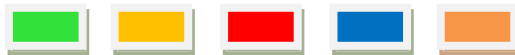




SANKOFA



ASSOCIATES

Goods and Services

www.sankofaassociates.co.uk

msoulfires@yahoo.co.uk

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Sankofa Associates Director Martin Glynn is a criminologist with over 25 years experience of



working in prisons and schools and has a Cert.Ed. and a Masters degree in criminal justice policy and practice. Martin is currently doing his PHD at Birmingham City University where he was the recipient of University Research Development Fund (URDF) PhD Bursary. As a lecturer Martin teaches:

- *Representation of Crime in Film and Television'*
- *Crime and The Media*
- *Introduction to criminology*

Martin has fed into the Home Office Select Committee report '*Overrepresentation of young black people in the criminal Justice System*' (Home Office 2006) and the recent Centre for Social Justice Report on *Gang Culture in the UK* (CSJ 2009). In 2008 Martin took part in a unique social experiment *Banged Up* for Channel Five fronted by the former Home Secretary the Rt. Hon David Blunkett MP. Ten teenage boys, aged 16-17, on their way to a life of crime came face to face with ten reformed, hardened criminals who offered an in-your-face, no-holds-barred account of life inside (*Broadcast July 2008*).



WINSTON
CHURCHILL
MEMORIAL
TRUST

In 2010 Martin was awarded a Winston Churchill International Travel Fellowship to undertake work in the city of Baltimore (USA) centring on models of good practice around issues of fatherlessness, father hunger, and father deficit amongst young men.

In Oct 2010 Martin was awarded a prestigious local heroes award by '*The Association of Jamaica Nationals*' (Birmingham) attended by the High Commissioner of Jamaica.

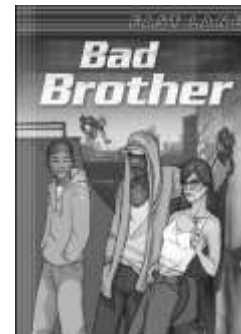


Publications: Short fiction



Devon has two older brothers
 One rolls with the Endz crew
 The other is seeing a Viper crew girl
 The two gangs don't mix
 Then someone pulls a gun ...
 (Franklin Watts)
 ISBN 978-0-7496-7712-1

Tyler is vexed
 He's had to give up half his room.
 His mum cusses him.
 The girl he likes plays hard to get.
 And all cos of one idiot person
 Alex, his stupid half brother.
 Time to get it sorted
 (Franklin Watts)
 ISBN 978-0-7496-7713-8



The Endz, has the sting of a grime track, the pulse of a Hip-Hop beat, and the fire of a Reggae bassline, with the with the hard edge reality of contemporary inner city street culture. (Age range 16+) Published by ACAF publications (Nottm 2009) (ISBN 978-1-90-718100-9)

'I believe I can fly' is a story about a young girl's dream of being in the school dance crew, but with an added difficulty of having sickle cell anaemia. 'I believe I can fly' is a feel good book aimed at young people, parents, and teachers involved in promoting positive healthcare messages. (Age range 10+) Published by ACAF Nottingham 2010) (ISBN 978-1-90781-01-6)



'Tales of Uncle 'P' and Marcus' is a 'coming of age' folktale about a young man's search for identity, as he goes in pursuit of the 'Wisdom Stone' accompanied by wise elder, Uncle 'P'. 'Tales of Uncle 'P' and Marcus' is about intergenerational storytelling and is designed to get the generations talking to each other. (Age range 10+) Published by Sankofa Associates - Birmingham (2010)

Toolkits



Sankofa Returns

Issue based and creativity with young people

This toolkit is aimed at parents, practitioners, organisations, agencies, and anyone who wants to use *issue based creativity* as a starting point for activities such as: *Developing short stories, writing outlines for scripts, devising drama, forum theatre and ethno-drama, group work & rites of passage.*

Dear Dad

A creative toolkit for those working with the issue of father deficit



This toolkit emerged out of Martin's 2010 Winston Churchill International Travel Fellowship in Baltimore (USA) where he looked at models of good practice around issues of fatherlessness, father hunger, and father deficit amongst young men. It is aimed at parents, practitioners, organisations, agencies, and anyone who are involved in working on issues centring on '*father deficit*'.

