilege on someone and, specifically, their identity formation. This conjecture invites a deeper exploration of the mechanisms through which societal norms and expected behaviour perpetuate feelings of shame and guilt, especially when the stigma attached to homosexuality can manifest in discrimination and violence, such as within a prison community, thus increasing the desire for safety and requiring specific response choices to ensure that safety. This is because stigma impacts not only the way a gay man perceives themselves (Cain, 1991) but also their interactions with others and, ultimately, their social and emotional landscapes (Herek & Capitanio, 1996).

This perspective exposes the socially constructed aspects of emotions like shame and guilt, especially as mechanisms through which societal norms and behavioural expectations are enforced, particularly when those expectations are not met, or norms are deviated from. A continuum of shame and guilt, including emotional responses and social constructions, intersects with identity. Someone's morality, which significantly contributes to emotions like shame and guilt, is as influential over a sense of self as it is over response choices in interpersonal relationships. This matters because the interplay

between responding in certain ways in interactions, identities, and societal norms mediates emotions such as shame and guilt (Turrini et al., 2010).

I acknowledge here that while shame and guilt are emotional experiences and reactions that are labelled separately (see Tangney & Dearing, 2002), I discuss them together in relation to my experiences. I do this intentionally and primarily because I believe I would not have experienced one without the other. In that sense, these two emotions sometimes merge into one heavy and lingering blend. The reasons I have identified for my shame rely on the experiences for which I feel guilt. The experiences for which I feel guilt exist only because of that for which I feel shame. I have experienced each of these emotions to varying degrees, and they do not always appear together. However, that they exist in a murky and complex co-dependency is primarily why they are predominantly inseparable in my discussion.

My narrative includes a complex interplay of guilt, shame, and identity, and this all spirals around societal expectations, prison culture, and grief. The prison environment, with the aforementioned heteronormative privilege and gender norms, shunted me toward adopting attitudes and behaviours that best portrayed a straight man. While this adoption was a coping strategy, it demanded a continuous performance that has since manifested into feelings of guilt and shame. Guilt because of my actions, shame because I acted in ways that felt inauthentic, and both from lying about James. In the following chapter, I return to this discussion and elaborate on how this has influenced my understanding of temporality today.

Guilt and shame can be separate categories of responses to and reflections on what I did in prison yet depend on each other for existence. Those acts of heteronormative conformity reflect the societal constriction of shame and guilt. Every act was a means to navigate my environment and the overall challenge of incarceration, yet potentially triggered an internal disharmony in contradiction to acts that would feel more genuine, thus generating additional

feelings of guilt and shame beyond that generated by performing the acts themselves. My murky yet combined experiences of shame and guilt, both during and since prison, are indicative of the impact of the broader societal compulsory heterosexuality narrative on identity. My experience shows how norms, attitudes, and expectations, especially in a heavily constricted and regulated environment like a prison, significantly impact emotional experiences and identities beyond the incarceration experience.

This chapter has provided the theoretical frameworks upon which the following chapter draws and brings my argument together to demonstrate the performative aspects of identity within the prison environment. Additionally, leaning into insights made possible through the lens of concepts from the work of Butler, Foucault, and Deleuze, this chapter has illustrated the profound and lasting transformations identity performances while incarcerated have on the self, both during and after incarceration.

As this thesis evolves into the final two chapters, I further show that an incarceration experience transcends the conventional and overused measures of time and space. Instead, incarceration significantly impacts identity transformation as the forced performances, everyday acts of resistance, and coping strategies reflect more than mechanisms of survival and extend beyond the physical and temporal boundaries of the prison sentence. Accordingly, the forced identity formation and reformation that occurs during incarceration is not merely a consequence of adapting to the environment; it is a negotiation with the self and a dialogue between who a person once was and who they become because of the performative elements of incarceration. Common concepts of time and space, or the temporal and spatial boundaries of the prison, explain the immediate context and environment yet fail to fully describe the incarceration experience. Specifically, as argued throughout this thesis and exhibited in the following chapter, that experience extends to the long-term impact of incarceration on identity.

Chapter Seven

7. Sand and Stones: Dual Sexual Identities and the Consequences During and After Incarceration

“Nothing will ever live up to the image I have in my mind of what got ‘taken from me’ and ‘how life should’ be.”

Letter home to mum

August 18th, 2012

That old, cracked basketball court where John had claimed that a prison sentence was just time sat neglected mere meters from where I spent most of my days: the kit locker. I strolled that destitute ball-less court in various attempts to distract myself from another day in prison, fill in some time, or get some exercise. Between the times I was scheduled or expected to be elsewhere to meet both the expressed and implied expectations, and between loads of washing, I would casually stroll around that concrete area. Days without this mundane yet essential distraction could be the most challenging for me because they lacked the type of mind wandering only this distraction could provide. Days without this distraction were those I was more likely to be haunted by past experiences, loss and trauma, and the burdens of my surroundings.

On a day when the loss of James, life without him, or a generally uncertain future particularly affected my state of mind, I could stroll that old, cracked court both as a distraction and as a space for reminiscing and reimagining. Around and around in an amorphous fractured-rectangle path and allowing myself to fantasise of a future that could never be, I was distracted from not only the feelings of grief but also from reminders of the physical boundaries of incarceration and the linear measured time they would hold me. The relative freedom I enjoyed because of my in-unit job afforded me these opportunities

to wander, fantasise, and mentally escape my surroundings. A positive consequence of this relative freedom also afforded me some ability to choose my response to the feelings of the day, if only from the limited response options available because of the impediments of incarceration.

One particular day during which my delve into a fantasy of a future that could never exist was in overdrive, I strolled that court and imagined I was elsewhere. With my eyes closed tight, the crunch of tiny stones beneath my shoes morphed into the sand of a Northland beach in my mind. With the details in my fantasy running rampant, a sizable stone and the accompanying noise and sensation felt to me like a shell crunching under the weight of my step. The breeze that lightly flowed through my hair and the sun that kissed my skin flowed from the Pacific Ocean, not down from the rural Waikato hills that surrounded me. The smells came from the crisp salt water to my right, not the stench of a prison that enclosed me from all sides. I was accompanied not by my fellow incarcerated but by one person. Borrowing from the vivid memory of that cherished day in the Auckland Domain, James and I were again the only two people in the world, even for the briefest of moments. I could feel our shared body heat again, even if only in a fantasy fuelled by treasured memories. Like that day in the domain, our shared energies blended as we strolled that Northland beach. He was there beside me. We were, together, surrounded by beauty and nature as I escaped the ugly and unnatural. It was real to me. I was escaping and coping, but as I closed my eyes and let my mind escape where I was, imagining a future I could never have, the fantasy was as real to me as the crunchy stones under my feet on that old, cracked basketball court I was strolling.

"Watch where you're going, c**t!”

I had nearly walked into someone. Or they had nearly walked into me. I was violently shunted out of the Northland beach fantasy and back into the world within which I was a straight guy. I describe this interruption as violent, even

though there was no physical contact between myself and the other in this story; I was left in no doubt by his tone that violence was a possibility if I did not respond to his warning in a manner that met his expectations. In this thesis, I refer to moments when incarcerated people are faced with situations to which they may select a response, even if from limited options, and this was one example of when I could respond in various ways. Each possible response could result in consequences for my various role performances. One response could be to react aggressively, and while that would earn me favour with any of the boys who witnessed it, it might not be perceived positively by guards, not to mention threaten my safety. At the other end of the extreme, on a spectrum of possible responses, there was an option to cower and apologise, risking a change in status to someone easy to intimidate and manipulate for favour. Further complicating situations like these was my straight performance. My response choices in prison were not only influenced by my need to portray good character to those influencing the outcome of my pending visit to the parole board but also by the need to meet expectations of how I should respond. Acting in a way that felt the most genuine to me at this moment came a very distant third. I cannot recall how I responded to that specific yet fleeting interaction, yet it was not an isolated event.

Allowing myself to drift in and out of fantasies like the one described above became not only a way of coping with my surroundings and my longing for a better past but also a way of retaining my gayness. I did not know it at the time, but retreating into imagined scenarios within which my sexuality was an essential element pushed me further into dual sexual identities. In situations like that which I described in the previous paragraphs, I was almost simultaneously pushed back and forth between gay and straight. In moments like these, where my fantasies involving James were interrupted by a display of masculinity, my shift between gay and straight was confronting. Today, and in different contexts, when I am not performing the straight guy and not worried about meeting societal expectations, I would most likely apologise to someone if I nearly walked into them, regardless of who was at fault. In prison, when I was, at times, a dictionary definition of macho, I was more likely to respond

with the four-letter word that starts with ‘f’ followed by a “you” and then possibly finish with a four-letter c-word if the situation required extra emphasis or a verbal puffing of the chest.

7.1 Dual Sexual Identities, Fantasy & Deleuze

Analysing moments of interruption in prison does more than merely illustrate the complexities of my dual sexual identities while incarcerated; it furthers the primary argument of this thesis: that a sentence of imprisonment transcends measured time, and its effects linger long after release from the physical boundaries of the institution. Interpretations of time as linear fail to fully describe the prison experience, as the impacts of the experiences shared in this thesis extend back into the past and forward into the future, beyond the presents in which they occurred. This is essential for understanding the long-term effects of incarceration on identity. My argument can be understood further by revisiting Deleuze’s three syntheses of time (introduced in Chapter Two) and my conceptualisation of these syntheses as temporal friction (as discussed in Chapter Five). These concepts provide lenses through which the lasting impact of the incarceration experience can be better understood, emphasising that incarceration is never just the sentence served; it is a transformation experience that reshapes identity.

When the fantasy of James and I sauntering along that peaceful, beautiful Northland beach was interrupted that day, it was instantly relegated to a past. Another reimagining of my future lost forever, to reappear only in a different form yet never to satisfy the same need to cope with specific feelings brought about by a particular day. If a similar fantasy remerged in another future, it would be reshaped by the past it had already appeared in and would be in response to the re-emergence of grief in another time or form. Interrupted by that sudden voice, the Northland beach fantasy was thrown onto the metaphorical pile with other fantasies and mixed with other utterings of a hope for a better past; the size of the pile of unattainable desires growing by the day,

even by the hour. The peace of that fantasy was interrupted not only by nearly walking into someone but violently by the language used and the contemptuous assumption that I should make way for him. That iteration of the Northland beach fantasy had relied on that certain present, how I viewed my past at that moment, and the future I longed for on that given day. There would be other fantasies on other days, but that one was gone and would only reappear reshaped in other pasts, presents, and futures.

My awareness of potential interruptions forever changed strolls on days that followed that aggressive encounter (as it did following other interruptions). Walking that concrete area still allowed me the physical space to wander and let my mind drift to the Northland beach fantasy, yet it was different. The same fantasy, yet different. The same court, the same direction around it, the same unit, the same prison. Yet all with a newness. No longer were James and I the only two people on that beautiful beach. It was still peaceful, and the soft sea breeze still caressed our sun-kissed bodies. Our hands still lightly touched in time with our casual stroll across the radiant sand. Yet now, because of the interruption and my increased awareness of the continuous presence of others, we shared the beach. Whether conscious or merely influenced by the potential for new interruption, both my mind and the details of my fantasy were aware that we were not the only two people in the world; we shared every space.

That space was not only shared by other people but also became contaminated by the expectations of others and societal norms. Even if subconsciously, I believe I was always aware while incarcerated that the success of my straight performance depended on specific acts, behaviours, and attitudes. Even when fantasy or other mediums (see the discussion on outside relations later in this chapter) presented situations where I could perform my gay sexual identity, I was still aware that at any moment, my straight performance would require some act to remain successful. It was as if that beautiful Northland beach was almost free of clouds, except for the big rain-filled one that followed us along the sand. Without warning, that cloud

could open and dump stinging cold rain on the fantasy; rain that took the shape of societal expectations and a reminder that I was still in prison; I was still pretending to be straight. Oh, and also, James was still gone.

On other days, my ability to drift deeply into the Northland beach fantasy was influenced by conventional measures of time (usually controlled and measured by others either explicitly or implied through expectations of behaviour). A casual stroll between washing machine cycles or the timer of the clothes dryer was limited by the time between laundry spins. A quick walk before I was due for a session of my mandatory parole-eligibility-driven course was clouded by the mindset I needed to enter that classroom with and, some days, the anxiety I felt about what that day's session would bring or what would be expected of my participation, especially on those days when I knew I would have to speak of James/~~Jay~~ and when my performance was at highest risk of exposure. Strolls on those days had a measured time limit, and, in those moments, John's statement that prison was "just time, bro" had additional layers of interpretation because of the pressures of time I felt. I had to get to the feelings I craved quicker; I had almost to force feelings and even trick myself into thinking that the walk's purpose on that day had been satisfied, especially as the clock ticked and my time on the court became increasingly limited. I was shunted between that present, the pasts I drew upon in the fantasy, and anticipations of potential futures. The walk along the beach was faster, and the distance we could go depended on that speed and the remaining time available to cover the space to our favourite spots or where the breeze was just right. The fantasy was the same but different. The stroll was the same but different. The location was the same but different. The changes forced by the circumstances of that moment and the looming expectations of my behaviour inserted differences in the repetition of the beach fantasy. After each repetition, the Northland beach fantasy would repeat again but in a different form, influenced every time by the pasts, presents, and futures that it drew upon.

7.2 Prison Time with Deleuze

I have repeated that Northland beach fantasy many times over the years. However, none of these repetitions were the same as any others. Each repetition has had something new because it changed every time. Repeating similar thoughts leads to new arrangements of those thoughts, and each repetition includes difference from repeated repetitions, and accordingly, ideas evolve. That fantasy, and the purpose of me repeating it, has changed through those repetitions of thought and continues to evolve, even now, as I repeat it and repeat it to understand my experience of incarceration as an example of Deleuzian thinking. That fantasy changes again as I proofread this paragraph, further as I rewrite to improve clarity, and further still as I improve the descriptive elements to take a reader on the journey with me, and so on. It will change when I am called upon to defend my work, and again if I rework my arguments for conference publications, academic publications, or guest lectures. It changes again when I word the experience in language more suited to a dinner party with friends or to explain to family members what I have been writing about all these years. That fantasy changed with every repetition during my incarceration because of the spaces between each repetition. In those spaces occurred interruptions, washing, course attendance, other fantasies, pain and trauma, other thoughts, confrontations, episodes of American Idol, workouts with gang members, chocolate bars, horrible prison food, and crude performative straight guy jokes. Since prison, those spaces have included the demands of academic performance, specific purposes such as sharing with students and fellow scholars, and personal conversations with family and friends.

