

Bearing witness to desistance: trauma and offending in the lives of people facing complex needs

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Overview

- Introduction to the project
- Methodological approach
- A case study emerging from the project
- Some tentative thoughts
- 'Bearing witness' to desistance

Methodology

Sampling:

- 16 participants
- Selected on basis of co-occurrence of (i) substance use problems; and/or (ii) mental health problems; and/or (iii) homelessness and (iv) repeat offending.
- Gatekeepers report as having made positive changes in life (particularly around offending)

Data collection:

- Open, unstructured approach
- Group art workshops using 'collage as inquiry (Butler-Kisper, 2008) to visually explore and represent individual lives.
- Detailed field notes from collage creation sessions and use of collages to support elicitation of narratives
- Life history interviews (initial & follow-up after 6 months), using minimalist passive interviewing (Jones, 2003)

Data analysis:

- Pen portraits
- Drawing on broad brush approach of BNIM (Wengraf 2001) by separating out the lived life from the told story & considering relationship between the two
- Drawing on techniques from Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009)

"Pete"

GROW UP
BUT DON'T
GIVE UP

CONCERN GROWS FOR

& **Saint or sinner?**
Homeless

WHEN REALITY BITES

CRAZY

Out of his
tree

PURE
BLISS

MEMORY LAPSE
brain damage.

CLOSE
SHAVES

LET'S BE HUMAN BEINGS.

WELCOME TO

music

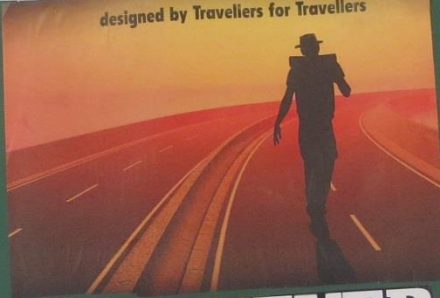
'til you drop

Club de

Rated No.1

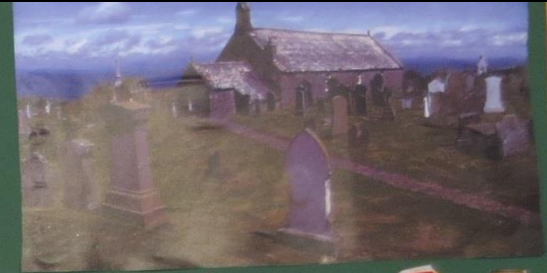


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THE NEVER
ENDING WAR

DON'T SAY GOODBYE



Bite the Bullitt
and choose
I'd rather be
in jail than
live in

SHAME

QC: Forgive

SLEEP
30%



The rich man will never go to heaven.

Economic systems come and go.
Capitalism has had a 300-year run.
The question is: will humanity stand
by and let the world be destroyed to
save the profit system?

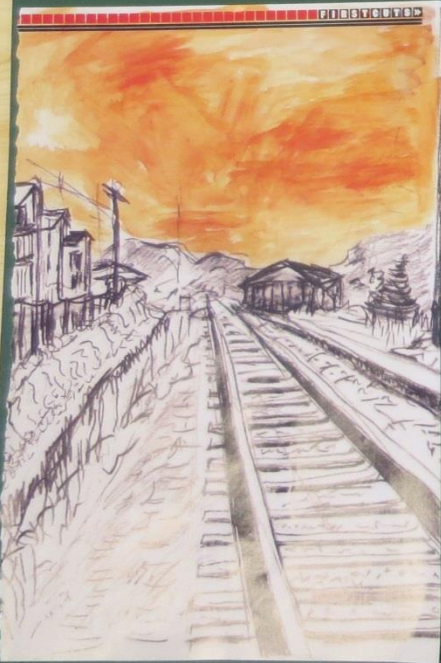
You've earned your
money, but are you
owning it?



