people whose lives are often hopeless, and it gives them an avenue for personal change,” said Jim Carlson, a former manager of the program. “It must be retained.”

THE DECLINE OF CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAMS AND HOW UNIVERSITIES INTERVENED

Since the 1980s, growing conservatism across the United States has precipitated cuts in funding to a number of creative writing programs. For example, the National Endowment for the Arts dramatically cut funds to prison journals in 1982, and by 1984 every significant prison writing journal temporarily dissolved. In response, writers who believed in the value of teaching creative writing in prisons were forced to return to volunteering their services or to turn to academic institutions for support. Two groups that have effectively harnessed the financial support of universities are the Prison Creative Arts Project and SPACE.

The Prison Creative Arts Project, founded by Buzz Alexander at the University of Michigan in 1990, offers theater, writing, and visual art workshops in prisons and juvenile detention centers throughout Michigan. The project offers University of Michigan students the opportunity to teach in state prisons as part of a class. The group offers instruction, exhibitions, and advocacy.

Space in Prison for the Arts and Creative Expression (SPACE) was founded in 1992 by a group of women from Brown University interested in working in the Women’s Division of the Rhode Island Adult Correctional Institution. The program offers theater, creative writing, and visual arts workshops to inmates. The group also produces a journal and trains others to respond to the issues of incarcerated women, particularly issues of disrupted families, histories of abuse, and challenges to feminine identities.

CONCLUSION

There is a mixed future for prison creative writing programs. Funding is still scarce, yet increasing numbers of anthologies by and about the lives of American prisoners are being published. These texts include Disguised as a Poem: My Years Teaching Poetry at San Quentin by Judith Tannenbaum, Doing Time: 25 Years of Prison Writing edited by Bell Gale Chevigny, Prison Writing in 20th Century America edited by H. Bruce Franklin, and Couldn’t Keep It to Myself: Testimonies From Our Imprisoned Sisters edited by Wally Lamb. Books such as these make accessible the wealth of artistic production from U.S. prisoners and point to the ongoing importance of creative writing programs in prisons. They also offer testimony to the efforts of writers and activists from the past three decades whose belief in the power of writing helped influence the lives of inmates.

—Vince Samarco

See also Adult Basic Education; Art Programs; Drama Programs; Education; General Educational Development (GED) Exam and General Equivalency Diploma; Literacy; Prison Pell Grants Literature

Further Reading


CRIME, SHAME, AND REINTEGRATION

In his book Crime, Shame and Reintegration, published in 1989, Australian criminologist John Braithwaite puts forth a theoretical model for dealing with crime at the individual and community levels. Braithwaite integrates many traditional
sociological theories of crime into a single view explaining why some societies have higher crime rates, why certain people are more likely to commit crime, and how communities can deal effectively with crime for the purposes of prevention.

According to Braithwaite, high rates of predatory crime in a society are indicative of the failure to shame those acts labeled as criminal. Braithwaite argues that the breakdown of community ties in modern urban communities has meant that perpetrators of crime are not made to feel ashamed of their actions, and thus continue victimizing others without remorse.

The concept of shame is the linchpin of this theory. Braithwaite suggests that if perpetrators were made to feel guilty about their actions, they would be deterred from committing further crime. He bases this assumption on the belief that those who are closely tied to family and community anticipate a negative reaction to the violation of community norms. Foreseeing the shame that they would feel, they are deterred from committing crime. However, according to this theory, shaming must be done in such a way as to be reintegrative, bringing the offender back into the community, rather than disintegrative, which would push the individual even farther out of the community. For Braithwaite, reintegrative shaming is the key to effective deterrence and crime prevention.

**BACKGROUND TO THE THEORY**

Braithwaite integrates the major tenets of five different theoretical traditions in 20th-century criminology into his theory of reintegrative shaming. He explains how labeling, subcultural, control, opportunity, and learning theories fit into his work. Crime, shame, and reintegration is not then an attempt to rewrite criminology, but to synthesize several seemingly disparate theories into a singular explanatory system.

**Crime**

Braithwaite begins with the notion, taken from control theory, that individuals are naturally drawn to commit criminal acts for personal gain and hedonistic pleasure. Proponents of control theory assume that it is more important to look at why certain people do not commit crime, rather than why some do. It is assumed that, without a particular set of restraints, the average person would commit criminal or immoral acts.

Criminological research has established that various personal and circumstantial characteristics are positively correlated to criminality. Being male, between the ages of 15 and 25 years, unmarried, unemployed or without steady employment, of lower socioeconomic status, living in a city, and having low educational attainment are all indicative of a statistically higher propensity for crime. The opposite is also true. Individuals who are female, younger than 15 or older than 25, married, of a higher socioeconomic status, living in a rural area, and having greater than secondary school education would be found to be at a significantly lower risk of committing a criminal act.