Using Deleuze's theory of time and concepts of actual, virtual, and becoming, as lenses for understanding the prison experience provides a framework for analysing the various ways in which time operates in the lives of prisoners. The active synthesis of the past emphasises the creative and dynamic nature of memory, highlighting how prisoners actively construct their past and present experiences and how memory is a tool for identity construction, resistance,

and coping. The passive synthesis of the future emphasises the open and indeterminate nature of the future, highlighting not only the potential for possibility but also the long-term impact that an experience of incarceration has on futures. The pure past synthesis emphasises how pasts are constantly being reimagined and revisited in presents, thus exposing the significance of historical and cultural contexts in the shaping of the prison experience. Furthermore, Deleuzian concepts provide a lens for understanding how the prison experience shapes an incarcerated person's sense of agency and self. Past experiences shape understanding of the present and possible futures. As experiences of incarceration become new pasts, these experiences influence new presents and futures, shaping identity and temporal experiences long beyond the present within which they appear. Participating in these temporalities while incarcerated forms a subject as reshaped by participation that is constrained and reconstrained by prison conditions. The post-prison subject can thus be viewed through these temporal dimensions, namely, Deleuze's past, present, and future and my conceptualisation of these as temporal friction, which becomes important in marking sites of possible change and newness.

In the narratives I share throughout this thesis, specifically the various repetitions of the Northland beach fantasy, the clash between the linear, regulated time of the prison and the non-linear, personal time shaped by subjective experience is evident. For example, reflecting on past significant life events—such as the anniversary of James' passing—while still complying with the schedule and expected behaviour of the prison routine. A moment like this, of remembrance and fantasy of a different past, disrupts the routine of prison temporality, as my internal, emotional experience of time clashed with the external, structured time. Moments like these not only disrupt the temporal order of the prison but also demonstrate the ongoing struggle between institutional control and personal identity.

Moments of temporal friction during incarceration also serve as junctions, marking potential sites for transformative change and newness. For example,

in the intersection between personal memory and an abrupt demand to adhere to prison routine, this clash can be a catalyst for a profound re-evaluation of self. These moments of reflective interruption can strengthen identity, inspire commitment to personal growth, push someone toward further introspection, and review past decisions, shaping new aspirations for the future. These potential sites for transformation extend beyond personal experiences and can influence collective dynamics within a prison. Shared experiences of temporal alteration, such as celebrating a birthday as a group, can transform social aspects of the in-unit community and culture, even fostering a group identity that challenges the mundane nature of daily prison life. These shared experiences can also redefine relations between incarcerated people and administrators of power, where changes in in-unit dynamics may facilitate changes in interactions.

Therefore, each instance of temporal friction not only illustrates the clash between the structure of institutional time and personal temporalities but also demonstrates how these points of conflict can be leveraged for transformation, both personal and collective. These moments, and how a person chooses to respond to them, offer opportunities to reshape identities, adapt social structures within a unit, and reframe relationships between incarcerated people and both their fellow incarcerated and those in control. This suggests that the friction itself can be a significant marker of sites for transformation, newness, and change.

I can describe most of my prison experiences as a series of successive occurrences in a linear manner and most of the stories in the thesis appear that way. Every stroll around that old, cracked basketball court has a start and a finish. Each time I draw on one of those experiences, the description of the experience can easily be warped into a linear flow. There was always a starting point when my legs casually drift into a natural rhythm. One after the other. Left, then right, then left again. Each leg worked together in some form of cohesion, as the feel of the concrete between each step registered in my mind and morphed into a fantasy of other objects. Each step seemingly had a

beginning and an end, and each contributed to the overall experience that, using a conventional measurement of time, has also a beginning and an end. The resulting cohesion of my legs aided my mental checking out and boosted my attempts at distraction.

However, the different states of consciousness that make up this series of events are not discrete moments. It is hard to pinpoint the exact moment that my ability to walk reached a standard that would make a rhythmic stroll like this possible. It is equally as challenging to recognise the moment when I understood the significance of those walks or even the meaning of the opportunity for distraction that they afforded me. Increasingly more difficult to grasp is an understanding of how those walks, in my past, shaped the present I now find myself in and which futures they contributed to, opened possibilities for, or shut the door on. The attempts at distraction I describe on these pages in a somewhat linear fashion were responses to my surroundings in those presents yet drew on pasts in a form of reimagination and revisitation. Moreover, these attempts did something else. They brought my past and future into that present. The synthesis of past, present, and future formed a new present in those moments of temporal friction. This was a present that would then become a past in futures I was yet to be present in, creating new passive memories from the fantasies I entertained and further embedding a future that relied on my hope for a better past to be realised. I can continue to describe those present moments with a clear beginning and end so that they can be read and understood in an easily digestible linear narrative. However, an overreliance on only descriptions of this kind would result in a failure of this work to grasp the significance of those moments, reimaginings, and fantasies on who I am today.

In those moments of temporal friction, the form with which my past, present, and future(s) engaged resulted in a cyclic, almost self-destructive perpetuation of the ways of thinking that had contributed to my incarceration in the first place. My reliance on a hope for a better past as a coping strategy for the loss of James had contributed to the sense of entitlement I felt before prison. The

bitterness and anger that came from my entitlement and sense that the world owed me for taking James contributed to my mindset when I made poor decisions. That mindset was clouded by fantasy and a hope for a better past, similar to the fantasy and hope I drew on to cope with my incarceration experience. Consequently, while the entitlement and bitterness had somewhat subsided by the time I went to prison, my continuous reimagining of a future that could never be brought a newness to my internal narrative, with elements of the repetition that had contributed to my self-destructive behaviour pre-prison. The newness I was continuously creating took on forms that solidified that which could never be, and my reliance on those new futures often extended beyond any resistance I might make toward the immediate arrangement of my prison experience. The need for this resistance in response to not just my incarceration but also the loss of my outward gayness became so strong that each moment of newness that formed was heavily influenced by the passive memory of my most recent pasts. Those most recent pasts would take the form of the spaces within which Deleuze claims that newness is created, including the time between strolls or even between responses to daily interactions or, alternatively, to the immeasurable and unnoticeable movements of the sub-conscious.

Imagining an impossible future with James became a coping strategy in response to the consequences of playing a straight character. Imagining a blissful future in a loving gay relationship comforted me during a time when the proud gay male I was before prison had been replaced by a guy who commented on the female body as part of a straight act. My fantasies were intensified because of the roles I was playing and in response to lying about James in that course. Hoping for a past free from his loss and free from the mistakes I made that led me to prison became not only a coping strategy but a counteraction to the restrictions that incarceration places on the options available to someone to respond to any situation. The hope of a perfect future shielded me from imagining the future that realistically awaited me beyond the fences—a future where I would have to start again, again. I recalled and reimagined my past while in a hostile environment that demanded certain

behaviour. I imagined a future free from past trauma and current restrictions to just get through the experience. I did this all the while responding to and coping with my surroundings through passive imagination, influencing future habits with each episode of imagining. Consequently, each present became a dimension of new futures, within which I reimagined pasts, past presents, and future new(s), as I do now sitting here writing this. My fantasy, desire, and hope for a better past not only shaped my future(s), but they also became a resistance against the roles I was playing and against the arrangement of my experiences.

7.3 Peeing Like a Straight Guy

Engaged so deeply in the fantasy that James and I had made it all the way to one end of the beach, I was interrupted differently on another day. We had made it to the end of the beach, where the waves of a high tide flow peacefully over the flat rocks that can be walked upon during low tide. I had engaged in that fantasy so peacefully and guided by such a casual walk, without the constraints of washing cycles or interruption, that we had made it to a part of the beach where it was easier to be free of the presence of others. A cliff face on one side and the crisp ocean on the other, the end of that beach provides walkers an escape from others and the surroundings and demands of the day. Completely engrossed in the beach fantasy on that day, we made it all the way to those rocks.

“Lipsey, guardroom”

I was called to the guardroom to experience some meaningless expression of power.

Getting called to the guardroom over the old unit PA system with a crackly and easy-to-miss sound was rarely for a positive reason. I cannot recall the reason

on that specific day, nor is it relevant to the purpose of recalling that specific stroll. It was just another interruption, just another reminder of where I physically was and the expectations of behaviour that surrounded me. Just another appearance of a fantasy that a sudden interruption would forever change. I would engage in that fantasy again, but it would never be the same. For now, even those rocks, those beautiful examples of nature's power and symbol of love and happiness for my broken heart, had been interrupted by the artificial power performed by the agents of the state responsible for the arrangement of my experience of measured time and physical space during my incarceration.

On another day in the mundane prison experience, my washing machines ran in unison, and the clothes dryers had started a new cycle. I had some free measured time and was about to use it for a stroll. On that day, I was not seeking a distraction from any feelings, and I am unsure whether the fantasy appeared. Rather, I was more likely engaged in the habit I had formed with my regular strolls around that court. I had started to construct a schedule that fit within the prison routine and did not buck against any expected behaviours. I was managing my own time, as prisoners usually eventually do, by taking on responsibilities for their own behavioural management (Foucault (1977) would refer to this as 'docile bodies'). I stepped out of the building that housed my place of work. I took a few steps toward the old, cracked basketball court. I was mere metres from the start of my routine path around that concrete space. Possibly a few short steps from the sand or an aspect of another of the many fantasies I drew upon to cope with grief and loss and confinement and restriction. Or, possibly not.

"Lipsey, guardroom"

Whenever I got called to the guardroom, I would first rush back into the building containing my kit locker and lock the door. I had learnt very early on in that job that, left unattended, my fellow incarcerated would help themselves to an extra

blanket or prison-issued t-shirt (regardless of those being a colour that reminded me of vomit from a toddler after they had indulged in too much birthday cake). When someone helped themselves to something they were not entitled to, I took it personally. I had taken ego-boosting ownership of that role very seriously. Consequently, those acts from other prisoners offered me many instances within which I could respond in a way that boosted my straight performance. A threat out of my mouth, a puff of my chest, or even an utterance of the ever-reliable four-letter f-word met expectations of the hyper-masculine prison environment and supported my straight performance.

On that day, it took less than 30 seconds to rush back in and lock that door before making my way to the guardroom.

“Lipsey, guardroom”

Few guards I met during my incarceration showed me any sign that they had much patience, especially the grumpy ones sitting in that guardroom.

I remember the reason for my summons to the guardroom that day, not specifically because of the reason itself, but because of the narrative and meaning I framed around it and because of the opportunity it afforded me to respond to a situation in a way that was further supported by performance.

I was called to the guardroom for a ‘random’ drug test.

Approximately 50 metres from the unit was a small building used to collect urine samples that were then sent for drug testing. If someone in my or surrounding units was called upon to give a sample, they would be taken over to that room, given a cup, and asked to urinate in it. There were two small

holding cells in that building for those who could not “pee on demand”, a sink, and a toilet barely covered by a barrier. The purpose of how that barrier was positioned was so that you could be watched while you did your business, with your private parts supposedly covered and protected from the view of the guards demanding your bodily sample. I am fairly sure that a careful positioning choice from a guard would render that barrier ineffective, and the gay guy hiding under my straight performance wondered if any of the masculine guards were role-playing along with me. It would not have been a challenging task to sneak a peek if they were so inclined. That is how ineffective that privacy barrier was.

I had heard stories of guys who were taken to that room and could not produce the sample. If that happened, the person being tested was held in one of those small holding cells until they could. If this went on too long, they were given tiny cups of water intended to induce the sample without diluting it. If the ability to deliver the sample was still burdened, the guards would leave them in that cell and return later. I had heard the stories. I had teased guys who claimed they could not pee because they had been to the bathroom just before being called upon to give a sample, and I questioned their manhood. I had partaken in the jokes about size and stage fright that you might expect in a hyper-masculine environment like a prison. They were hilarious, or at least, I pretended that they were, even though many four-year-olds would likely find them too juvenile. Then it happened to me.

I had gone to the bathroom minutes before that day’s “Lipsey, guardroom” rang throughout the unit. I could not produce. Honestly, I had just been to the bathroom!

They kept me in that tiny building, and eventually, I forced out the bare minimum, and that experience was over. I passed the drug test, and it was another tick in the right box for when I attended my parole hearing and my suitability to be released was assessed. I had met another expectation of ‘good

character' that day. That is, however, not where this story ends. Supposedly, random prisoners from each unit were tested at regular intervals, and at other times, guards could put someone forward for testing if they had suspicions. My test was apparently random. However, the guard who called me to the guardroom that day led me to question their reasoning.

I am a fan of rugby league. It is the one sport I have supported continuously since I was a kid. This was never more so than when I was in prison. I have enjoyed watching the Australian competition, the 'National Rugby League', since I could barely walk. I also believe that the Australian competition is far superior to the 'Super League' that runs in England. The guard who called me for my drug test was British. He and I engaged in various teasing sessions for a couple of months. Barely one week before my 'random' drug test, the winner of the Australian competition (coincidentally, the team I had supported since I was five years old) had played the winner of the English competition. My team lost, but I still let that guard know which competition I thought was superior, and he returned to serve with his own banter. It was playful teasing that I now recognise as another performance. While I still watch Rugby League today, I spoke of it differently in prison. My love for that sport comes from what I find almost poetic in the athletic and synchronised team plays and the immense athleticism of those who dedicate their bodies to the game. I cringe at the hard tackles and worry for the health of my favourite players. In prison, that was different. While incarcerated, I would cheer more for the big hits, and my teasing was littered with comments guaranteeing that my team would "smash" the team of whoever I was teasing at the time. My fandom was more violent and aggressive, and my support for my favourite team met the expectations of masculine prison standards of what it meant to be a man enjoying a contact sport. I still catch myself, on occasion, cheering for an aggressive tackle or similar expression of masculinity, and I cringe now as much as I did in prison. I do not judge others who watch the game for those moments; it is just not why I watch, and those cheers only remind me of the time I pretended it was.

I cannot remember my exact wording, but I am sure my teasing of that guard reminded him that my team was more masculine than his (ironically, I support the Manly Warringah Sea Eagles—yes, I have heard many gay jokes about supporting a team from Manly). The following week, I was 'randomly' selected to be drug tested. I teased him about my suspicion. He laughed. Well played, Mr. Well played indeed.