"THE PLACE SMELLED



A BILL
YOU CHOOSE. The Heat is on



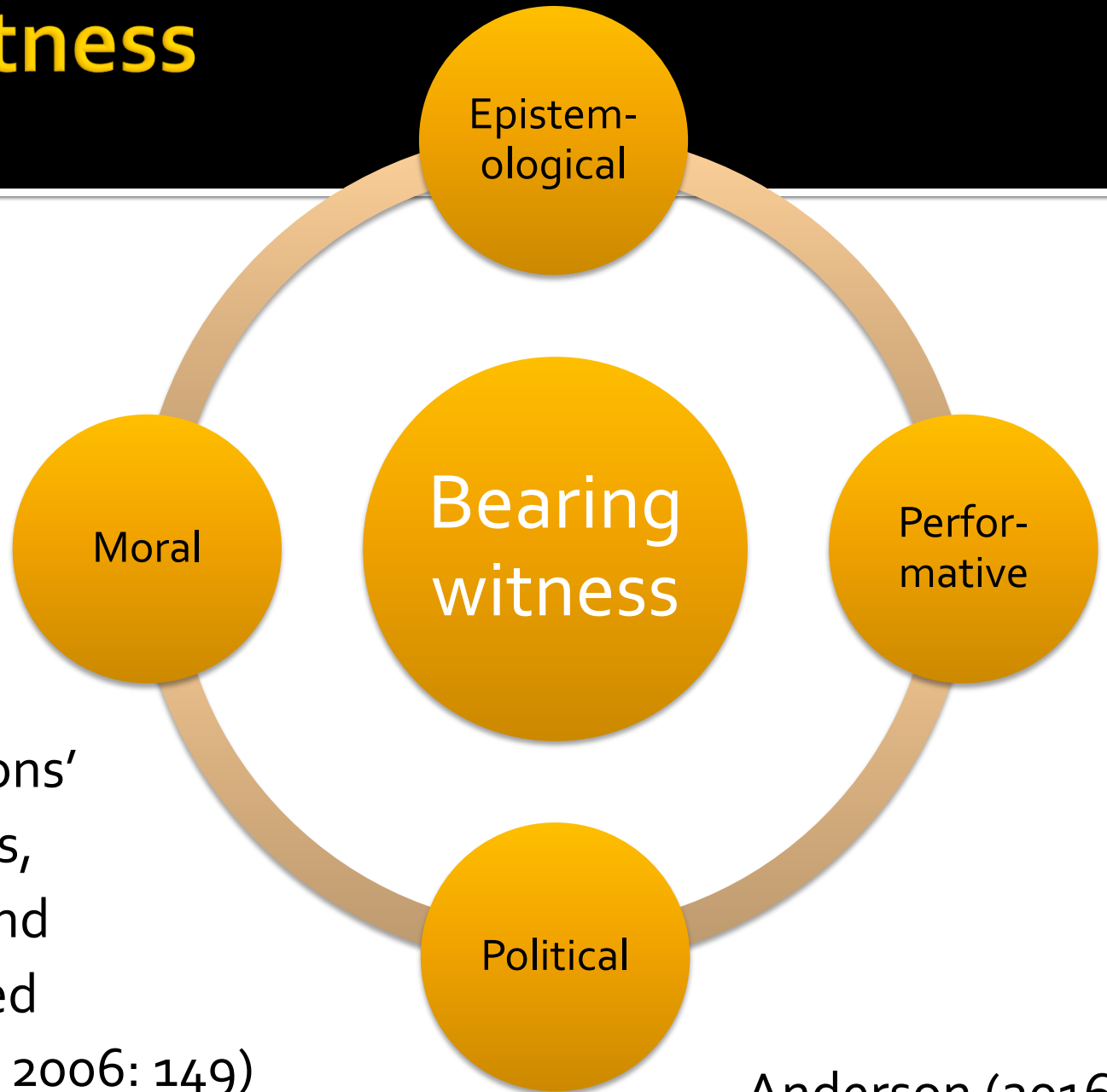
Some tentative thoughts...

- Insufficient attention to embodied and emotional dimensions of desistance
- Desistance partly dependent on recovery from/ circumvention of engrained emotional and behavioural responses arising from trauma
- Active role of community and state institutions in engendering desistance
- Misrecognition of victimhood as offending



Bearing witness

“being with and relating to others...based on values and beliefs that give rise to a commitment to attend to, honour, and stay with persons' truths, perspectives, priorities, hopes, and dreams; ...their lived experience.” (Naef 2006: 149)



Anderson (2016)

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