Performance and Writing



Yo! Blood - Script

In Nov 2008 the Arts Council England awarded Martin Glynn a grant to adapt his book **'Blood Bond'** into a play. **Yo! Blood** centres on the challenges faced by 3 brothers; Troy, Otis, and Devon. Themes such as *knife crime, forbidden love, the pressures of gang affiliation, and parental fears*, are all explored within the script. **(Age range 13+)** Published by Sankofa Associates (Birmingham 2011)



Beyond the Mask

Writing workshop

The workshop is designed to enable participants to write and tell their own life stories. The outcomes are about healing, having a platform to speak to the world, as well as becoming the author of your own life.



Dear Dad

Father deficit performance workshop

This workshop is designed to provide a 'safe space' for individuals, parents, practitioners, and educators, to explore issues associated with 'father deficit, using performance as the vehicle.

Films available for screening



'Life in the Game' - American Gangster Melvin Williams AKA *'Little Melvin'*, talks about his life as the Heroin King of Baltimore. How he amassed a half a billion dollars from the sale of heroin and how one rogue cop framed him and put him behind bars. Melvin's story highlights that in spite of being involved in crime, there are ways out of the game.

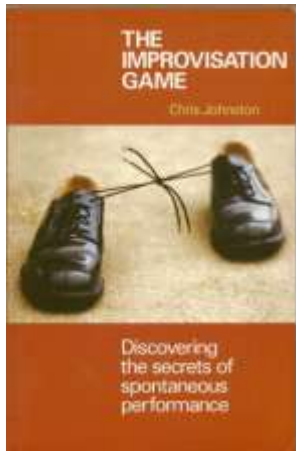


'Men to Boys' - From the producers of the best black documentary of 2007 comes the next installment in the landmark series *'What black men think'*. This documentary reveals the insights of older black men on notions of being a man, talking to directly to young black men who have suffered from the deficit of a lack of fathering.

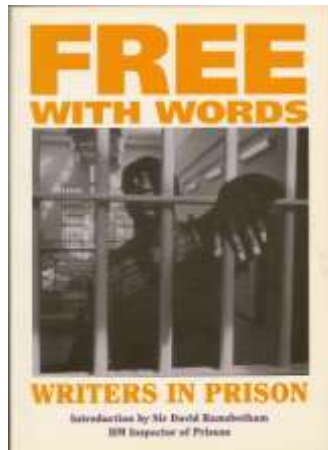


'Daddy Hunger' – A film where incarcerated men share their views on the pain of growing up fatherless and how it led them in to a life of crime. The openness and frankness of their testimonies is both moving and a lesson for all of us in regards to the pitfalls that can happen to men whose father was absent in their lives.

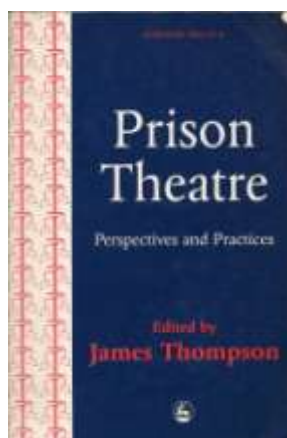
Non Fiction – Contributed Chapters



Johnston, C (2006) *The Improvisation game – Discovering the secrets of Spontaneous Performance* London: NHB, pp.60-62



Hopwood, C (1999) *Free with words – Writers in prisons, Manchester: Bar none*, pp. 139-144



Thompson, J (1998) *Prison Theatre – Perspectives and Practices*, London: JKP, pp 171-182

Martin Glynn featured in a book on Applied Theatre



Nicholson, H (2005) *Applied Theatre – The gift of Theatre Hampshire*: Palgrave-MacMillan (pp 150-151)

By the right to narrate I mean to suggest all forms of creative behavior that allow us to represent the lives we lead, questions the conversations and customs that we inherit, dispute and propagate the ideas and ideals that come to us most naturally, and dare to entertain the most audacious hopes and fears for the future Suddenly in painting, dance, or cinema you rediscover your senses, and in that process you discover something profound about yourself, your historical moment, and what gives value to a life in a particular town, at a particular time, in particular social and political conditions

Bhabha's emphasis on narrative and contextuality is important here, as it shows that human rights are not experienced solely as social 'issues' but are played out in the dialogic space of everyday existence. The practice of the arts enables experiences to be framed and, I am suggesting, practising drama has the potential to bring life into sharp relief by inviting participants to step outside themselves, to embody the narratives of others. This is a process which often involves seeing themselves as outsiders and experiencing life from different perspectives. The interweaving of ethics and aesthetics implies a journey or movement, in which we are asked not only to consider where we are, but to question which way we are going. Bhabha's concept of the right to narrate locates human rights in the performative practices of everyday life where an awareness of social justice is articulated in people's behaviour and attitudes towards others.