This narrative of my exchanges with the league-loving corrections officer and my experience of being drug tested is a further exploration of temporal friction. This narrative unfolds amongst the stark contrasts between moments of personal engagement in memory and the interruptions of prison routine, such as being called to the guardroom. This contrast further highlights the friction between the internal, subjective experience of time and the external imposition of regulated prison time that I have already discussed at length. However, this friction not only demonstrates the ongoing negotiation between past and present selves within a prison setting, but it also marks sites of potential change. As I navigated through each interruption caused by prison routine and control, there was a clear transformation in how I engaged with both my fantasies and the realities of prison life. Each call to the guardroom serves as a reminder of the power dynamics at play within that prison unit, reshaping my behaviour and self-perception from someone indulging in nostalgic fantasy and escape to someone who must conform to the immediate demands of institutional control and routine.

The repeated calls to the guardroom demonstrate the prison's power and control over movements. This display of power serves as a constant reminder of who is in control, especially when the reason for the summons seemed almost pointless (such as the time I was called to the guardroom to be told about a meeting with my sentence planner, a meeting which I already knew about). Each interruption by the command "Lipsey, guardroom" illustrates the surveillance and control mechanisms typical of Foucauldian disciplinary institutions. These mechanisms are not just used to maintain order but to also internalise expected behaviour, creating those previously mentioned docile

bodies. Moreover, the interaction between myself and the British guard, and asymmetric power dynamics, reveals how power is not only top-down but can be nuanced. The playful banter about the league, while trivial on the surface, served as a medium through which power and masculinity were negotiated. Even within a light-hearted exchange, the power dynamics are evident, as the guard could reinforce their authority through actions such as a 'random' drug test. This action subtly reminded me of his control over even personal aspects of my life, such as bodily functions. This highlights how power within the prison is exerted not only through overt control but also through more subtle, everyday interactions and decisions that reinforce power dynamics and regulate behaviour.

It would be difficult to estimate how many times I engaged in the Northland beach fantasy during my incarceration (and since). It was always the same fantasy yet never repeated the same way twice. Each of these fantasies, and the many others I employed as coping tools during my incarceration, had an impact on my selfhood and on my perspective of time, both past and future, and my perceptions of how my future beyond incarceration could be lived. What the revisiting of these fantasies can contribute to an understanding of the incarceration experience, however, is a specific lens through which that experience is viewed: temporalities. These experiences also show the dual sexualities I performed while incarcerated. In my daily interactions with fellow incarcerated and guards, it was the straight performance that dominated. That repetitive and often overwhelming performance left me with a need that fantasies, within which I was still gay, could only partially fill. Accordingly, my outside relationships took on a specific and significant role: a space for my continued performance as an openly gay man.

7.4 Staying Gay During the Stay

While I was playing the straight man in prison, my identity outside of the wire as an openly gay man, who had been coming out since I was 17 years old, remained.

Connections between those in prison and the outside world play a particular role, especially in relation to the incarcerated person's perception of their identity. These connections can aid in keeping aspects of stripped roles alive. Accordingly, the importance of these relationships can intensify as they provide a vehicle for performing roles that cannot be performed inside the prison (Moerings, 1984). My experience goes beyond that, as I found that because outside connections were the main avenue for the continuation of a stripped or partially stripped role, then the form in which these connections operated also shifted how I perceived the relevant aspects of my identity and how they could be performed upon release. These relationships were likely reshaped through those interactions. This was my experience because, in addition to my reliance on fantasy and memory, the primary way I kept my outside role as a gay man alive was through communication with family and friends.

In letters to and during phone calls with family and friends, most commonly my mother, I often spoke of 'J' (referring to James). Recipients of those letters and those on the other end of the phone always knew to whom I was referring, and, more importantly, I knew that they knew. While 'J' is pronounced the same as 'Jay' (the fake name I gave when referring to James in that course room), I knew what I was saying, and so did those who heard my words. Through these utterings and, often casual, mentions of James, I kept a significant part of my identity alive. Not only the 'gay man' aspect but also the part of my past that had been in a relationship with James, a male, not Jay, a female (consequently, keeping this part of me alive also likely impacted the fantasies that became a coping strategy). Talking and writing about J became the safest

way to talk about my sexuality covertly, and I suspect that I leant into these conversations more than I would have without this complication or the essential element of keeping that part of me alive. While this served a purpose during my incarceration, I now understand that it that it added various nuances to the negative consequences I have since experienced.

Speaking about my relationship with James in this way prolonged my grief. While I do not accept that grief occurs in linear stages, I do understand that it ebbs and flows and is influenced by both circumstances and openness to experience it. I wrote in Chapter One that my grief became a tool for parole eligibility. At the same time, my relationship with and the loss of James became a tool for various coping strategies, not only through fantasy but also through my interactions with those on the outside. Talking about James was the easiest way to ‘talk gay’, and I spoke of him often. This complicated my grief and left aspects unresolved, aspects that I still struggle with today. Some of these aspects feature in this thesis, including in the last section of this chapter.

I still have every letter I sent home to my mother. She kept them all and reviewing them years later not only provides quotes for a piece of writing like this but also provides some insight into the impact of incarceration on my identity. Evident in my words was the shifting nature of my grief throughout the year I was incarcerated. I can track my grief going through a process of recognition that much of it was unresolved, and I can almost pinpoint the period of my incarceration when I resolved some of that grief yet battled the disenfranchisement caused by the lies that I told in that course room. Conversely, I can see moments when my words contributed to a different complication of my grief, leading to that which still, at least partially, remains unresolved today. This shows a tension in my experience of grief while incarcerated, heavily influenced by my dual performances of sexuality. What resulted from this tension is one of the things I still battle today: a realisation of social norms around grief and that there is not only a socially acceptable time to grieve, but there are also some losses more accepted than others. In those moments, where I worked through my grief authentically yet struggled

with the prison environment, I can see my grief shift from one type of unresolved to another, in my words home to my mother. Accordingly, the shifting nature of my grief and my relationship with it further complicated a grief that was already complicated. Through my own words, I can see my identity shifting and my guilt and shame building. At a similar time to when the story of James became a tool for parole eligibility, my James love story became the only way I could safely outwardly express my gayness, at least in my mind and at the time. While I have uncovered some of the consequences of those performances to write this thesis, I expect I will never fully understand the extent of the impact this had on my identity, especially related to my sexuality.

7.5 Straight Guy Performance

My ‘straight guy’ performance demanded that various acts be performed for the overall performance to be successful, and I provide examples of this throughout this thesis. While I was aware of some of the consequences of those acts during my incarceration (for example, the need to repeat some acts, including feigning attraction to females), it appears that I underestimated the long-term consequences. Namely, the contribution of performing those acts to the guilt I still feel today. It seems that the actions themselves have had a more lasting impact on my identity than either the role I was partially stripped of (that of a proud gay male) or the role I assumed (that of a straight male). The disproportionate lasting impact of these actions is most likely because they cannot be undone or corrected. I cannot apologise to those I made fun of or objectified, nor can I return to those moments and act differently. In contrast, the overall straight guy act can be corrected through pride today. Yet those crude jokes, macho idiocy, and other cringe behaviour that still make me shudder in shame today cannot ever be corrected.

In the previous chapter, following my discussion of using derogatory terms in response to being questioned about my sexuality, I noted that many of my behaviours and words seem unnecessary when I view them through today’s

lenses and with the perspectives I had gained through this work. The series of acts that made up my straight performance linger today and complicate efforts to perform my sexuality. I am left with a confusing tension. At times, I have a nagging need to overperform my sexuality. While this does not appear in physical ways through something like an overuse of Grindr, it does manifest verbally through mentions of my sexuality at times when that is irrelevant and even moments when I manufacture opportunities to 'come out' as I did when I was in my late teens. In contrast, at other times, I have felt unworthy of the 'gay' label, as if I acted in ways that betrayed my people and that I now believe I should be shunned to the hard edges of society.

7.6 The Biggest Guilt of All

There are other layers to the shame and guilt I discuss in previous chapters that I have hesitated to share. I hesitate because they are deeply personal and are forever in the world once printed. I discuss this consideration in the methodology chapter concerning the crude jokes I told in prison and how I had to decide whether I was prepared for them to be in print. I decided I was comfortable with that, primarily because of the solid examples they provide and because sharing them is my shaky attempt at atonement. However, I did not mention these other layers in the methodology chapter. I did this on purpose. I did this because not mentioning them until now mimics how they came to be included in this thesis. I did not know until nearing the end of this process that I would be writing this. I could not realise that I would be comfortable with sharing what follows. I cannot be certain that I will not regret this in five or ten years, but this does not bother me because I have learnt to live with regret. It does not bother me because I know the layer these examples add to the argument I am trying to make in this thesis. I claim that the sentence never truly ends because of the long-term impact incarceration has on identity. I have made that argument and summarise it in the following chapter. However, here, in the closing paragraphs of the penultimate chapter, I go deeper. If you have made it this far and are still with me, please know I appreciate you. However, trigger warning: I am about to get raw to drive home

the argument. Because, like the sentence never ends, neither does grief. It is throwing those two in the blender of my life that generates what I am sharing with you now.

These layers of guilt and shame, perhaps unsurprisingly if you have read this far, relate to James. He and my unresolved grief drift in and out of this thesis as if I wrote it intentionally to emulate the way grief and loss drift in and out of my lived experiences. This represents the past 20 years of my life through the seemingly random mentions mimicking the surprising bursts of grief that still wash over me to this day. He has always been there, yet the impact of my love for him and my grief over his loss ebbs and flows like a long river with as many calm spots as chaotic. Those calm spots can be misleading because the upset and disruption are never far from the surface.

I feel guilt and shame not only for the behaviours and actions that made up my straight guy performance. I feel guilt and shame not only for the words I said or the jokes I laughed at and not only for my contribution to the perpetuation of heteronormative privilege, compulsory heterosexuality, and all of those fancy academic terms I have drawn on to make sense of and describe my experiences. Above all of that, the guilt and shame I feel the most is because of how my straight guy performance disrespected the memory of James. My lies in that course room and my portrayal of him as a female stripped an aspect of his identity. I knew that at the time, even if I did not yet understand the theories I now draw on as lenses of understanding. I still knew it, and I lied anyway. A handful of people sat in a room with me and believed, even just for the duration of that course, that Kalym Lipsey's lost love was a female named Jay. That still breaks me today as much as it did back then. The guilt is washing over me even as I write this sentence, and I shudder from those waves.

I wish I could say that this is one of the things this PhD has helped me make peace with, and sometimes I have even said that. Nevertheless, I am not sure how much truth is in that claim. Most days, I realise he would have accepted

and even encouraged me to do what I needed to stay safe. I know that, and even his sister shares the same assumption. However, the guilt and shame remain. Now and then, it catches me in moments when what he would have accepted is not a strong enough antidote to the guilt. In those moments, I have been filled with rage, or I have sobbed almost uncontrollably in that kind of emotional reaction that instantly adjusts body temperature and almost completely takes over, all because of what I did and how that impacted my memory of him. This matters to my overall discussion because it is indisputable to me that this layer of guilt and shame has had as much of an impact on my struggle with my sexuality over the past decade as the other layers did, if not more so, because of the bitterness and, at times, disgust I have felt toward my own sexual preference. Each of these moments of shame and guilt has left me a little more hard-hearted to relationships and dismissive or even blind to future loves. I do not know if that is because I think I do not deserve it, I am not ready, or simply because no one will ever compare to him. Regardless of the conclusion, guilt and shame still exist; no layer of academic interpretation or therapeutic insight can completely wash that away. It was not the overall performance as a straight guy that impacted my identity to the extremes I have discussed; it was the specific behaviours and words that made up that performance that left their rotting crumbs in my psyche. Those acts changed me forever. It is those acts that I still feel the consequences of today, like when I felt forced to rename James as Jay.

I, thankfully, have enough good memories to survive those moments when the guilt and shame take over. When the emotion takes control, and my body shivers from the rush of chills, I can recall the shared body heat with James that day in Auckland Domain and take back the warmth. When the tears flow, I understand my emotions enough to let them pass without me fighting against their appearance, and I can picture his cheeky smile with one side of his mouth raised slightly higher than the other to hang on with a white-knuckle grip until those emotions subside. At times, when song lyrics shunt me back to the experiences that influenced my hope for a better past or even forward to a future that can never be, I can recall how his shocking singing voice both

ruined a song and made it better simultaneously. I know he would have forgiven me, and his sister has on his behalf. I guess, I am just still yet to forgive myself.

The Deleuzian concepts I have drawn on throughout this thesis provide a profound theoretical framework to explore the dynamic, and complex, interplay of memory, time, and identity. My conceptualisation of temporal friction—the clash between the linear regulated time enforced by institutions and the non-linear, experiential time—encapsulates the experiences I share in this narrative. This friction highlights how subjective experiences interact and conflict with institutional power structures. As I reflect on my past behaviour and its lasting impacts, particularly concerning my relationship with James, each recollection and its associated feelings interrupt regulated time and inject moments of personal significance that reshape and resist both the temporal structure of the prison and the homogeneity of linear time in society. This ongoing dynamic illustrates the negotiation and renegotiation of my identity within these conflicting temporalities and demonstrates the influence of past experiences on present realities; an example of a Deleuzian interplay of difference and repetition where each recall introduces subtle transformations to my sense of self.

Interactions between the virtual and actual add a layer of understanding to this narrative. Memories of James and the emotional weight they carry represent the virtual, unactualised forces that influence actual experiences of living through incarceration and grappling with identity. This swing between virtual potentialities and actual realities underpins much of the temporal friction I describe in this narrative. Each recollection of James and each revisitation of past actions and their implications offer some divergence each time, adding new nuances to my identity and reshaping that which has already been reshaped.

This narrative of guilt also demonstrates Deleuze's third synthesis of time, the pure becoming that disrupts past and present and introduces potential for futures. The shifts in grief, guilt, and identity that I have shared on these pages are not merely recollections of past events; rather, I actively engage with these, allowing for a transformation that is both influenced by and influences my ongoing temporal experiences. This Deleuzian perspective shows my experiences not as fixed sequences but as a series of dynamic moments where institutional time, personal memory, and potential futures collide, creating a continual becoming. Through this lens, this thesis not only narrates my lived experiences and personal journey but also offers an exploration of the nature of time, identity, and existence itself.

I have enough memories of James to push through when memories of Jay unwelcomely creep back in. I have enough gay pride to survive when my pesky and defiant mind recalls when I pretended to be straight. However, still, the consequences of what prison did to me and what I did to survive it will be with me forever—my reshaped identity and unresolved grief demand that.

Chapter Eight

8. From the Incarceration Experience to Temporal Justice in the Criminal Justice System

Common concepts of time and space do not provide an adequate understanding of the experience of incarceration.

