Performing (for) Survival: Performance Tactics of Incarcerated Women

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Declaration

I declare the work in this thesis is entirely my own, comprising of work undertaken during the period of registration.

Signed:

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ABSTRACT

In an era characterised by impacts of cuts and austerity in the UK, this study is positioned at the interface between two socio-cultural institutions against which societies are judged: the arts and criminal justice. Within this field, the thesis investigates the ways women in prison are positioned in a carceral performance that is cyclical and inevitably 'tragic'. The argument considers the tactics women use in order to firstly, survive their incarceration, and sometimes, resist, the institution. The theoretical frame is drawn from feminist criminology and Bourdieu's 'habitus' to examine everyday performances as well as theatrical works by and about incarcerated women. This project adds to the field by locating performance practices in and of prison within wider social contexts of the politics of carceral spaces.

The main questions posed by this project were 'what does theatre/ performance offer to challenge stereotypes of 'the cage'?; and to what extent and in what ways does performance in (and of) prison challenge/ subvert/ augment/ transform the site itself'? The research sought to understand to what extent women's articulations of subjectivity could be a radical alternative to the logocentric and discursive prisons of sentences and prison records. The study was developed as an ethnographic examination of performance in and of prison, alongside exploring how contemporary performance modes are implicated in defining, containing, and correcting (criminal) women's everyday performances.

The thesis is primarily concerned with a critical reflection on theatre practices in prison, with particular emphasis on the political implications of the effects of prison as/and performance. The study makes claims for a radical practice in and about prisons that is distanced from current applied theatre practices, and as such points towards a more troubled rehearsal of how punishment is performed.

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INTRODUCTION

This project has become a means of exploring the limits of theatre in prison and prison in theatre, as I attempt to grapple with the ethical and aesthetic poles that characterise the magnetism of 'the cell/ the cage' in contemporary performance. Its intention is to identify how and why prison functions as a fixed field and postulate new ways of viewing performances in and of prison that trouble and un-fix the institution. (Research Diary, January 2014).

Performance and prison may, as Caoimhe McAvinchey notes, 'appear immiscible' (2011a: 60): at a superficial level we might understand the pleasures associated with theatre as being in opposition to what Graham Sykes (1958) calls the 'pains' of imprisonment. This thesis contributes to the critical and troublesome genre of analysis that disrupts the neat, compelling stories of 'success' of performance interventions in and of prisons and other sites of conflict (Thompson, 2011a). The thesis is thus an attempt to recuperate performance, both theoretically and methodologically, through examining how it functions in relation to the theatrical presence of the law. This is not a perpetuation of what Jonas Barish (1985) termed 'antitheatrical prejudice'. Rather, following Diana Taylor (2003), a focus on the wider sense of performance enables me to move beyond the logocentric, colonial, Eurocentric boundaries hitherto associated with text-based 'theatre' criticism. The context of this study coincides with an instrumental turn in applied theatre[1] (Thompson, 2011a); in which performance practices serve an ameliorating purpose that inevitably conform to funding agendas. In addition, the current context of arts funding and the resultant conservatism is evident in companies that mount productions that do not challenge the status quo but prioritise entertainment and market their performances as 'experiences' rather than as 'theatre'. For these reasons, this research turns away from merely analysing theatre: I am more interested in the socio-political function of the work rather than making a

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[1] Applied theatre is an umbrella term that incorporates a wide range of performance practices outside of the formal theatre, usually based upon the perceived benefits of participation, advocacy and pedagogy. What is contestable about the term is the difficulty of adequately representing the distinctions and divergences in practices as diverse as theatre for development, theatre in healthcare contexts, work with young people and those with disabilities (Prentki and Preston, 2009). While it is not unproblematic, the term is used in this thesis, as it is nevertheless the recognised term in this sub-discipline of performance studies.

case for a specific aesthetic model. As such I am drawing on a provisional and strategic definition of performance instead of 'theatre'.