According to Braithwaite, the very characteristics that lead one person to have a higher propensity for criminality also lessen his or her relationship with family and community and leave a person less susceptible to the deterring power of shame. Those characteristics associated with a lower risk of criminality correlate to increased contact with family and community, which in turn increases a person’s susceptibility to shame. For example, an individual who is married with children has responsibilities to his or her family that may constrain him or her from making risky or poor choices, whereas a single individual does not necessarily have such ties to family and responsibilities. Those who are more integrated into the community and involved in relationships with others are less likely to commit crime because they appreciate the shame and embarrassment that would result from violating community norms and values. Furthermore, those who are firmly integrated into a community feel personal responsibility for the safety and well-being of those around them. In contrast, those who are not integrated into a community or involved in meaningful relationships with others are more likely to commit crime because they do not feel a sense of responsibility.
to those around them, and they are not constrained by feelings of shame.

Braithwaite uses these beliefs to argue that cohesive, communitarian societies, such as Japan, which are characterized by networks of interdependent relationships, are likely to have lower rates of crime than more individualistic, fragmented societies, such as the United States. In Japan, he claims, honor and responsibility to family and community are emphasized. The Japanese place their community and family above themselves. In contrast, people in the United States and other Western nations are socialized to value individuality and personal accomplishment and fulfillment over the needs of family and community. According to Braithwaite, it is this distinction of values that accounts for Japan’s much lower rates of violent and predatory crime.

Shame

For Braithwaite, shame is the ultimate deterrent against the violation of societal norms, for those who have a stake in a particular community. As already stated, he differentiates between shaming that is stigmatizing and shaming that is followed by reintegration. Reintegrative shaming is characterized by a ceremony in which the criminal act committed is denounced and community members express their disapproval of it. The shaming ceremony is then followed by efforts to “reintegrate the offender back into the community of law-abiding or respectable citizens through words or gestures of forgiveness or ceremonies to decertify the offender as deviant” (Braithwaite, 1989, pp. 100–101). An example of reintegrative shaming in practice can be found in New Zealand family group conferencing, which is frequently used to deal with cases of juvenile delinquency. In this strategy, the victim and offender meet in the presence of family and concerned community members to work out an appropriate restitution and consequence for the crime. In Canada, a similar process of circle sentencing is sometimes used by Aboriginal communities.

Shame that is stigmatizing, or disintegrative, occurs when the act and the actor are denounced as unworthy of the community. There are no efforts to reintegrate the offender, and he or she is rejected by the community. Disintegrative shaming is exemplified in the traditional criminal justice system by the court and sentencing process. Here, the offender is stigmatized by his or her conviction and literally, as well as symbolically, sent away from the community to prison.

Shaming that is reintegrative is not “soft” or “easy” on the offender. Although it can be done in love and with caring, reintegrative shaming can also be degrading, cruel, and punishing. The difference between reintegrative and disintegrative shaming is not in the quality of the shaming, but in its aim and in the processes that follow. Disintegrative shaming emphasizes the evil of the actor, while reintegrative shaming acknowledges the act as an evil thing, done by a person who is not inherently evil. Reintegrative shaming is followed immediately by gestures of reconciliation and inclusion, before the deviant identity is established as a master status.

Reintegration

As a follow-up to his theory of crime and reintegration, Braithwaite wrote an article with Stephen Mugford in 1994 titled “Conditions of Successful Reintegration Ceremonies,” which identified 14 characteristics that must be present for a reintegration ceremony to be successful. They noted that structurally successful reintegration ceremonies usually include two aspects: confrontation with the victim, which leads to effective shaming, and inclusion of the people who respect and care most about the offender. Reintegrative shaming is most effective when those who are closest to the offender and/or to the situation participate.

Braithwaite believes that offenders must be able to view their act outside of their own perspective to see the harm that it has caused. The victim’s perspective is invaluable in breaking down the offender’s justification of the act, to enable him or her to see it as a crime. The victim may have the most impact on an offender in a face-to-face encounter, but those who do not wish to meet the person who harmed them may also communicate
through letters, video conferencing, or a written statement. Shaming and reintegration are found to be most effective when those who support and care for the offender take part. This is because offenders are more likely to give regard to family and community members who have been involved in their lives than to people whom they do not know.

An individual’s community may not be geographic, but instead composed of various individuals who have a common concern for the individual. For example, in New Zealand and Australia, Maori and Aboriginal people often bring relatives or friends of an offender from far away, so that those people can support the offender in his or her reintegration. Most important, those involved in the shaming and reintegration process must be able to impart to the offender the idea that they are denouncing the act that he or she committed, but restoring him or her to the community as a full member.