A sentence of incarceration never ends because of its long-term impact on identity and opportunity that is shaped by privilege.

That is it. That is my argument. What I have discussed in the preceding pages illustrates various examples of why prison is more than the sentence and the physical boundaries. My story shows how the prison experience impacts identity during and well beyond the expiry of the sentence. That is it. That is my argument.

A part of me wants to end the thesis here and see what happens when I am called to defend my contentions. However, I know that the academic performance demands more. This final chapter is expected to be the pinnacle of my contribution to the conversation of understanding incarceration. Still, my argument is that simple.

Prison is more than time and space, and incarceration never ends.

Neither does grief.

8.1 Reflection

In quiet moments of reflection, I hope this thesis is more than an academic exercise. I hope it is more than my resistance against a violent and destructive justice system that rips people away from their lives and loved ones whilst irrevocably reshaping their identities. I want this thesis to speak for more than my experience and to achieve more than an academic qualification. I hope this part of my story stands as a testament to the unseen, for the unheard and often-forgotten members of our community who deserve to be heard just as much as those with privileged opportunities, like myself. I write not just for myself, but for those stuck on the hard edges of society who battle to survive within the physical boundaries of the prison. I argue in order to challenge the myopic views of incarceration that confine the experience to temporal and physical boundaries.

I advocate for a more profound understanding of the journey that one's identity undergoes in response to the demands of incarceration. As these final pages take form, I am revisited by the echoes and aftershocks of my prison experience that have lingered far longer than the literal sentence imposed on me, reverberating through my identity and my sense of self, and influencing my engagement with the social structures within which my life is lived. This has not been merely a study of one person's experiences but an attempt to contribute to a conversation that, to me, often seems to have gone stale with the same rhetoric, argument, and rehearsed and recycled outrage. I urge any reader to recognise and acknowledge the long and dark shadows that incarceration casts over lives, reaching all corners of society and never fully dissipating.

I call for a fundamental and extensive shift in perception, policy, and practice for a future in which the end of a prison sentence does not relegate the formerly incarcerated to a never-ending sentence. Instead, I call for a future where the

incarcerated can emerge transformed by their experiences yet not bound to serve a sentence indefinitely. In an emotional and somewhat desperate cry, this thesis is a call to action and a plea for policymakers, academics, and wider society to acknowledge the often-overlooked irrevocable elements of the prison experience. In a possibly fantastical world that understands the true impact of incarceration, we could move toward empathy and a commitment to a more compassionate approach to offending and other behaviour mistakes. With this approach, we move closer to a society that does not shun its most challenging tasks and responsibilities but learns from and grows through them with no person left behind.

My argument asserts that a sentence of imprisonment extends beyond the walls that are intended to control by enforcing the time to be served. I have highlighted the limitations inherent in the overreliance on traditional concepts of time and space in understanding the prison experience. The examples and discussions I have offered show that the incarceration experience extends beyond the physical and temporal boundaries set by a court-imposed sentence by profoundly and irrevocably influencing the fabric of identity. The almost deafening echoes of incarceration embed indefinitely within a person's sense of self, being shaped, reshaped, imagined, and reimagined through their behaviour, actions, coping strategies, and responses to the temporal friction experienced within the prison boundaries. From bodily modifications to everyday acts of resistance, to fantasies of a reimagined past, and to performances of gender, the personal experiences of incarceration deeply shape identity. As I undertake the final stage of my academic performance, I seek to take this discussion to another level. In those moments of quiet reflection, I have realised that it is not enough for me to simply tell my readers what is wrong, and that the system destroys lives. I would be left unsatisfied with that as a conclusion for this work. Accordingly, beyond a claim of the damage the system causes and how its practices have an irreversible impact on identity, I take this discussion toward temporal justice in the criminal justice system.

Something else is happening here, and it is influenced by my engagement (or lack thereof) with prison abolition theories and conversations. If you have read this entire thesis, you may have noticed that I barely mention abolitionism. This may seem strange to some readers in a thesis that sometimes rages against the idea of imprisonment. The reason is simple: I cannot imagine a world without prisons. I want to; of course I do. I simply cannot. My failure to visualize such a world is likely influenced by whom I encountered while incarcerated and my assumption that those who control the system will never allow a world without prisons to emerge from the ashes of the current system—even if we could find some way to metaphorically burn it to the ground. I have sometimes called myself an 'emerging abolitionist', but perhaps the conjecture I share here makes me a 'wannabe abolitionist'—stuck somewhere between dreaming of a prison-free world and struggling to conceptualise how it might come to exist. That is why *temporal justice* matters.

While I wholeheartedly believe that a temporal justice approach in the criminal justice system could correct many of the imbalances currently running wild and alleviate some of the detrimental effects of incarceration that my work highlights, I also believe it is more than reform. Temporal justice does not seek to make prisons more bearable—it seeks to challenge the very structures that make them seem inevitable. In that sense, temporal justice is not just a corrective but a step toward dismantling the conditions that make carceral logic so entrenched. If I cannot yet imagine a world without prisons, perhaps a commitment to temporal justice brings us closer to making that world imaginable.

8. 2 Defining and Contextualizing Temporal Justice

Temporal justice is a framework that examines how access to, control over, and experiences of time are structured by power. Although time can be perceived as neutral and universally experienced, it is shaped and reshaped by systems of privilege and oppression. Control over time is not evenly

distributed; it is socially constructed and influenced by intersecting forces of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, and institutional authority. Some people experience time with autonomy and flexibility, managing their schedules to access and enhance opportunities. Others, particularly those who are marginalised, are subjected to rigid temporal structures that restrict their autonomy and reinforce expected behaviours. For the marginalised, time becomes a mechanism for perpetuated inequality where access to self-directed time is a form of privilege, while the control and restriction of time function as tools of discipline, exclusion, and suppression.

Incarceration is an extreme case of temporal injustice; the inequitable control and structuring of time, restricting autonomy and deepening social inequalities. Imprisonment is not just a loss of freedom—it is a restructuring of time itself, where those in power enforce a rigid temporal order as a form of punishment and as a tool to control and, supposedly, correct behaviour. An experience of incarceration is characterised by temporal deprivation—the loss of control over one's time, leading to restricted autonomy and diminished opportunities—and time is weaponised as a tool of discipline, transforming what might otherwise be perceived as a measurement into a punitive force that regulates experience. This regulation is enforced by repetitive routines and can result in the reshaping or even elimination of future possibilities and the disruption of personal identity through forced temporal control. The incarcerated do not merely serve time; they experience time as something to be endured, controlled, and fragmented. This temporal discipline does not end upon release—formerly incarcerated people can struggle to adjust to the accelerated time demands of the outside world, reinforcing cycles of marginalisation and recidivism. Furthermore, the impact of incarceration, as discussed at length in this thesis, extends far beyond the physical boundaries of the prison.

Incarceration creates a state of temporal deprivation, in which self-determination is eroded, and time becomes something to be endured rather

than lived. Prison schedules dictate when those held within its walls wake, eat, move, and sleep, reducing time to a repetitive cycle of institutional control. This form of temporal discipline extends beyond the enforcement of rules and routines; it restructures the incarcerated person's relationship to time itself. The expectation that time in prison is 'served' assumes a passive progression toward eventual release, yet the experience of carceral time is often one of stagnation, fragmentation, and loss, where future possibilities can appear indefinitely suspended and forever adjusted. This disruption of temporal agency can lead to profound disorientation, detachment, and identity destabilisation, reinforcing the idea that incarceration is not simply about physical confinement but about the fundamental restructuring of time and selfhood.

Crucially, the control of time does not end upon release. The formerly incarcerated carry the aftershocks of prison temporality into their post-incarceration lives, struggling to readjust to the rhythms and expectations of free society. The shift from externally controlled institutional time to self-regulated, autonomous time is not immediate or seamless. This is where Bourdieu's concept of temporal habitus becomes particularly useful in understanding the long-term effects of incarceration (see the following section). While in prison, the incarcerated develop a prison temporality—a way of engaging with time that is shaped by routine, external surveillance, and the absence of long-term planning. Upon release, they must re-enter a world that demands self-discipline, adaptability, and structured productivity, yet the expectations of society can conflict with the temporal conditioning of incarceration. The clash between institutionalised time and the accelerated demands of the outside world creates a form of temporal disjuncture that reinforces cycles of marginalisation, particularly for those who struggle to secure employment, rebuild social relationships, or adjust to the unpredictability of everyday life.

I define temporal justice as the equitable consideration and redress of the disproportionate temporal controls and disruptions imposed by the criminal justice system through practices, policies, and institutions such as the prison. A temporal justice framework extends beyond linear time to consider subjective experiences of temporality—how incarceration alters a person's perception of past, present, and future, and how these altered temporalities shape identity, reintegration, and access to opportunity. A temporal approach to justice puts significant emphasis on the broader temporal parameters of punishment, examining how carceral time extends beyond the physical sentence to structure post-incarceration life.

Time is central to how punishment is enacted and experienced. The control and removal of time fundamentally shape opportunities, relationships, and self-conception (see Bittman & Wajcman, 2000; Schor, 2000; Goodin, 2010; Fraser, 2013; Usmani & Jamal, 2013; Tyssedal, 2021). In the context of the criminal justice system, temporal justice demands recognition of the long-term temporal harm caused by incarceration, including its impact on identity, social mobility, and reintegration. It challenges the assumption that the end of a prison sentence marks the end of punishment, highlighting how carceral time continues to shape lives long after release. This temporal disjuncture reflects broader patterns of temporal oppression that extend beyond the prison. The rigid and controlled time of incarceration is not an isolated phenomenon—it mirrors other forms of temporal inequality experienced by marginalised communities. Precarious workers, for example, often face unstable, externally dictated schedules that limit their ability to plan for the future, while those engaged in unpaid care work experience time as something demanded of them rather than autonomously controlled. The extreme temporal fixity of prison operates within this broader network of temporal hierarchies, where certain groups enjoy flexibility, autonomy, and control over their time, while others are subjected to rigid, externally imposed temporal structures. This reinforces the central argument that control over time is a key site of social injustice, with incarceration serving as one of the most pronounced examples of how power is exerted through time.

A temporal justice approach to criminal justice reform and abolition requires a fundamental rethinking of sentencing, rehabilitation, and reintegration—not just in terms of how much time is served, but how time is experienced. This perspective challenges the assumption that a prison sentence is simply a quantitative measure of punishment and instead asks how the structure of time within incarceration can be reimagined to allow for self-development rather than stagnation. Instead of simply advocating for shorter sentences, a temporal justice framework asks: How can prison time be structured in a way that fosters growth rather than stagnation? What alternatives to incarceration could restore temporal autonomy instead of enforcing rigid discipline? How can reintegration programs recognise and address the temporal disjuncture that formerly incarcerated people experience when transitioning from controlled time to self-directed time? These questions emphasise that justice must consider not only the duration of incarceration but also the lived experience of time within and beyond prison walls.

In this way, temporal justice is not simply about reforming incarceration—it offers a potential pathway toward abolition by shifting the very foundation upon which punishment is built: the control of time. If incarceration functions as a method of control through temporal deprivation, then justice must be reframed to restore autonomy over time rather than enforce its restriction. A system that acknowledges time as a fundamental site of inequality must move beyond punitive temporal constraints toward a model of justice that prioritises transformation, agency, and self-directed futures. By situating incarceration within a broader critique of temporal inequality, temporal justice emerges as a framework that does not merely seek to reform prisons but instead challenges the very mechanisms through which power is exerted over time itself. In doing so, it forces a reconsideration of what justice means, how it is enacted, and whether carceral time can ever be compatible with true social equity.

To fully grasp the implications of temporal justice, it is necessary to situate the concept within broader theoretical discussions on time, power, and inequality.

As explored in the previous section, time is not neutral—it is structured by social forces, shaped by institutional control, and distributed unevenly across different groups. Incarceration represents one of the most extreme forms of temporal regulation, where people are stripped of autonomy over their own time and subjected to state-imposed stagnation, repetition, and disruption. However, prisons are not the only sites where temporal inequalities are produced and maintained—similar dynamics exist in labour markets, gendered expectations of care, and class-based restrictions on time autonomy. The following section expands on this by first exploring time as a mechanism of power through Foucault, Bourdieu and Adam. The section then examines Wajcman's concept of temporal autonomy and Fraser's framework of recognition and redistribution, both of which help illuminate how control over time operates as a mechanism of power, reinforcing privilege for some while restricting the temporal agency of others. These perspectives provide insights into how prison time mirrors, intensifies, and extends the broader temporal injustices experienced by marginalised communities.

8.2.1 Time as a Mechanism of Power: Foucault, Bourdieu, and Adam

Time is not merely a neutral, measurable quantity—it is structured and controlled by social institutions to regulate behavior, reinforce hierarchies, and shape identities. Incarceration represents an extreme form of temporal control, where time is not just constrained but actively weaponised as a mechanism of discipline and social exclusion. To understand how prison time functions as a site of power, it is useful to turn to Foucault's concept of disciplinary time, Bourdieu's theory of temporal habitus, and Adam's analysis of institutional time and social acceleration. Together, these perspectives illustrate how prisons not only restrict freedom but fundamentally reshape a person's relationship to time, both during and after incarceration.

As I have drawn on throughout this thesis, Foucault (1975) describes modern institutions—prisons, schools, and military organisations—as sites of

discipline that regulate time to produce docile bodies—people who internalise control through routined, repetitive structures. Prisons exemplify this mode of power: time is not just served but structured, with strict daily schedules dictating when prisoners wake, eat, work, exercise, and sleep. This temporal regulation is not merely about efficiency—it is a form of power that disciplines people into submission.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault outlines how the control of time is central to modern disciplinary regimes. The prison system extends beyond physical detention to impose a temporal confinement, in which a person's ability to self-regulate time is systematically eroded. By controlling time, prisons regulate behavior, producing docile bodies who are trained to comply with authority and expected behaviour (Driver, 1994; Schlosser, 2013). Time itself becomes a tool of punishment—not only through the length of a sentence but through the way it is lived: monotonous, repetitive, and stripped of autonomy (Goldberg-Hiller, & Johnson, 2013). This imposed temporality does not end at release; rather, it lingers in the form of institutionalised habits, surveillance, and social exclusion, reinforcing the idea that the sentence never truly ends.

Bourdieu's concept of habitus (1977) provides another lens for understanding how prison time shapes identity. Habitus refers to the ingrained dispositions, behaviours, and ways of perceiving the world that develop through social conditioning. In the prison environment, people are forced to adopt a distinct temporal habitus—one structured by institutional time, where external forces dictate all aspects of daily life (see Jewkes, 2002; Neuber, 2011). This temporal habitus, developed in confinement, often clashes with the demands of free society upon release, making reintegration challenging.