It also draws attention to political questions about that has access to the means of cultural expression and where this right to narrate is denied. Both perspectives are articulated in a disturbing account of work in British prisons by theatre practitioner **Martin Glynn**. **Glynn described how he sought to enable black male inmates to explore and narrate their own social realities in dramatic form but was confronted with hostility, racism and opposition by white prison officers. Prisons are notoriously difficult places to show emotional vulnerability or take risks, and the repressive environment which surrounds life in the penal regime is not conducive to the more sensitive aspects of theatre-making. Glynn's intention - to encourage disaffected black inmates to find an outlet for 'self-examination and creative expression' - was motivated by a need to connect with those whose voices were unheard and 'invisible' in the penal regime but with whom he felt he shared a social, cultural and political bond. He is extremely critical of the ways in which the prison service is unquestioningly based on white values and norms, which at best does little to promote black-led thought or recognise the complexity and diversity of black experience, and at worst is actively racist. The role of black artists within this system is doubly problematic, as Glynn's account of his painful encounters with officials in prison institutions testifies. His essay encapsulates and examines many aspects of human rights that have been explored in this chapter - the significance of language to cultural affirmation and mutual respect; the ways in which normative vocabularies of institutions are inevitably partisan; the potential for the neglect of human rights in a system in which there is no reflection on the social and cultural specificity of its regime and regulations. What he adds to this analysis is an awareness of the need for self-reflection in order to understand how his own beliefs impact on the work, and to recognise how his psychological strengths and weaknesses affect its progress. This self-knowledge contributes to, and feeds into, the process of setting boundaries within drama workshops and to defining the parameters of acceptable behaviour with all those involved in the work. As Glynn's account clearly illustrates, this may be an uncomfortable experience.**

One of the insights from psychoanalytic theory is that prejudice is often the unconscious projection of one's own needy feelings onto others, and this means that tackling some of the more subtle forms of human rights infringement can feel intensely personal and disturbing. In some ways every social encounter is a performative negotiation of human rights. Derrida's concept of a poetics of human rights recognises that there is an aesthetic dimension to ethical social interactions, and that human rights are practised only when the dialectic between self and other is troubled and the fixed polarity is challenged. In this context, therefore, one of the social purposes of drama is to practise human rights by both embodying the position of an imagined other and re-affirming an assured sense of selfhood. These aspirations are not contradictory: they are not allied to an uncritical cultural pluralism and nor do they represent an individualised liberal tolerance. It is quite the reverse. A poetics of human rights is about taking collective responsibility for the performance of rights, and recognising the creative opportunities afforded by envisioning social change. This approach to human rights is inherently dramatic and performative because it unites the personal with the political, the public with the private, thought and action, and asks all of us to make a daily commitment redefining where we are and improving human rights for the future.

***Barred Voices* - Perspectives on Theatre in Prisons in the UK. A report by Escape Artists© Copyright Escape Artists (2006)**

Martin Glynn and Sankofa Associates

'Working in prisons is a deeply personal and important part of my own development as a Black man, where there is the need to connect with those forgotten and invisible voices who, despite their crimes, come from the same cultural, political, and social bond as myself'. (Martin Glynn in Prison Theatre. Practices and Perspectives – James Thompson, p171)



Martin Glynn became involved with prison work in the early 1980s. He came from a background of activism but, as a fellow activist told him, 'if you wanted to do real activism work with black people you needed to start with the prison because that's where most of us were.' (Martin Glynn, Interview Dec 2005). Martin started by writing to prisoners and then began setting up arts-based residencies in prisons. The turning point came in the mid-eighties when he was asked to run a residency with a group of volatile black prisoners in Long Lartin.