Performance is a contested term, the limits of which are tested through the thesis. Sociology and criminology have found tools and vocabularies for translating lived experiences into theories and models in order to explain the world. Performance translates lived experiences into aesthetic encounters while research in prison insists on an ethics of encounter. This research in particular seeks to view the lived experiences of incarcerated women through the models and metaphors offered by performance. Thus, the institution itself is examined as the performance context or, to use Pierre Bourdieu's term, 'field', of the research (1990). In this argument, then, I define performances as the framing of a set of practices and behaviours in conscious aesthetic and ethical relationships between bodies, in which space and location provide a specific context through which meanings are generated and understood. Drawing on Gareth White's recent formulation (2013: 2-5), attention to 'performance' allows me to analyse practices that occur outside of what has a defined economy and set of values associated with formal 'theatre'. Yet, I also pay close attention to theatre's responsiveness to the cultural and social performances of prisons.

I am interested in exploring the surrounding discourses that seek to make sense of crime, justice and incarceration, and consider how performance disrupts, and in some instances, reinforces, those discourses. In the context of crime and justice, it is both necessary and valuable to identify existing power structures so that we might ask of performance whether it reinforces, obscures or challenges how power is distributed. In addition, this line of enquiry heeds Nevitt's call to examine 'how [such power] is used in contexts beyond the performance' (2013: 39).

A formative experience of performance in and of prison from my own South African context was Athol Fugard's (collaboratively written) *The Island* – in which two political prisoners on Robben Island perform Antigone (1974). The promotion of gender as both a victimising category of punishment (the emasculation of male prisoners in this case) and their performance across genders mark this play as particularly rich for staging

how the bodies of the incarcerated repeat and reflect the historical, cultural, mythic and political spectres of prison.[2] This notion of repetition raises questions about who is incarcerated and why, although this line of questioning is relevant to criminology, and as such functions as an underlying – rather than a central – concern in the research. Nevertheless, the socio-political context of women's 'offending' and pathways through prison are important to this argument.

The aims of the research include how theatre practice can be used to explore the performative ontological states of women in prison in the UK. A related concern is to unpack the extent to which women's articulations of subjectivity (that I understand as everyday performances) can be considered a radical alternative to the logocentric and discursive prisons of sentences and prison records. Underlying both of these aims is the consideration of the problems and possibilities of representation. This thesis is an account of a feminist project that engaged with women in prison to explore to what extent, how and why modes of performance can be seen as a means of 'survival'. Finally, the research aims to introduce my subjective encounters in and of prisons as a further strand of data to provide an embodied reflexive account of place and materiality.

Although it draws on feminist criminology, sociology and criticism of dramatic literature, the informing discourse is from performance studies. In foundational texts in performance studies scholars have developed a set of complex explanations for the problems of visibility (Diamond, 1997; Phelan, 1993), harnessing the worth of Derridean notions of performativity and Austin's Speech Act Theory (Diamond, 1997; Miller, 2007; Sedgwick & Parker, 1995). Performance studies has moved beyond considerations of what is and is not seen in the study of the ephemerality of the theatre – or the always already disappeared (Phelan, 1993). Rather, the force of performance as a mode of understanding is in its relation to what remains as traces and in the collapse of separation between the real and representations (Davis, 2003;

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[2] I wish to note that the two characters' adoption of stereotypical 'feminine' characteristics is not unproblematic, nor is the insistence on compulsory heterosexuality (*vide* Adrienne Rich, 1996). It nevertheless serves a function in the portrayal of the institution's penetrating power over the virility of the political prisoners in the play by Fugard et al.

Diamond, 1997; Phelan and Lane, 1998; Schneider, 1997, 2011). Although these arguments often centre on the value of theatre and performance itself, there is a wider, methodological implication to the process of applying performance analysis to non-performance sites and contexts. It is in this specific arena that this research is located, amongst scholarship that points towards the need for performance to dismantle what otherwise appear to be inviolable apparatus of the state – such as borders (Nield, 2006a; 2008; 2010a); courtrooms (Leader, 2008; Wake, 2010); political leadership (Schmidt, 2010) and in war (Schneider, 2011; Thompson et al, 2009). The need for critical and radical deconstruction of power and its representations is well explored, and has become more acute since the events of September 11, 2001, in which concepts such as 'nation' and the 'other' were highlighted in a spectacular event that collapsed the real (of the terrible destruction experienced by civilians in the USA) with the mediation of cycles of retribution in the 'war on terror' (Taylor et al, 2002, Taylor, 2009). I maintain that critical investigation of all state apparatus is necessary in order to better contribute to the wider debates about human rights, safety and security, and global and local futures. As such, this multi-layered performance analysis of and about prison intends to add to these debates.