Incarceration disrupts a person's previous relationship with time by replacing self-directed temporalities with enforced, institutional routines. Over time, prisoners become conditioned to expect a highly regimented schedule, often

leading to difficulty navigating the more fluid, flexible demands of life outside prison. Upon release, the formerly incarcerated must readjust to a world that expects self-discipline, adaptability, and proactive time management—skills that are actively suppressed in prison. This temporal dissonance can contribute to recidivism, as a person can struggle to transition between the rigid structures of incarceration and the expectations of autonomy in the outside world. Additionally, Bourdieu's concept of symbolic power (1991) helps explain how social norms dictate what constitutes 'valuable' time. In capitalist societies, time is often equated with productivity, efficiency, and economic contribution. In contrast, prison time is constructed as 'wasted' time, reinforcing stigma and marginalisation (Hardt, 1997; Fox & Crocker, 2024). This devaluation of carceral time extends beyond the prison itself, influencing how society perceives and treats formerly incarcerated people, often denying them opportunities for meaningful reintegration (Tyler & Slater, 2018).

Adam (1995) expands this discussion of time by highlighting the differences between institutional time and the accelerated temporality of modern society. Institutional settings—such as prisons, hospitals, and bureaucratic systems—operate on static, rigid schedules that are designed to maintain order rather than adapt to personal needs (see Cope, 2003). In contrast, contemporary society is characterised by social acceleration, where technology and capitalism create increasingly fast-paced demands for productivity, responsiveness, and adaptability. This temporal gap between institutional time and external time is a crucial factor in understanding why prison disrupts long-term reintegration into society.

Prison imposes a form of temporal suspension, in which incarcerated people are removed from the accelerating rhythms of the outside world (see Wan, 2018). Unlike those outside of prison, who can experience time as a resource to be optimised, those incarcerated can experience time as something to endure. As Adam (1995) argues, institutional time flattens subjective temporality, forcing people into a controlled, repetitive mode of existence that

is detached from the dynamic changes occurring outside. The result is a multi-layered disorientation: incarcerated people are isolated from the temporal developments of society, and upon release, they must suddenly adjust to an accelerated world that expects them to be immediately functional, employable, and self-sufficient. This mismatch between institutionalised time and social acceleration exacerbates the challenges of post-incarceration life, possibly leading to economic exclusion, technological disorientation, and social alienation.

Foucault, Bourdieu, and Adam collectively illustrate that prisons do not just confine bodies; they confine time itself. Through disciplinary regimes, prisons structure time as a tool of punishment and control (Foucault). This creates a temporal habitus that shapes identity and hinders reintegration (Bourdieu) and produces a mismatch between the rigid time of incarceration and the accelerated time of free society (Adam). Together, these perspectives highlight that prison time is not just time lost—it is time lived under conditions of control, disruption, and social exclusion.

Having established that time is not neutral but a structured mechanism of power, I can now examine how temporal autonomy—the ability to control and shape one's own time—is unevenly distributed across social hierarchies. As Foucault, Bourdieu, and Adam illustrate, prisons do not merely confine people; they reshape their experience of time, imposing rigid, disciplinary schedules that continue to influence identity and social reintegration long after release. However, the loss of temporal control is not unique to prisons—it reflects broader inequalities in how time is regulated across different social groups. This discussion extends through an exploration of Wajcman's concept of temporal autonomy and Fraser's framework of recognition and redistribution, both of which provide useful lenses into how prison time can be challenged through a temporal justice framework.

8.2.2 Temporal Autonomy, Recognition, and the Inflexibility of Prison Time: Wajcman and Fraser

Wajcman's concept of temporal autonomy—a person's ability to control and structure their own time—highlights how control over time is a key site of power and inequality (Wajcman, 2014). In their critique of digital capitalism, Wajcman demonstrates how technological advancements have allowed privileged groups to experience greater flexibility over their time. This contrasts sharply with the rigid temporal constraints imposed on marginalised groups, who have less control over their schedules and daily activities (Wajcman, 2014), and can reinforce rigid, externally controlled time structures on those marginalised groups (Wajcman, 2018; 2020). While the privileged exercise agency over their own time, others are subjected to externally imposed schedules, reinforcing existing social hierarchies. This disparity is particularly evident in precarious labour markets, where low-income workers can experience inflexible schedules, enforced shift work, and unpredictable hours that limit their ability to plan their time autonomously (Gerstel & Clawson, 2018; Creagh et al., 2023)). Some workers are forced to navigate fragmented and exhausting temporalities, working multiple jobs, dealing with erratic hours, or being placed on-call with little notice. Similarly, women performing unpaid care work can experience temporal constraints shaped by social expectations, as their time is assumed to be endlessly available to meet the needs of others (Mahar, 2009). These forms of time control mirror broader patterns of structural inequality, in which certain groups enjoy autonomy over their temporal experiences, while others are expected to conform to externally dictated routines, norms and expected behaviours. While this applies most directly to labour markets, it also provides insight into the way time functions as a tool of social control in other institutions—including the prison system.

Unlike workers in precarious labour markets, incarcerated people experience a more complete denial of temporal autonomy, where time itself becomes a mechanism of punishment rather than an economic constraint. Whereas Wajcman describes temporal rigidity as a feature of class inequality, in prisons,

it is weaponised as a totalising force—used to strip incarcerated people of agency, identity, and future possibilities. Prisons do not just control schedules; they enforce a temporal reality in which time is no longer one's own, creating a disorientation that lingers far beyond release. The prison system is an extreme form of temporal rigidity, enforcing a hyper-structured system that controls when incarcerated people wake, eat, move, work, and engage in activity. Unlike workers in precarious jobs, who may at least leave their places of employment, incarcerated people experience total subjugation of their time under institutional control and expectation. Prison schedules are not only externally dictated but also designed to eliminate autonomy, reinforcing discipline through strict temporal segmentation. The incarcerated are denied the ability to shape their own time, with long periods of idleness punctuated by enforced and often strict routines, creating a form of temporal oppression that extends beyond the physical boundaries of the prison. By extending Wajcman’s critique of time discipline beyond labour and into the carceral system, I argue that temporal justice must address not only economic exploitation but also the way institutions impose temporal subjugation as a form of punishment and social exclusion.

Wajcman’s work provides a different lens into how prisons function as places of temporal discipline, intensifying the temporal restrictions experienced by marginalised communities outside of physical prison boundaries. Incarceration does not merely control the present; it also disrupts the future. People who have lived under rigid institutional time for extended periods can struggle to reintegrate into a society that demands self-regulation, adaptability, and flexible time management. The expectation that the formerly incarcerated will seamlessly transition into social and economic systems that value autonomous time management ignores the profound temporal disorientation and disruption created by imprisonment. By incorporating Wajcman’s temporal analysis, *temporal justice* emerges as a framework that critiques rigid, punitive time structures across multiple domains—not just in prisons, but also in workplaces, domestic spaces, and public policy. Temporal justice calls for greater temporal flexibility, autonomy, and recognition of diverse temporal

experiences, ensuring that people are not trapped in cycles of externally imposed time regimes that limit their freedom and potential. It challenges the assumption that certain groups' time is less valuable or undeserving of autonomy, instead advocating for a restructuring of social institutions to respect and redistribute control over time as a fundamental aspect of justice. While Wajcman's work highlights the inequalities of temporal autonomy in labour and daily life, these insights also extend to broader discussions of justice. If time is unequally distributed and structured by power, then it follows that justice must account for time—not just in terms of how much of it is allocated (such as prison sentences) but in terms of how it is lived and controlled.

Fraser's (2003) framework of recognition and redistribution provides an additional lens for conceptualising temporal justice. Redistribution demands that time be equitably distributed, ensuring that certain groups are not disproportionately subjected to externally controlled or devalued temporalities. Recognition, meanwhile, calls for an acknowledgment of different ways of experiencing time—especially in institutions such as prisons, where time is not simply 'spent' but deeply shapes identity, agency, and future possibilities. Fraser's framework allows this discussion to move beyond personal experiences of temporal autonomy and toward a structural analysis of how time itself is used as a mechanism of inequality and control. Through recognition and registration, temporal justice is positioned as both a structure and social issue. In their broader work on justice, Fraser argues that achieving equality requires addressing both economic redistribution—the fair allocation of material resources and opportunities—and cultural recognition, which involves validating and acknowledging marginalised identities and experiences (see Fraser, 1997). Applied to temporal justice, this framework exposes how access to time itself—its control, flexibility, and value—is unequally distributed, reinforcing existing social hierarchies.

From a redistributive perspective, *temporal justice* requires a reallocation of time as a fundamental social resource. Just as wealth and power are unequally distributed, so too is the ability to control one's own time. Marginalised groups can have their time stolen, controlled, or fragmented due to social and economic structures that impose external demands on their schedules. This includes over-policing and incarceration, where people are removed from their own temporal trajectories and placed under state-controlled time regimes that fundamentally alter their life courses. The punitive use of time in prison does not merely restrict freedom but actively disrupts the capacity to shape one's future, reinforcing cycles of disadvantage even after release. Fraser's concept of recognition highlights the need to acknowledge diverse experiences of time and how these are shaped by social hierarchies. Dominant norms privilege linear, productive, and economically 'valuable' time, while devaluing non-normative temporalities—such as time spent in caregiving, incarceration, recovery from trauma, or waiting in bureaucratic systems that regulate marginalised lives. The incarcerated experience time as stagnation, marked by enforced routines, imposed idleness, or monotonous labour, yet this experience remains largely invisible to broader society, which primarily understands punishment through the quantitative measurement of years rather than the *lived* experience of prison time.

Temporal justice, through Fraser's framework, demands both the redistribution of temporal autonomy and the recognition of different ways time is lived, controlled, and constrained. It challenges whose time is seen as valuable, and whose is erased, controlled, or rendered invisible in public discourse and policy. This shift requires not only structural interventions—such as reducing incarceration, improving labour protections, and redistributing caregiving responsibilities—but also a fundamental reimagining of time as a site of justice, rather than merely a neutral measurement of punishment or productivity.

Before applying Fraser's model, or any other model, however, it is necessary to establish time itself as a politically significant resource. Time is not merely

a neutral or passive measurement; it is actively controlled, structured, and distributed by social power. Just as Fraser argues that wealth and cultural status are unequally distributed, so too is access to self-directed, autonomous time. Certain groups—such as the incarcerated, precarious workers, and unpaid caregivers—experience time as something imposed upon them, structured by external demands, while the privileged retain the ability to dictate their own temporalities. Seen through this lens, time becomes both a site of economic inequality (who has free time, who must sell their time, who has their time stolen by institutions) and a site of cultural misrecognition (whose experiences of time are validated, and whose are erased or dismissed). The prison system perpetuates, and even relies on to function, both forms of injustice. Incarceration operates as a form of temporal theft, where people are removed from their own temporal trajectories and placed into state-controlled regimes of punishment, fundamentally disrupting their ability to shape their own futures. At the same time, incarcerated time is culturally devalued, seen not as 'real' time but as time wasted—erasing the complex ways that people survive, resist, and reconstitute their identities under conditions of extreme temporal control.

If justice requires the recognition and redistribution of time as a social resource, then the prison system represents one of the most urgent sites for intervention. Incarceration does not simply remove people from society—it fundamentally restructures their temporal existence. Prison time is not neutral; it is weaponised as a mechanism of punishment, control, and discipline. The incarcerated experience time not as a free-flowing continuum but as an externally imposed structure that dictates every aspect of daily life. This form of temporal control extends beyond the prison walls, affecting identity, reintegration, and future possibilities long after release. Incarceration not only removes time but distorts it, creating a condition in which those held behind its walls are forced into temporal regimes that continue to disadvantage them even beyond their sentence. In this way, temporal justice is not simply about the length of a prison term but about how time is lived, experienced, and controlled within and beyond incarceration.

In what follows, I offer a mixed approach in my call for change within the prison system. Part of this approach is a series of policies and practices that can be immediately implemented within the existing structure of the criminal justice system. Little needs to change about the current system for those with administrative power to implement these policies, now. While perhaps not groundbreaking, these suggested changes to policy and practice are critical and represent changes that should have been made long ago—similar calls for reform that have resounded for years without sufficient action. Changes like these are urgently needed to address glaring deficiencies in how the system currently operates and the damage it does to those forced behind its walls. However, while these practical measures are necessary, they are not enough. This is why, alongside these actionable steps, I also call for a broader and more radical vision of what the prison system could become. This vision extends beyond mere tweaks to existing practices and calls for a fundamental transformation towards a model of temporal justice that profoundly rethinks how time, identity, and power are navigated within the confines of incarceration.

I recognise a risk in proposing immediate, tangible reforms alongside a call for something more. Those in power may choose to implement only the easiest, most palatable measures, claim that significant change is impossible, or ignore that part of my call entirely. They could pick the low-hanging fruit while ignoring the challenging but necessary and more effective reforms that would lead to a more profound transformation. Yet, I accept this risk and make my call anyway. Changes must be made immediately without losing sight of the larger goals. These goals closely align with principles of temporal justice and would radically alter the role of the prison. I started this thesis with my statement of hope, and I again grasp for it as I complete this work. I hope that by including changes that can be enacted today within a more visionary framework, this chapter can catalyse immediate improvements and a profound systemic shift beyond mere band aids over the problems.

Before exploring this concept further, I recognise that I have drawn upon a range of theories on the preceding pages. To illustrate the place of the key concepts from those works in a discussion of temporal justice, I will first offer a recap.

8.3 From Deleuze, Butler & Foucault to Temporal Justice

In building my argument and furthering an understanding of the long-term impact of incarceration on identity, this thesis has drawn on my lived experiences to explore the profound impact that a sentence of imprisonment has on people beyond the length of the imposed sentence and the physical boundaries of the prison. Central to my argument is that the effects of incarceration invade temporal experiences and reshape the identities of the incarcerated. Accordingly, understanding a prison experience through common and limiting concepts of time (the sentence) and space (the physical boundaries) can never offer a complete understanding of the experience. At the crux of my discussion is the assertion that an experience of time during incarceration is fundamentally shifted by a disconnect between the measured time people are socially conditioned to accept, the repetitive and often paused time experienced by the incarcerated and the internal experience of time. The resulting altered temporal state and perception is an active participant in the reshaping and development of an incarcerated person's identity.