Although Martin hadn't gone to prisons to deal with the arts but rather 'to engage black men', this residency introduced him to the need for transformative experiences for black men in prison and the role of the arts in providing these. *'It started off as a discussion around black history, black politics, and revolutionary theories and then translated into them expressing and exploring themselves through creativity. So for the first time, black men felt a sense of freedom, felt their experiences were being validated... for guys who couldn't read or write, poetry and performance became a vehicle for them to explore who they were'*. The next milestone in Martin's work with black prisoners came when the late Anne Peaker suggested that Martin use the Unit (now the Anne Peaker Centre) to articulate the voice of black offenders. With a group of artists, he developed and delivered a project called Nuff Respect, which looked at the creative and rehabilitative needs of black prisoners. Over the following years Martin regularly delivered projects specifically for black male offenders through the Anne Peaker Centre and the National Black Prisoners Support Project. His workshop approach would involve group bonding, the participatory definition of a brief, providing an inventory of creative workshops, teaching from a point of prior knowledge (so that poetry can begin with hip hop and grime) and teaching by example. Driven by the possibilities of engagement and transformation, Martin adapted his approach in each situation to maximise these possibilities. *'I didn't have a methodology,'* says Martin, *'I just knew that I was engaging black men and whatever I was doing was working. There was no evaluation then, no real academic context to what I was doing, I just knew it worked.'* In terms of the spectrum described in the introduction to this report, Martin's approach is difficult to categorise. His methods spread broadly across the range from arts to therapy, while their application is immediate and context specific. Although it may not be useful to try to describe Martin's methodology, his work is underpinned by structures and templates of understanding that are familiar to the men with whom he works. Martin describes an ideal structure as *'culturally competent, embracing cultural forms of creativity... validating those cultural forms as a viable form of expression'*. In co-facilitators, he looks for those who are culturally competent in their own spheres. In order to create a safe space in which transformation can occur, they need to be able to build credibility through shared humour and their real, lived, common experiences.

As Chris Johnston has pointed out, structure is not value free. Although Martin's structures are based on shared societal and cultural values, they reflect his personal values too. He favours using traditional wisdom, for example, as a basis for Interpretation of reality. The Sankofa bird, after which his company is named, is an African bird with its head facing backwards. It symbolises going back and retrieving, 'So I go back and search for wisdom and bring that as the foundation for interpreting social reality'. Martin sees the creative process as part of a wider developmental process concerned with rites of passage. He has developed a range of projects around fatherhood, masculinity and rites of passage using black history and performance as the tool. He uses African-centred performance, not in its purest sense but rather in terms of favouring the non-linear tradition, the aural tradition and ritualised performance. He uses traditional wisdom as a basis for the men to creatively interpret their reality, together with a strategy he calls POSE - looking at Purpose, how you take Ownership of that, Sustainability and Evaluation. 'So with the prisoners, we'd looked at what was their purpose in life, they're prisoners, but prisoner, offender, is a social label... Black self-concept is a very important tool... So we use the creative process to engage them in a process of self-definition, outside of their social label.' As a part of doing this, Martin uses a ritual that involves sitting in a circle with a stone in the centre. Each person picks the stone up in the morning and affirms something they would like to get from that day. Every evening, they repeat the process, stating what it was that they received. The stone is said to contain memory, and so they may dedicate thoughts or actions through the stone to people who are not there. They may go into the centre of the circle and pray. The ritual is about finding what works the best for them, about establishing meaning and purpose in their days and lives. In conclusion, Martin's work interweaves the personal and political concerns specific to black men. His structure is informed by his understanding of criminology, psychology and poetry, and fundamentally underpinned by cultural competency.' If you're going to engage [black offenders] as a theatre provider,' Martin reiterates, 'you have to engage on those cultural norms that they relate to. If you can get the hard to reach and access to connect to their own peers, to build capacity within their own peers, they already have the cultural competency. If you can connect that to public and social policy concerns... you have a model practice.

'Martin feels that this connection is important and overlooked. He points out that the black male prison population is increasing; the level of gang affiliation is increasing and the length of sentences is increasing. Martin questions how these high-risk prisoners can be brought back into the community, asking, 'What do prisons do for black prisoners? They could say 'we provide the same service to them as to everybody else', while in education, the curriculum is mono cultural and Eurocentric. A black man inside does not have the same lived realities as a white man, even on a class basis, so the ideology and framing is flawed.... The Prison Service is not culturally competent because it does not reflect the people inside.' In terms of theatre companies going in to prisons, Martin feels that the involvement of two or three black men in a company is not enough to address racism. Rather than operating from a policy of inclusion, companies need to be culturally competent, peer led and empowering. Martin would like to see 'a clear evaluation strategy in relation to the regime, more encouragement for non-white practitioners to make a difference in prisoners' lives... I would like to see a greater acknowledgement within the networks of prison theatre that there are other ways of being and seeing and experiencing social reality through the creative process.