Performance, Power and Patriarchy: Defining the Paradox
In the UK, there is a rich tradition of arts in prisons with men that seeks to engage in identifying, articulating and then re-framing offending behaviour through performance exercises.[3] Men in prison are discursively framed as violent, angry, often addicted and with poor interpersonal skills. Their crimes are symptomatic of aggressive masculine claims of territory. Many men do not feel thwarted by prison; but on the contrary characterise their 'time' as part of a passage towards more 'successful' expressions of masculinity (Balfour, 2003; James, 2003). By contrast, theatre-based programmes with incarcerated women tend to engage with their identities as partners, and mothers, or with cognitive behavioural approaches concerning their vulnerability, dependency (on the state or on patriarchal figures), poor mental health (Lawston & Lucas, 2011; Kilby, 2001), and addictions (Clark, 2004; Fraden, 2001; Hughes, 1998). They are

characterised as having chaotic lives and their crimes are very often attributed to the influence of men. Accounts of women's incarceration rarely valourise their bravery, but rather tend to position women as helpless, hopeless, and unable to cope with the cold and hard institution (Lamb et al 2003; Lamb, 2007).

Both views are clearly based on out-dated thinking that engages biological determinism by stating that excess testosterone results in crime, and presupposes that women only commit crimes because they are too weak to resist men's dominance. In other words, women in prison are doubly victims of patriarchal oppression; firstly for engaging in law breaking at the behest of men; and secondly for being incarcerated in a patriarchal system, as Helena Kennedy (2005) posits. In addition, where women are not drawn as weak caricatures lacking will, violent women – or what Lynda Hart (1994) calls 'fatal women'– are demonised for being unwomanly. There is a sense, then, in popular culture and media (film, books, television and performance), that Western women in prisons are considered 'acceptable' if they are repentant victims.[4] There is a further thrill at operation in the characterisation of criminal women as 'monsters' (Hart, 1994).[5] Should a woman, upon release, be seen to have 'transformed', she is called a survivor.

Feminist criminology suggests that by definition, women in prison are triply marginalised; first, by their status as women in a phallocentric society; secondly, by being in prison (having been judged guilty of crimes); and thirdly, by being marginal in relation to other factors that lead to criminalisation (such as race, ethnicity, and class as well as poverty and education attainment). Such marginalisation, and the *de facto* inscription of performative cycles of (re)offending this implies, is critically questioned in the research. In the thesis I do not wish to perpetuate the currency of women in prison as victims of circumstance, nor do I wish to engage in the frenzied debate on women's crime and behaviour (both of which reduce and erase agency in favour of

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[3] This is explored in more detail in Chapter 4. For accounts of these approaches, see Baim et al, 2002; Balfour, 2003, 2004; Heritage, 1998, 2002, 2004; Peaker & Johnston, 2007; Thompson, 2003, 2004; Watson, 2009.
[4] See Bosworth & Carrabine, 2001; and particularly in relation to a turn to religious 'transformation'.
[5] See Lynda Hart's description of 'monstrous' convicted murderers Myra Hindley and Aileen Wournos (1994).

banal cause/effect argumentation). Rather, I make use of the time/space caesura of incarceration as a means of moving away from the above stereotypes to the untold stories of a marginalised group.

There have been no UK focused book-length studies of arts with women in prisons. Perhaps this is due to the relatively small number of females in prison in the UK.[6] The only book about theatre with and by women in prisons is about the US based theatre company 'Medea Project for Incarcerated Women', which is renowned for engaging with how women's testimonies invite witnessing through radical re-positioning of their marginalisation.[7] Prior contributions to the area of theatre and women in prison have been in practice-led research, although these tend to be chapters in edited collections.[8] These accounts engage with a model of practice that is defended and tend to relate to the practical and pedagogical implications of conducting theatre-based interventions in an institution.