Drawing on works from Deleuze, specifically his concepts of time and identity, Butler's performativity, and Foucault's power relations, this thesis explores how the prison environment creates disorientation of temporal perception and reshapes self-conception. Through Butler's performativity, I contend that the demanded routine and expected behaviours in prison force and solidify reshaped and adjusted identities; identities that are often perpetuated by the type of active participation in a routine that is best understood through Foucault's docile bodies and interrupted by my take on temporal friction (see Chapter Five). Together, the key concepts from these three theorists offer a

lens through which to view the intersection of time, identity, and power, which has underpinned my analysis of the prison experience.

What follows is a summary of the key concepts this thesis has drawn on to support the central argument that a sentence of incarceration never truly ends because of its long-term impact on identity, and to take this discussion further toward temporal justice.

8.3.1 Deleuze: Time, Difference, Virtual & Actual

Deleuze's inquiries into time and difference offer a foundation for this discussion, specifically the areas relating to fantasy and coping. His three syntheses of time—a theory of time that I have conceptualised as temporal friction—abandon linear temporality in favour of including past, present, and future in a co-existing and dynamic state of perception. This theory has armed me with a framework to understand and explore the altered temporal states experienced during my incarceration, specifically regarding the fantasies I relied on as a coping strategy. Deleuze's concept of the virtual and the actual further highlights how potential futures are reshaped by both imprisonment and, in my situation, grief and loss, thus impacting not only my sense of self but also the possibilities for becoming and self-development. Furthermore, Deleuze's discussion of difference and repetition provides a lens for understanding how the repetitive structures of the daily prison routine are not just a punitive measure but a means of controlling the experience of time that produces differences in identity within the incarcerated.

In Deleuze's first synthesis of time, time is understood through the perspective of habit, encompassing present moments that pass through but are also preserved in the past as memory. In the context of incarceration, the first synthesis provides a means to understand the impact of a prison's structured and repetitive daily life measured by schedule and routine. The repetitive

present evident in the prison routine causes a temporal stasis within which time can appear to stand still, yet is filled by past actions, some of which led to the sentence of imprisonment. The control of time that forms the basis of this scheduling not only shapes perceptions of time but also an incarcerated person's sense of self as identities are reshaped by present conditions, which limits potential futures.

The second synthesis encompasses memory and the pure past, as a past that never was present. Specific to incarceration, this synthesis offers an understanding of the disconnect those imprisoned may experience between the measured time by which they are held within the prison's physical boundaries and the external temporal world from which they have been separated. This synthesis suggests, as it encompasses all of time, that people carry layers of temporal experiences that are not linearly connected with either each other or with their current present. For those experiencing incarceration, this means that a past self can remain unscathed by the experience yet is inaccessible in their current present. This disconnect can further deform a person's temporalities, as the past includes paths never walked and forever lost possibilities that continually increase the temporal alteration. Furthermore, in my situation and for others, the experience of grief relegated further lost possibilities to the past.

Deleuze's third synthesis explores time through the future as the virtual realm, which encompasses all potentialities that could actualise. Specific to incarceration, this synthesis provides a unique understanding of an imprisoned person's perception of the future, or futures, after their measured sentence is complete. The violent and volatile prison environment, with emphasis on control, impacts an incarcerated person's ability to visualise a future behind the confines of prison (as does loss, hindering the ability to envisage life beyond grief). This can trap a person in a repetition of mundane routine that stifles and reshapes potentialities. During incarceration (and grief), the realm of the unactualised—the virtual—is increasingly barred and reshaped,

flattening the future and leaving it devoid of the possibilities that are usually found in the world outside of prison.

I have conceptualised Deleuze’s three syntheses of time as temporal friction, referring to the resistance and responses that occur when linear time clashes with non-linear. Specific to incarceration, linear time refers to the institution's control of the experience of time through routine, schedule, and expected behaviour. Non-linear time is the subjective virtual time that differs from schedules, including memory and future aspirations. These subjective experiences represent possibilities for the futures within which newness can be imagined and actualised, and by which the temporal regime of the prison system can be challenged.

The application of Deleuze’s concepts of the virtual and actual aids the discussion within this thesis by offering a deeper understanding of the alteration of time for those incarcerated and the changes to the experience of time caused by significant life events such as the loss of a loved one. The virtual, as the realm of potentialities that exist beyond current realities, highlights the fluid nature of human existence and the development of self and identities—both of which are hindered by incarceration and loss. The virtual includes all potentialities, not just those that are possible. As a realm of existences and events that are yet to actualise, the virtual embodies futures that could exist, identities that could develop, and life paths that could still be strolled. For those incarcerated, the virtual is dominated by potentialities and identities that cannot be actualised because of the physical boundaries of the prison and the control of time enforced by those in administrative power. This arrangement of the temporal experience not only hinders access to the actualisation of potentialities, but it also reshapes those which are accessible and narrows that which is possible, including actualisations of identities and self-conceptions. The actual is the world as it is experienced and, for the incarcerated, the actual is defined by limitations not only of the physical kind—the prison itself—but also related to the subjective nature of identity formation.

The actualisation process, or the transition from the virtual to the actual, is restricted by these limitations and the vast potentialities of the virtual can only be funnelled through a narrow corridor of actuality, through which the institution constrains potentialities.

Through the lens of Deleuzian concepts, the control of the experience of time is shown to be not only a court-imposed sentence but a profound deformation of the temporal experience for those incarcerated. The resulting reshaped temporalities alter perceptions of time, identity, and possibilities for becoming. Accordingly, the impact of incarceration alters a person's relationship to their past, present, and future selves. The incorporation of Deleuze's understanding of time into this discussion of temporal justice offers one piece of the puzzle to recognise the extent of the impact prison has on a person, specifically in respect to time and identity. These concepts highlight that incarceration does not control only the measured time imposed by the sentence but also the loss of potential futures and identities. This discussion is built upon further through a summary of Butler's concepts used in this thesis and through an understanding of their contribution to this discussion.

8.3.2 Butler: Performativity

Butler's notion of performativity, which argues that identity is constructed through repeated performances within specific discursive contexts, offers insight into the prison setting as an environment within which expected behaviours contribute to the formation of an incarcerated person's identity. The acts and performances that construct gender, according to Butler, are not expressions of an innate identity but rather the means through which gender identities are constructed over time. Applying performativity to the incarceration experience exposes the prison as a stage upon which identities are not merely enacted but are performed and reconstituted under the gaze of both institutional power and societal expectations, within which certain behaviours are often expected and demanded by both those in positions of

power and the fellow incarcerated. This type of forced performance of identity within a violent, volatile, and controlled space impacts identity construction during incarceration, with lasting impact beyond release.

The emphasis that Butler's performativity places on the repetitive nature of performative acts is particularly relevant in the context of the prison. The continuous everyday repetitiveness of regulated schedules and the internalisation of these routines can influence a reconstitution of identity. This effect on the construction of an incarcerated person's identity is not something they willingly or voluntarily submit to, rather, it is imposed as a consequence of a prison system within which societal norms and expected behaviours can be heightened in importance and come with significant consequences if they are not met. Over the period of a prison sentence, the repeated performance of imposed and expected identities can lead to a recognition by a person that whom they are performing for has become the locus of their identity.

In addition to providing an understanding of how identities are imposed and enacted within specific settings like a prison, Butler's performativity nevertheless highlights space for agency and resistance. In the prison context, moments of resistance are found in refusals to meet the expectations of the required performance and in responses to moments of antagonism within which a person chooses to respond in a way that may buck against the norms of their unit's sub-culture. This, according to Butler, amounts to a reclaiming of agency. Acts of resistance while incarcerated, especially those that push back against expected behaviours, such as what it means to be a 'real' man and what is considered by those in power as 'good' character, are often subtle yet can occur with risk.

The incorporation of Butler's notion of performativity into this discussion of temporal justice along with the Deleuzian concepts discussed in the previous section, strengthens an understanding of the impact of imprisonment on

identity after the court-imposed sentence has been completed. Butler's perspective supports the idea that identity is not innate or static; it is formed by an ongoing and repetitive series of acts performed and constructed through discourse and within societal contexts. The lens of performativity, combined with Deleuze's attention to the multiplicity of time and the potentialities inherent in the virtual, exposes how incarceration not only demands control over the incarcerated person's experience of time but also interrupts and reshapes the performative processes through which identities are constituted. These interruptions reshape potential future selves (as does grief), which exposes the extensive temporal reach of incarceration beyond the measured period of imprisonment.

These interruptions and alterations also provide a space for the incarcerated to assert their agency. Despite the controls imposed on their temporal experience, incarcerated people can find inventive ways to manage aspects of their experiences of time, inserting new temporalities and responding to moments of temporal friction. Such responses can be seen in the creation of personal rituals or the maintenance of internal schedules that defy the mundane daily life imposed by the prison. These acts of temporal friction challenge the control of time but also allow a person to preserve and even reshape their sense of self. These personal and subjective experiences of time can also serve as coping mechanisms, allowing connections to identities and futures to be maintained outside of the control of the prison. This dynamic interaction between imposed temporal control and personal temporal assertion underscores the complex ways in which time functions as both a tool of control and a domain of resistance within carceral spaces.

The integrated analysis made possible by combining Deleuze and Butler revealed deeper insights into how incarceration impacts identity in the long-term. I now build on this discussion and further strengthen my call for a temporal justice, by first recapping the Foucauldian aspects utilised in this

thesis and then combining those concepts into the above integration of insights from Deleuze and Butler.

8.3.3 Foucault: Sexuality, Power & Docile Bodies

Foucault’s analysis of power, the body, and sexuality provides a framework for understanding the dynamics of surveillance and control within the prison. Viewing the control of the prison population through the regulation of schedule and movement highlights how incarceration exerts control over not just the bodies of the incarcerated but also their temporal experiences. A Foucauldian lens shows that power within the prison system is exercised through the manipulation of both the experience and perception of time, through daily routines, and the sentence itself. This exertion of power solidifies the system’s authority and interrupts temporal autonomy.

Foucault's insights into the disciplinary mechanisms of power highlight how control over time becomes a strategy in the arrangement of prisoners and the incarceration experience itself. The control of the experience of time in prisons—through the routine daily schedule and restricted access to specific activities—is not only a means of organising prison life but also a form of temporal discipline that forces incarcerated people into the institution’s rhythm and order. This deliberate control of time constrains people such that they live according to a temporality imposed upon them, stripping them of most of their autonomy over their own time. The segmentation of time in prisons illustrates Foucault's disciplinary power operative through the organisation and management of time to achieve compliance and control, and to produce docile and disciplined bodies.

Alongside the insights offered by drawing on work from Deleuze and Butler, incorporating Foucault’s analysis of power relations—as well as his history of sexuality as discussed in Chapter Six—into this discussion toward temporal

justice reveals a more nuanced understanding of the impact of incarceration on identity. Foucault's conjecture that power operates through the fabric of society, including in institutions like the prison, exposes how criminal justice systems not only dominate measured time through the sentence but also participate in and influence the construction and deconstruction of the identities of those confined within the prison boundaries. Integrating Foucault's concepts with Butler's performativity and Deleuze's account of time, virtual and actual, as well as my conceptualisation of temporal friction, offers a specific lens through which to critically examine how incarceration, as an instrument of power, shapes and limits the performative acts through which identities are enacted, stripped, reenacted, and constituted. This combination of concepts and perspectives also highlights how the loss of potential futures is both a consequence of time lost to incarceration and a result of the disciplinary power and control of experiences. Through these frameworks, the profound temporal ramifications of imprisonment become strikingly evident. They reveal how the control of the criminal justice system, particularly through incarceration, reaches far beyond sentences imposed by courts.

Supported by the analysis summarised in this section, this thesis suggests that to fully understand the long-term impact of incarceration, the temporal dimensions of imprisonment and the profound impact these have on identity must be considered. It is through this lens that an understanding of the mechanisms through which and reasons why a sentence never truly ends can be reached.

8.4 Temporal Justice as a Conceptual Framework

Having established how incarceration functions as a form of temporal control that extends beyond the prison sentence, I now develop temporal justice as a structured framework for addressing these injustices. Temporal justice is not merely a critique of prison time; it is a model for recognising, mitigating, and ultimately transforming how time is controlled within the criminal justice

system. This framework extends beyond sentence lengths and prison conditions to consider how time is experienced, how it is taken away, and how it can be restored through reintegration and policy reform.

A prison sentence is most commonly framed as a measurable quantity of time but this type of framing obscures the deeper temporal disruptions imposed by incarceration. As I have experienced and outlined in this thesis, prison does not just take time away; it alters how time is lived, how identity is shaped, and how future possibilities are imagined. My time inside was not simply a linear passage of days marked off a calendar. It was a forced immersion in a rigid temporal regime where autonomy over time was stripped away, daily life was dictated by control and expected behaviour, and the act of 'serving' a sentence of measured time became a form of punishment. More than a decade after my release, I still feel the aftershocks of that imposed temporality—a sensation that the time I lost was not simply taken but fundamentally reshaped my relationship with the past, present, and future. To fully grasp the significance of temporal justice, I outline four key dimensions through which it operates: addressing temporal disruption, facilitating reintegration, recognising the temporal harm experienced by families and communities, and reshaping policy to account for these injustices.

8.4.1 Addressing Temporal Disruption

A central concern of temporal justice approach to criminal justice is the way incarceration fractures a person's relationship with time, disrupting the continuity of their life and placing them in a system of rigid temporal control. The temporal rhythms of everyday life—self-directed work, relationships, long-term planning—are replaced with externally dictated routines designed to structure behavior through monotony and repetition. As I experienced during my incarceration, the rigid scheduling of prison life creates a form of stagnation where time feels simultaneously heavy and empty, and this can be something as simple as when and how meals are served or as imposing as expected

behaviours. This time of strict structuring and enforced norms contribute to a system that is not designed to rehabilitate but to instil a passive acceptance of control.

The disruption of time during incarceration has long-lasting effects, particularly because prison temporality is so fundamentally different from the accelerated time of the outside world. Inside, I often relied on fantasy, memory, and imagined futures as ways to counteract the oppressive present, yet those same strategies made reintegration more difficult once I was released. The sudden expectation to self-regulate time after an enforced and externally imposed scheduling is a profound temporal shock—one that is rarely acknowledged in re-entry programs. A temporal justice approach seeks to mitigate these disruptions by recognising time as a critical element of punishment and ensuring that incarcerated people retain forms of temporal agency, continuity, and future orientation while inside.