From inner-city Britain to Baltimore's mean streets

Black scholar's journey takes him to the home of *The Wire* to study 'desistance'. John Morgan writes

As fans of cult US television series *The Wire* will know, Baltimore is a city with problems.

The series focused unflinchingly on racial divisions, corruption, gang- and drug-related violence and the effects of social deprivation on every level of society.

Now a British lecturer is travelling to Maryland to study solutions to crime in the city as part of his PhD.

Martin Glynn, a criminologist at Birmingham City University, is beginning a thesis that will consider the testimonies of black male offenders who have turned away from crime.

Mr Glynn joined the academy late in life – he is beginning his PhD in his fifties after gaining a master's degree, despite missing out on undergraduate study.

He has won a Winston Churchill International Travel Fellowship, allowing him to travel to Baltimore on the East Coast of the US for two

months. He will spend time at both the Johns Hopkins University and the Urban Leadership Institute.

He said Baltimore was a draw for two reasons: the strong research in his subject area conducted by Johns Hopkins, and the fact that the city is the setting for *The Wire*, whose characters include teenagers drawn into dealing drugs, the police officers whose job it is to deal with them, and the city politicians who set the agenda on crime.

Mr Glynn said: "*The Wire* is put forward as one of the best examples of cultural criminology, where we see the collusion of the state in generating aspects of crime.

"I wanted to go to the community where it is filmed, because there are a lot of very good programmes that have a resonance with what I'm investigating."

Mr Glynn argued that his thesis will explore an area traditionally ignored by criminology.

"I'm developing what is called a

critical race theory of 'desistance' [the process of ceasing and desisting from offending] for black British men," he explained.

Criminology "is not very good at discussing race", and desistance is an even greater blind spot for the discipline, he added.

Mr Glynn, who described himself as coming from an "inner-city" background in Nottingham, said that at first he was wary about becoming an academic.

"To leave that behind to go into this middle-class, white male environment created what's referred to as 'double-consciousness'," he said. "When I first started, academics were white people who came to interview you after a riot."

But he added that his views had been challenged at Birmingham City and that he had found "love and support" there.

Mr Glynn said his research on desistance would be of use in areas such as the education system, where black boys are more likely to be suspended or excluded from school than their white counterparts.

john.morgan@tsleducation.com





Birmingham criminologist is local hero



A criminologist from Birmingham City University is celebrating after becoming a 'Local Hero' at a recent award ceremony held in the city. Martin Glynn, 53, from Handsworth Wood, scooped the award at a glittering ceremony attended by the High Commissioner of Jamaica and hosted by the Association of Jamaican Nationals.

Beverly Lindsay, Chairman of the Association of Jamaican Nationals, said: "This award ceremony celebrates our rich Jamaican culture and heritage past, present and future here in Birmingham and also back home in Jamaica. The event brings recognition and remembrance to that legacy of sacrifice and achievement by extraordinary individuals in the selfless pursuit of the wider common community good both past and present." Martin's work around desistance, rites of passage, masculinity, anti-social & criminal behaviour has gained him a national and international reputation. He has received commissioned work in theatre, radio drama, live literature, and poetry. As a criminologist, Martin was the only person in Birmingham to be awarded a Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowship earlier this year, and as a result has recently returned from Baltimore in the United States where he examined the impact of fatherlessness in anti-social behaviour. He looked at issues related to community violence and crime among young black men as well as compared and contrasted urban street crime violence between the UK and Baltimore. His Fellowship research will assist in the understanding of issues affecting young black men in the region as well as inform his current PhD 'The Sankofa Paradigm – Towards a Critical Race Theory of Desistance.' Martin said: "To be acknowledged validated by my father's country of origin is both an honour and a privilege. It is important never to forget where you're coming from. To quote famous Jamaican national hero Marcus Garvey, 'a person without knowledge of their history is like a tree without roots'." Beverly Lindsay added: "Martin has worked in Jamaica and with the Jamaican Community over a number of years and is one of nation's greatest assets. Martin may be a Birmingham Based Jamaican but he has an international constituency. His work is simply World Class."

Photo-caption: Martin Glynn receiving his Local Hero award from Marcia Fletcher – Chief Representative Officer - Victoria Mutual Finance LTD (subsidiary of Victoria Mutual Building Society – Jamaica)