By contrast, this project develops a theoretical model of analysing prison through performance in the model of what I call 'tragic containment'.[9] It explores Diana Taylor's (2003) notion of 'archives' by analysing play texts (the documented archives of performance events), as well as the researcher's personal archive of memories of working in prisons as a theatre practitioner in the form of autoethnographic passages. 'Repertoires' are analysed through prison fieldwork, in which women's daily performances form the basis of creative theatre based workshops at HMP Drake Hall. These autoethnographic sections offer accounts of the ways in which I, as researcher/practitioner, was engaged in a process of performance in order to gain access to the prison (for security reasons). The autoethnographic extracts are signaled in the text in indented blocks of italic text, and cited as research diary extracts. This is in order to signal my distinct shift in register between the subjective, personal reflections on experiences and memories and the academic rigour of the framing text.

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[6] There are fewer than 3800 women in prison in the UK (Prison Reform Trust, 2012).

[7] Since the focus of my own investigation is UK based work in prisons, this company is outside of the scope of the study. See Billone, 2009; Fraden, 2001; Warner, 2001, 2004, 2011.

[8] See Clarke, 2004; Herrmann, 2009; McAvinchey, 2006a; McKean, 2006; Weaver, 2009. McAvinchey (2006b) also authored an as yet unpublished PhD Thesis on women in prisons in the UK and Brazil, focussing on testimony and documentation practices of applied theatre.

The disciplinary frame of the institution marked out pathways for the research that had not been planned, but that became productive in my understanding of carceral spaces, strategies and tactics. The prison habitus is also understood from the embodied perspective of the insider/outsider – one who holds keys but has no power. It is thus fitting that I introduce this strand of argumentation in the thesis with a confession.

Starting from the Fence

I am profoundly ambiguous about prison theatre. I feel unsettled by the majority of work that moralises, often imposing a particular perspective privileging narratives of 'victims' or casting prisoners as 'survivors'; or those that demonise institutions entirely without contextualising the social function of prisons, neglecting the question of crime and criminality. In the audience, I become anxious that theatre's attempts to aesthetically frame prisoners' experiences slip past the desire for 'authenticity' that I can't quite escape (not only in realist modes, but site-responsive and promenade performances too). As a practitioner, I am silenced despite feeling I have something to say. I am bewildered by my expectations for representation – but sense that is not because I believe 'authentic' accounts are possible – but rather because that is how so many prison performances are framed. I am disappointed that so many examples of theatre that include prison do not seem able to function outside the binary between victim-survivor. I am also concerned by performance work that is not in the public realm (as much applied theatre remains process-based). Some of this work seems to me to perpetuate a benevolent approach that, despite 'good intentions', can often end up perpetrating silencing, exclusions, and even co-option by the authorities. I am also guilty of perpetrating that kind of strangulation.

I am more infuriated by the barriers to accessing prison than ever before (and I have been doing theatre in prisons for the last ten years). I have no doubt that this is because prison, in the UK at least, has become even more restrictive, more bureaucratic, more risk averse and more tied to cost-benefit analyses than before; in other words, it has become further stripped of its potentiality for humane rehabilitative measures. I'm still trying to get in though. Perhaps this is a productive state to attempt to define a model of reflexive critical research on performance practices in and of women's prisons. Perhaps the fence is a good place to start: neither entirely inside the field nor entirely outside, but straddling both.

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[9] This is developed in Chapter 2.

To evoke Minh-ha (2011), the allure of the walls and fences demands a breach (Research Diary, May 2012).[10]

Prison Architectures: Concepts and Frameworks

One feature of ethnographic accounts of research and practice in prisons is the ubiquitous description of entering prison walls and navigating the gates (Kershaw, 2004; Williams, 2003). These reflections of the outsider's entry into the alienating world of restrictions and sanctions are often then counterposed with detailed descriptions of the 'liberating' experiences of freedom attained through creative pursuits. They are, very often, inspiring stories of the transformative power of the arts (Heritage, 2004; Peaker, 1998; Rhyms, 2012). Indeed, most accounts of arts in prisons rely on a sense of distance between the aesthetics and the 'real' of the prison as the ethical and juridical cages in which the activities occur. Yet, all too often, these narratives do not trouble the very structures of fences, security and surveillance that mark prisoners as captives (Marquart, 1986). At best the critical examples offer a sentimental gloss that relies on empowerment (Lopez, 2003), and at worst, they reinforce a distinction between 'us' and 'them' (Clark, 2004; Cleveland, 2003; Davis, 2004).