8.4.2 Reintegration and Opportunities

The impact of incarceration does not end upon release. Formerly incarcerated people must navigate a world that expects them to reintegrate seamlessly, despite the profound changes to their temporal experiences and autonomy. The time lost to imprisonment cannot be reclaimed, and the effects of that loss continue to shape opportunities and relationships long after the sentence is complete.

My own release was marked by a stark disjuncture between the controlled time of prison and the accelerated demands of society. In prison, most decisions were structured by external authority, and survival often depended on adapting to a predictable but rigid system. Upon release, the sudden demand to make independent choices about work, relationships, and daily structure felt overwhelming. Bourdieu's temporal habitus is a useful lens here: the patterns

of behavior and time management learned in prison often clash with the expectations of free society. In my experience, this is an aspect of re-entry—prison does not simply remove time, it conditions people into a temporality that does not align with the demands of life after release.

A temporal justice approach would recognise these long-term effects and actively work to address them. Reintegration programs should focus on more than measurable needs, such as job training or housing assistance, and need to explicitly acknowledge the temporal disjuncture faced by the formerly incarcerated. This means:

- Providing structured but flexible transitions, allowing people to gradually reclaim control over their time.
- Designing parole and probation systems that do not reinforce rigid institutional time but instead allow for autonomy-building practices that help people navigate free time after a period of control.
- Ensuring access to future-oriented programs inside prison that help maintain a sense of personal temporality, rather than leaving incarcerated people suspended in a form of waiting that can feel endless.

8.4.3 Interpersonal and Community Time

Temporal justice extends beyond a personal experience to consideration of the wider social and relational effects of incarceration. Prison does not just steal time from those incarcerated; it reshapes the temporal experiences of families, friends, and communities. Throughout my incarceration, I often felt that my parents were serving a sentence alongside me, trapped in the same suffocating period of waiting, restriction, and imposed schedules. While I was living in the slowed, monotonous time of prison, they were experiencing time through the frustration of distance, limited visitation hours, restricted calls, and the periods that defined parole decisions.

Prison extends its reach beyond the wire, creating shared temporal losses for those left behind. Families of the incarcerated experience disruptions to their own life trajectories, often suspending plans, navigating bureaucratic barriers, and enduring the weight of prolonged uncertainty. A temporal justice approach must recognise the collateral consequences of carceral time, ensuring that policies account for the ways in which time lost to incarceration is a collective burden, not just a personal one. Because, if time lost to incarceration is a collective burden, then any effort at justice must also be collective in its solutions. Temporal justice demands that reintegration does not fall solely on the incarcerated—it must be a process of restoring lost time within families and communities, ensuring that the collective is given the resources and support needed to rebuild what was fractured by carceral time.

The impact of incarceration is not limited to the incarcerated person. Carceral time extends outward, affecting families, children, and entire communities. For children of incarcerated parents, the disruption of time can be even more profound. The absence of a parent is not just a temporary separation—it alters childhood development, emotional security, and prospects. Missing formative years cannot be undone, and the temporal gap created by incarceration lingers in relationships long after a parent's release.

Temporal justice demands recognition of these broader temporal harms and calls for:

- Policies that prioritise alternatives to incarceration for parents and caregivers.
- Support systems that acknowledge the ongoing impact of incarceration on families.
- A shift in focus from punitive time structures to relational, community-based approaches to justice.

8.4.4 Policy Implications

A temporal justice approach to criminal justice and prison reform demands a fundamental shift in how sentencing, incarceration, and reintegration are structured—not simply in terms of duration, but in terms of how time is lived and experienced. The prevailing system measures punishment quantitatively yet fails to acknowledge the difficult-to-measure, qualitative harm inflicted through carceral time. Temporal justice calls for policies that mitigate the long-term effects of prison temporality and actively work to restore personal and community control over time.

Key policy interventions should include:

- Reevaluating sentencing structures to account for the qualitative impact of time rather than simply the measurable time imposed.
- Rethinking daily prison schedules to allow for greater temporal autonomy, access to education, and engagement with future-oriented activities.
- Developing reintegration programs that specifically address the temporal disjuncture between institutionalised and self-regulated time.
- Recognising the impact of carceral time on families and communities and developing support structures to mitigate these effects.

A temporal justice approach recognizes that reintegration is not simply about access to resources but about restoring temporal autonomy. This means:

- Reevaluating policies that allow a criminal record to permanently block employment and housing opportunities.
- Creating structured transitions that acknowledge the difficulties of shifting from institutionalised to self-managed time.
- Recognising that psychological barriers—such as the internalised effects of stigma and prolonged disempowerment—are as significant as structural ones.

Temporal justice acknowledges that the psychological effects of carceral time require active intervention. Reintegration programs must:

- Address the temporal disorientation of release.
- Provide structured but flexible support that allows formerly incarcerated people to regain autonomy without being overwhelmed.
- Recognise that healing from carceral time is not immediate and requires long-term attention to the psychological shifts created by imprisonment.

The criminal justice system does not affect all groups equally. Marginalised communities experience harsher sentencing, greater disruptions to their temporal trajectories, and longer-lasting consequences of incarceration. Those with privilege can more easily navigate time after prison—accessing legal support, securing employment, and reintegrating into social networks. Meanwhile, people from low-income and marginalised communities can find that their time is more tightly controlled even before incarceration—through over-policing, economic precarity, and systemic barriers. The justice system does not simply remove time; it perpetuates existing inequalities, ensuring that some people's time is continuously devalued.

A temporal justice approach requires that these inequalities are addressed not just by reducing incarceration but by addressing the broader distribution of time and opportunity in society. This means:

- Reforming sentencing laws that disproportionately affect marginalised communities.
- Addressing the economic and other disparities that influence who is incarcerated.
- Recognising that time itself is a form of privilege—and that justice must include equitable access to time, autonomy, and opportunities.

Ultimately, a temporal justice framework does not simply advocate for 'better prisons'—it challenges the very mechanisms through which power is exerted over time itself. By acknowledging time as a central element of justice, this approach forces a reconsideration of what punishment means, how it is enacted, and how society can move toward a system that restores rather than restricts temporal autonomy.

By conceptualising temporal justice as a framework, I have demonstrated that incarceration is not just about confinement but about the fundamental restructuring of time itself. Prison imposes a rigid and externally controlled temporality that extends beyond the physical sentence, shaping identity, restricting autonomy, and disrupting future possibilities. Temporal justice demands that we recognise these harms not only in terms of lost years but in terms of the enduring transformations in how time is lived, controlled, and navigated post-incarceration. The implications of carceral time extend far beyond the prison walls. The temporal disruption of imprisonment does not simply affect the incarcerated person—it fractures relationships, hinders reintegration, and reinforces cycles of marginalisation that persist long after release. Families experience the weight of shared temporal loss, while formerly incarcerated people struggle to transition from institutionalised time to the accelerated demands of society. Policies that fail to account for these temporal injustices risk perpetuating the very cycles of exclusion they claim to address.

The impacts of incarceration cannot be measured solely in years served. Carceral time extends beyond the sentence, shaping identity, opportunity, and future possibilities. A temporal justice framework makes these invisible consequences visible and demands that justice systems do more than punish—they must restore time, autonomy, and possibility to those who have had them taken away.

8.5 Prison Through the Intersection of Time, Power & Identity

The intersection of time, power, and identity presents a framework for understanding the multifaceted injustices perpetuated by the criminal justice system, particularly through the ubiquitous use of prisons. This triadic relationship highlights how prisons exert control not only over the physical bodies of incarcerated people but also their temporal experiences and senses of self, leading to profound and lasting impacts on their lives and identities. Through the lens of this intersection, a comprehensive understanding of the ways in which the system enforces temporal injustices beyond the sentence of imprisonment becomes possible.

Throughout this discussion, through mentions of the routine-driven daily life during imprisonment, I have shown that time in prison is arranged and altered, serving as a tool for control and punishment. The daily routine, control over access to preferred activities, and isolation from the world outside contribute to a significant disorientation and alteration of temporal perception for those held within its physical boundaries. This arrangement of the experience of time disrupts personal narratives and life trajectories by imposing a form of justice and punishment that extends well beyond the prison walls. The exercise of power within the prison is thereby linked to the control of time. Drawing from a Foucauldian analysis of disciplinary power, prisons operate as institutions within which power is asserted through constant monitoring of the incarcerated and the regulation of their movements and behaviours. This power includes the control of the experience of time when routines determine the pace and structure of daily life. By controlling time, the system and those in power assert dominance and perpetuate a power dynamic that strips temporal autonomy.

Identity formation and the reconstruction of identities within prison spaces are influenced by the intertwined dynamics of power and time. As incarcerated people are forced into temporal regimes under constant surveillance, their identities are reshaped in accordance with the roles and behaviours forced

upon them and expected of them, in addition to the strategies they employ and lean into just to cope. This process of identity construction and reconstruction is not neutral as it reflects the imbalances in power and the temporal arrangements associated with imprisonment. The forced and expected performances and internalisation of those forced identities, as discussed through Butler's performativity, expose how identity construction is shaped by external forces, including the control of time in prison.

A view of the criminal justice system through the intersection of time, power, and identity within prisons illustrates the layered long-term impacts that the incarcerated are confronted with, both during and post-incarceration. Beyond the loss of freedom, these impacts are intensified by the deformed and reshaped temporalities that affect a person's sense of self and development potential. The control that the prison system exerts over the experience of time results in lasting impacts on identity formation and highlights a form of injustice that is embedded in the structure and practices of prisons. A comprehensive understanding of these lasting impacts requires an understanding of the prison experience beyond common interpretations of time and space. This research argues that prison is more than time (the sentence) and space (the physical boundaries), and this is further illuminated through this intersection, specifically in the interaction between time and identity, with power an influence that reproduces and perpetuates the inequalities and marginalisations associated with the criminal justice system. A temporal justice approach and framework, in calling for a reimaging of justice, recognises the complex interplay between these components. A critical engagement with this intersection supports advocacy for reforms that seek to dismantle the temporal injustices that are inherent in the prison system, aiming to restore autonomy over the experience of time to the incarcerated, their families, and the wider community.

8.6 Incorporating Temporal Justice into Reformative Measures

Having established temporal justice as a framework for understanding incarceration, this section turns to its practical applications. Temporal justice is not merely a critique of carceral time—it offers a foundation for rethinking justice itself, shaping policies that prioritise rehabilitation, reintegration, and the restoration of autonomy.

A temporal justice approach does not advocate only for simple surface-level adjustments—shorter sentences, more programs—but for a transformation in how time is understood within justice systems. This requires shifting focus from punitive time to restorative time, from state-controlled stagnation to personally directed transformation. This shift would reshape sentencing, rehabilitation, and reintegration policies, while also challenging the fundamental assumptions that sustain carceral punishment. If engaged with substantively, temporal justice is not just reformist—it is disruptive. By exposing how time itself is weaponised within carceral institutions, it raises the question of whether true justice can ever be achieved through incarceration. In this way, temporal justice can serve as a bridge between incremental reform and abolitionist thought.

8.6.1 Rethinking Sentencing Through a Temporal Lens

A temporal justice approach does not stop at reducing sentence lengths—it challenges how time is lived and experienced during incarceration. The criminal justice system treats time as a commodity to be taken away—as though years in prison are a fair measure of punishment. But punishment is not experienced in abstract years—it is lived through the stagnation, monotony, and forced submission to institutional control.

Under a temporal justice framework, sentencing policies would shift from quantitative time (the court-imposed sentence length) to qualitative time (how the time is structured and for what purpose). This would include:

- Expanding alternatives to incarceration such as restorative justice, which prioritises accountability and repair over the passive endurance of a period of imprisonment.
- Reevaluating parole systems to increase focus on rehabilitation and personal progress, rather than arbitrary time-served models that assume punishment is inherently reformative.
- Eliminating mandatory minimums and life sentences, which impose irreversible temporal disruptions that do not account for personal capacity for change.

These shifts challenge the foundational assumption of incarceration—that time itself is a just form of punishment.

8.6.2 Rehabilitation: Restoring Agency Over Time

Incarceration fractures a person's ability to structure and control their own time—a reality that extends into reintegration. Upon release, formerly incarcerated people are expected to seamlessly transition into a world where time is self-directed, despite years of externally imposed control.

To restore temporal autonomy, rehabilitation should focus not just on measurable education and job training, which is often merely a box-ticking exercise, but on relearning time itself. A temporal justice approach would include:

- Expanding access to education and vocational training not as a privilege, but as a recognition that incarceration should not be an interruption of life progress.

- Rethinking prison schedules to allow for more self-directed time, breaking the rigid monotony that reinforces institutional dependency.
- Incorporating temporal healing into mental health services, recognising that adjusting to free time after carceral time is itself a psychological challenge.

These reforms would treat time as something to be rebuilt, rather than something that has simply been paused and resumed upon release.

8.6.3 Reintegration: Addressing Temporal Disjuncture

The temporal rupture of incarceration is not just experienced by the incarcerated—it extends into families, communities, and economic opportunities. Returning from prison is not just a legal transition—it is a temporal transition, requiring a reintegration into the rhythms of work, relationships, and self-determination.

A temporal justice approach would recognize this temporal disjuncture by:

- Creating structured transitions that allow for gradual adaptation to self-managed time, rather than an abrupt shift from total institutional control to complete autonomy.
- Providing financial and housing support to counteract the economic stagnation caused by carceral time, ensuring that people do not re-enter society already years behind in stability and opportunity.
- Recognising and repairing the harm done to families and relationships, offering programs for reunification that acknowledge lost time and work toward rebuilding it.

These approaches acknowledge that reintegration is not simply about physical release—it is about restoring lost temporal agency and reconnecting people to the timelines from which they were severed.

8.6.4 Beyond Reform: Temporal Justice as a Step Toward Abolition

At its core, temporal justice does not simply advocate for a 'better' prison system—it questions whether prisons can ever truly be just. If time is a central tool of punishment, and punishment is structured around the extraction and control of time, then justice cannot be achieved within the current system.

Abolitionist thinkers argue that justice should not mean punishment—it should mean repair, transformation, and accountability. Temporal justice aligns with this view by demonstrating that:

- Prisons do not serve justice—they impose stagnation.
- Incarceration does not create accountability—it extracts people from time.
- Rehabilitation is possible only when people have agency over their own temporal trajectories.

If justice is to be truly transformative, then the fundamental logic of incarceration must be rethought. Temporal justice provides a pathway toward this rethinking, challenging the notion that time is something that can—or should—be taken away as punishment. A system that truly values justice would not impose rigid time but would work to repair disrupted temporalities, restore agency, and ensure that no one is trapped in a timeline that they cannot escape.