CRIME, SHAME, AND REINTEGRATION IN PRACTICE

Community measures and reintegrative shaming do not form an extensive part of the U.S. criminal justice system. They remain far more popular in New Zealand and Australia. However, in recent years, alternative measures that use the theoretical principles presented here have sprung up in the United States and Canada. Community conferencing, victim-offender mediation, and sentencing circles are examples of these new measures. Such measures are often referred to as restorative justice.

Community conferencing is one alternative to the traditional justice system in cases of juvenile offending. The victim and his or her supporters, the offender and his or her supporters, and other concerned community members gather in the presence of a community facilitator to discuss the incident and what should be done about it. The community conference is usually resolved when all parties agree on an acceptable restitution or punishment, at which point the reintegration can begin.

Victim-offender mediation is similar to a community conference, but it is usually not opened to concerned citizens. The victim and one or two supporters meet with the offender and one or two supporters in the presence of a trained mediator. The mediation is usually ended with the signing of a contract for restitution or community service. Victim-offender mediation may be used as a diversion from the traditional criminal justice system, or following the imposition of a custody sentence for a juvenile or adult offender.

Sentencing circles originated among Canadian Aboriginal peoples. The sentencing circle, available to juvenile and adult offenders, is similar to a community conference, in that it is opened to concerned community members, but it differs in that a judge presides over the circle and it is conducted in lieu of a formal trial. The sentencing circle differs from community conferencing and victim-offender mediation in that it may result in a custodial sentence, fine, or any option that would be available in a criminal sentencing hearing. A common thread among these alternative measures is that the offender has to first acknowledge his or her guilt in order to be eligible for these processes.

CONCLUSION

Braithwaite’s theory has been criticized for its unquestioning assumption that Western societies are built on a consensus about what is right and what is wrong. His theory places little value on the beliefs and morals of subcultures while assuming that there is an overarching societal consensus on the laws of the land. Often, his theory obscures the fact that there are subcultures within the dominant culture that may or may not support the “dominant” consensus. For example, although violence against women is defined as criminal by the law and by many in society, prevailing patriarchal norms lead others to feel that there is nothing wrong with the abuse of a female partner or spouse. Similarly, those who grew up prior to the age of anti-drinking and driving sentiment often feel that it is perfectly acceptable and sociable to “take one for the road.” They do not feel shame for their actions and are unlikely to respond well to a shaming ceremony. In such cases, reintegrative shaming may not work, since the crimes are not universally abhorred.
The use of prison, for Braithwaite, is inherently disintegrative and counterproductive, especially given the fact that most offenders return to the community. He thus supports the use of community alternatives to imprisonment or, at the very least, the use of proactive community reintegration following a term of incarceration.

—Stacey Hannem-Kish

See also Australia; Canada; Community Corrections Centers; Deterrence Theory; Faith-Based Initiatives; Intermediate Sanctions; New Zealand; Prisoner Reentry; Rehabilitation Theory; Restorative Justice

Further Reading

CRIPS

The Crips are among the best-known gangs in the United States. Along with their rival group the Bloods, Crip sets exist in cities throughout the United States, and thus have attained status as a supergang. Due to their involvement in the drug trade, and as a result of increased policing of gang-related activity, many Crip members are currently imprisoned.

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

The Crips began in Los Angeles in the late 1960s. Raymond Washington and Stanley “Tookie” Williams are generally cited as the initial organizers of the group. The first name taken by the Crips was the “Baby Avenues” for the street on which Washington lived. There is some dispute about the origins of the name “Crip” itself. Some suggest that the initial name was Cribs and it evolved into Crips. Others suggest that the initial name was “Crypts” taken from the Vincent Price movie, Tales From the Crypt. Other reports suggest that one of the members was a cripple and walked with a cane.

Whatever its origins, Crip gangs spread quickly throughout South Central Los Angeles into other parts of the city and Los Angeles County, composed primarily of young, male African American residents of these neighborhoods. These groups took the color blue as their primary symbol, and similar to the longer-standing Hispanic gangs in southern California, wore bandanas that identified their membership.

Members of the Crips fought against other youths in neighborhoods in and around where they lived. It did not take long for youths in other neighborhoods to form groups for protection; these groups soon took a name. The groups opposed to the Crips came to be known as the Bloods, and early gangs were known as Piru Bloods, for the street near which many of the youths lived. These gangs chose red as their color. Wearing this color symbolized both membership in the Bloods and opposition to the Crips.

The development of the Crips reveals the importance of oppositional groups in gang activity. As Malcolm Klein (1995) has observed, gangs cannot exist in a vacuum. Thus, because of the role that external rivals play in both increasing solidarity internally and spreading the growth of the group, the Crips could not exist long without a rival. The rivalry between the Bloods and Crips has been important in fueling the growth of both groups.

Equally important to that growth, however, has been the impressive movement of Crip and Blood gangs into popular culture. Even though black...