8.6.5 Toward a More Just Relationship with Time

If justice is to mean more than punishment, then it must take time itself into account—not just as something to be measured and taken away, but as something that is lived, shaped, and experienced. The reforms outlined in this section suggest that incarceration must be reimagined, not simply as a period of confinement, but as a temporal disruption that requires repair. A temporal justice framework demands that we move beyond thinking in years and sentences and instead consider the quality of time, the continuity of identity, and the potential for transformation. Yet, even with these proposed reforms, a difficult question remains: Can prisons, as they currently exist, ever be spaces of healing? Can an institution that is built and run on containment, deprivation, and rigid temporal control ever truly foster growth, restoration, or justice? My experience suggests that it cannot. Prisons are not designed to mend what has been broken; they are designed to store human lives within tightly regulated time.

It is in these deeply personal spaces of grief and trauma that the conversation about temporal justice and prison reform must confront its most difficult truth: time lost cannot be returned, harm cannot always be undone, and healing cannot happen within a system designed to impose suffering. The next section turns toward grief, trauma, and the question of whether prisons could ever be spaces of healing. If we must have prisons, could they ever do more good than harm? And if they cannot—if they are fundamentally incapable of restoring the lives they fracture—then what does that mean for the future of justice itself?

8.7 What Becomes of the Broken Hearted

Those with a keen eye may be aware of how little grief and trauma appear in the preceding sections of this chapter. In a thesis with constant undertones of grief, even in the parts where it is not mentioned, a reader of my work may

have expected more commentary on grief and trauma on these final pages. Perhaps even a full section on how the prison can become a place where grief and other traumas are supported may have been expected. I have struggled with this thought because my perspective of the prison is still clouded by the consequences of my incarceration experience. If we must have prisons in our societies, then they should be a place where people can heal. If we must throw people behind its walls, control their schedules, and arrange their experiences of linear time, then I question why we cannot offer some healing during those periods of restriction. I want the prison to perform that role; I just know it currently cannot do that.

The prison is fundamentally ill-equipped to serve as a place of healing. The current framework and policies of the prison do not support healing; instead, the prison often compounds trauma by using it as a form of punishment and by forcing people to engage with it as a tool for institutional procedures like parole eligibility. Currently, the prison as a site of healing will always fail because it is not set up to handle the challenges of the tasks that have been thrown upon it. While the prison is not positioned within our society as a place to go for healing, it is nonetheless thrown into that role because of those who are sent to be confined by its walls. The inadequacy, or lack of interest, of the system to address grief and other traumas leaves people like me leaving the physical prison with additional layers on top of what I took in with me. This raises a critical question: if prisons must deal with the trauma of those whom it works to restrict, what would it look like if the institution was transformed into a place where healing could genuinely occur? Furthermore, what if, instead of leveraging trauma as a tool for punishment or parole eligibility, the prison facilitated recovery? I am driven to explore how the prison might be reimagined so that it can do more good than harm. If we must have the prison, at least for now, then I believe it can do more. I believe it must do more.

Any concept of transforming prisons into therapeutic communities—or at least integrating wider therapeutic practices—demands a radical rethinking of

assumptions about the roles of incarceration and punishment. Such a transformation goes beyond superficial reforms and beyond what I can approach in this thesis; instead, it requires a structural change in how societies perceive the role of the prison. The current assumptions, which are punitive at their core, must shift to accommodate healing from grief and other traumas as fundamental elements of the incarceration experience. However, transforming the prison into a place of healing would face significant challenges, not least of which is the dominance of punitive social norms both inside and outside prison boundaries, regardless of what changes are made. Societal expectations, such as those concerning acceptable grieving practices and timeframes, often follow the incarcerated from the outside into the prison and are waiting for them upon release. This sets any efforts from the prison up for failure if it were to offer support for coping with grief or other traumas. Despite these considerable challenges, I grasp onto my hope even tighter. I cling to any possibility that, even within the constraints of societal norms and expectations, the prison can play a constructive role in addressing the needs of those it restricts and controls. My hopes and visions, while ambitious, are underpinned by my belief in the potential for systemic change toward a temporal justice framework that supports the incarcerated and helps them heal and grow rather than contain and damage them and steal their potential futures.

I am aware that this specific part of my call for change requires further research and exploration. Perhaps I am not done telling my story just yet.

8.8 Concluding Thoughts

Academically, this thesis contributes to the fields of sociology, criminology, and criminal justice. It does this in various ways, most importantly by exposing what I believe is too often overlooked when understanding incarceration: the temporal dimensions of the prison experience. I have argued that the impact

of incarceration extends beyond the physical boundaries and the court-imposed sentence to affect temporal experiences and identities and that these effects have significant implications for life trajectories. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex nature of prison and challenges those in control of the system to consider the full spectrum of the impact of policy and practices on people.

Time is a fundamental aspect of human existence. It shapes not only our daily lives but also our understanding of ourselves and our place in the world. The arrangement and disruption of time through incarceration can disorientate and displace through the severing of connections to past, present, and future. In doing so, incarceration shapes, reshapes, and alters a person's identity beyond the sentence and in ways that can never be reversed. In that sense, prison is not just time, and the sentence never ends. If that is the only contribution I have made to relevant conversations, then my work here is done. However, beyond the academic contribution, I continue to hope that this work contributes to more than academic conversations and that I have told my story with respect to others who have been forced through the criminal justice system. If just one person, anywhere, reads my story and their understanding of the incarceration experience changes for the better, then it just might have been worth the years of constant imagining, reimaging, revisiting, and self-reflection that went into the preceding pages.

Towards the end of my PhD journey, I started to experience a mystifying detachment from my prison experience. There have been instances where I have had to consciously remind myself that I actually was incarcerated. I suspect that this disorientating relationship with my memories is influenced by the years that have passed and this academic performance. Nevertheless, the causes of this disorientation are insignificant compared to the consequences. I was incarcerated; these things did happen to me, and I did perform the roles I have written and talked about, yet sometimes it all feels like a dream or even a movie that I have watched about someone else's experience. My story and

experience, specifically those I have shared on these pages, have become data to me and almost alien, as if I was narrating the experiences of another. I was released from the physical boundaries of the prison over 11 years ago. Soon, that will be 15 years, and then 20, and 30, and so on. While I know the sentence, like grief, never truly ends, regardless of how high that count of calendar years gets, the potential impact of the fleeting years and future academic performances on how I remember that period will remain a subject of introspection and speculation.

It’s (Not) Just Time: Postfaced with Moving On

Before I put down the metaphorical pen, I will complete the thesis as I started it, with vulnerability and a grasp for some semblance of authenticity.

Something is Missing

There is a feeling I will carry with me for the rest of my days. It is a feeling I cannot articulate into something crisply poetic to complete these pages in a smooth style. Maybe it is a feeling best described as something missing, or maybe it is just that I will always carry some form of bitterness or feeling of being ripped off because life did not work out the way James and I planned it. I guess I will never define it with any certainty. It is just a feeling that will always be there. He will never be there, no matter how often I roll over in bed to check, and this is not the type of *forever* I feel I was promised. While I intellectually understood this and accepted it many years ago, this feeling represents that something that will always be missing.

I know I am not special. It must be rare, if even possible, to go through life without experiencing loss. I also expect that many people all around the world and throughout history have been so overcome with grief that they have made decisions they came to regret, with some of them ending up incarcerated. There is nothing special about my story. It is little comfort to me that others have experienced similar pain and feelings of hopelessness that I have. When my assumption that others have had similar experiences impacts me, it only worsens my discomfort with the human journey because I know how this loss and regret feels, and I would not wish some of this stuff on anybody. My story is not special. Nobody will read this thesis and buy the movie rights, and that is okay. Yet, accepting my lack of novelty came with an internal nag to ensure my ‘not so special’ story did not happen in vain.

In an attempt to finish this work with a poetic flow, I recall those times I leant on music and lyrics to express myself. Many songs, especially in the country music genre, sing about heartache and loss, and many wonder what might have been. Songs like '*What Hurts the Most*' by Rascal Flatts suggest that what hurts the most is not knowing what might have been. I have found myself with the opposite problem; I know what might have been. I tried so hard to fantasise an impossible future into existence that much of it became real to me and in my memory. I know what might have been—fantasy after fantasy, each with something new, even when the imagining felt like repetition. I have imagined enough for multiple lifetimes and within each, James never left; within each, I never went to prison; within each, I do not live in a society that locks away so many people for so many ridiculous reasons with punitive results; within each, peace.

This leaves me with a different type of grief to that created by a longing for the unknown. My loss of the presumptive has been filled by so much that today, I sometimes struggle to separate the fantasy from what really happened. I wasted so many years longing for what might have been. I finished the unfinished conversations and often struggled to separate the real from the fantasy. I lost so much of what the real James said to me in a haze of imagined, and it took me 15 years to grieve the real loss. The real James. The James that was not the perfect iteration that I made up to cope with the loss and the environments I found myself trapped within. My fantasies did their jobs too well because fantasy makes someone and the future within which you find them just utterly perfect. Those imaginings became too real and outstayed their welcome.

I do not know if I will see James again. I do not know if I'll see Nana again, or Uncle Joe or others who have passed, or my parents after that dreaded day comes. As most people do, I have my beliefs about what happens when we die, yet the only thing I know that happens with any certainty is that when someone is lost, someone else is left behind who misses them. In my mind and driven by my experiences of grief, the only absolute certainty about death

is that it creates loss. On the back of the chance that I will see my loved ones in another realm of existence, I have told my story in ways that mean all the events contained within them do not simply represent stories without meaning so that I feel I can face them again strengthened by my authentic engagement with my lived experiences. There must be meaning in the grief and loss; there must be lessons in the mistakes and entitlement; there must be happiness from the joy, and there must be hope from the pain.

I somehow feel lighter, and I grapple with explaining why. I have learnt through this process that the same story can be told in countless ways. I struggled with using my story as data at various stages of writing of this thesis because I felt as if I was losing ownership of my experiences. Yet, I learnt that because the same story can be told in different ways, my telling of my story in a way that best suits the purpose of this thesis does not mean I cannot tell it in other ways, at different times, and for different purposes. It also does not mean I cannot retain my memories in a form only partially conditioned by the academic performance. Part of my story became a tool for gaining parole eligibility in prison. Outside the wire, I have used my story to gain an academic title. Yet, ultimately, neither has lessened my ownership of my lived experiences. They are still mine.

Yet, at the same time as feeling lighter, I am aware of some dominant expectations. Following a Buddhist path, I am attuned to the risk of having expectations because they cannot meet the pressures that we often place upon them, yet I find myself leaning into these expectations as I complete this journey. I have expectations that the end of this process, represented by these final pages, means it will stop hurting so damn much. I almost demand this rather than accept a destiny to live with this pain forever.

The day after I put down the metaphoric pen, or the day after I hit the magic submit button, or maybe the day after they call me Dr. for the first time, I expect to feel certain things. Or, more specifically, to not feel certain things. I expect I

have carved off parts of my story and given them purpose. Those parts represent the pesky, complicated aspects of my grief that remained unresolved because they had no purpose or meaning. I have given them purpose. I have given them meaning. This PhD has given them purpose and meaning. I now have expectations that I can unpack those parts of my story from the backpack that is my life and leave them on the side of the road along with the metaphorical pen that wrote them into stories for you to read.

I feel lighter. I have resolved some of the unresolved, and I expect a reward for that. I expect to go at least one day without thinking of him or one day without thinking of that place. I have used this PhD to make sense of the senseless, and I expect some peace.

I'm Going to the Beach

If I allow myself that beach fantasy once more, James and I will take one final stroll down that beautiful Northland beach together. The fantasy feels familiar yet is different in ways I can barely articulate. It is the same fantasy I have leant on countless times, yet this final time is layered with every other repetition. It has never been the same fantasy twice, regardless of the repetition of my purpose for leaning into it. Yet this final time is different even in its purpose. It is not about coping this time, for I have less to cope with. This final stroll is about letting go. We stroll the beach one last time together, the final time because I must leave this fantasy and what it represents behind. I always feared that part of me would die if I ever truly let him go, or the past go, or even the hope that came with reimagining that past. I now know that is not what I am doing.

As I finish this work, I question what it means to move on. Driven by a fear that an act of moving on will take more than I give it, I question what awaits me beyond any resemblance of a final goodbye. Does that mean I cannot bask in his memory, or does it mean his memory no longer controls me? Does moving

on mean prison no longer has control over me, and I can take my identity back from its clutches? Do I finally leave that cell behind? Regardless of these nagging doubts and shuddering anxieties, I still must move on through a mist of uncertainty. I must take that final fantastical stroll away from memories of a life I wish I lived but never will. A last engagement with the Northland beach fantasy before finally letting go of the hope for a better past it represents. One final time, I will use those vivid and descriptive imaginings for a purpose.

One last stroll with the breeze gliding lightly over the ocean waves, free of obstacles, so subtle that it passes through our skin and settles in our hearts, so pure that the crisp, salty smell settles in our nostrils with a welcomed sting that only the ocean can bestow. One final stroll along the shelly sand and with the sun kissing our skin so gently, our hands occasionally touching as we are, one final time, the only two people in the world. It must be the last time I allow myself to drift into this fantasy because I no longer need to hide behind the mirage of what might have been. I no longer need to express my sexuality through the detailed fantasy of a future I can never have, nor will I forever bow down to the control of grief and the rule of my reaction to it. No longer is my grief dependent on the performance of closeted expression. I no longer look for something I left behind or that was taken from me, because it never was, and no temporality can fantasise it into existence. Regardless of how hard I have tried to make that happen.

Likely, I will still glance back into that metaphorical prison cell occasionally because the sentence never truly ends. If I glance back, it will be by choice. If I glance back, my perspective will be strengthened by the purpose I have found in the measured time that was restricted by those walls. But no longer will those glances be through that tiny slit in the window. Any future glances will be through the massive gaping hole I have blasted in that cell wall by taking my story back. Finding purpose in that experience has acted as dynamite, and I no longer sit in that cell fantasising of a version of the outside.

Whether my expectations for peace from this process get met is anyone's guess. I will believe it when I feel that peace for myself.

If you are left wondering what is next for me, I will be strolling that beautiful Northland beach—literally this time. James will never be there, and I will have to share the beach with others. But that is all okay. Neither the grief nor the sentence will ever end, but I have found meaning and purpose and the backpack carrying my pasts sits lighter on my shoulders where the bitterness, regret, and anger used to live.

Thank you for reading.

That is not only my story but also how I chose to tell it. That is how I must have told it.

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