Typical prison architectures are constructed as radial 'wings' off a central hub (or, in prison parlance, 'cage'). There is no particular hierarchy in the order of the wings, but the central core of the design is security (following Jeremy Bentham's design of the panopticon)[11]. This is the centralised location in which officers can maintain control over the operations of hundreds of prisoners housed in cells in the wings' radial corridors. Rather than replicate the centrality of security, as a thesis in criminology might tend to do, this thesis structure positions women at the core of the investigation. Each of the chapters offers a particular line of investigation relating to women's positions and portrayals in, of, and through performance. There is no single chapter that outlines a 'field', since there are several overlapping fields with which to

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[10] This diary entry refers to a 6-month delay while I waited for full enhanced security clearance from the Ministry of Justice to gain access to the specific institution.

[11] This is further explained in Chapter 3, having gained prominence in Michel Foucault's seminal text *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1977).

contend. Rather, in each of the chapters I attend to some of the relevant concerns raised by the literature and engage with their potential to invigorate my argument.

The theories I have adopted provide vigour to entering and 'reading' prison as a location or 'field'; and provide ways in which to consider the women prisoners' everyday performances or 'habitus'. The study investigates the ways in which location impacts and changes the performance by conceptualising performance as situated within (or between) 'archives' or 'repertoires'.[12] One of the primary contributions of the work then, is a translation of archive and repertoire to the prison location. This breaks open the fairly fixed ways theories have responded to prison by analysing discipline-specific concerns of deviance, desistance, or otherwise the defence of a specific model of artistic practice in prisons. By contrast, the structure I have developed provides a sense of the competing discourses that operate in relation to the topic. What the thesis does is platform the contestation in these fields, providing a provocation to both contemporary performance and applied theatre practitioners in its conclusions and recommendations.

This research draws on multiple theoretical and methodological influences and as such, the reader will experience several shifts in register and 'voice' as the argument proceeds. The most evident shift is in Chapter 5, in which I develop an ethnographic analysis of performance-making fieldwork in HMP Drake Hall. In other chapters I navigate a shift between arguing a theoretical position and providing close analysis of play texts as well as participation as audience in events. Readers familiar with ethnographic writings will be aware of the jostling of voices in contested terrains. Readers familiar with prisons or other criminal justice institutions will understand the need for multiple strategic deployment of convincing arguments: initially for why the arts can and should be practiced in prisons; and secondly, for the ethical obligation to critique and offer novel insights into how participation, representation and

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[12] This conception is raised on p. 5. See Diana Taylor's description of archive/ repertoire in relation to social and artistic performance in Latin America (2003). Taylor's study carefully considers how performance offers new ways of understanding 'what happened' in, for example Argentina's 'Dirty War' by evoking cultural practices alongside examples from mainstream theatre. She articulates how performance operates as a location/ repository of cultural memories as well as creating new collective memories. I am indebted to her approach for engaging the everyday as performance alongside and through formal aesthetic performance (See also 2001, 2006).

empowerment can move beyond platitudes. The conscious engagement with multiple disciplines is not merely customary, but necessary for developing a robust argument against the limiting discourses about women in prison.

As such, the central research questions, which are inter-related, are: what does theatre/ performance offer to the subject of women in prison to challenge stereotypes of 'the cage'? And to what extent and in what ways does performance in (and of) prison challenge/ subvert/ augment/ transform the site itself? The questions raise further sub- questions that are explored in relation to both empirical observation and analysis of contemporary performances. Namely, how do women in prison use performance tactics as part of their daily survival? And how are women in prison represented in theatre?

Walls and Barbed Wire: Addressing Limitations
The decision to engage with women in prison as a research topic has its drawbacks. Firstly, one has to counter the prevailing myths and stereotypes about who women in prison are. Then, one has to navigate access to the institution in order to pose questions, seek answers and gain experience. These two hurdles are endlessly repeated throughout the process of engaging with literature and exploring representations of prison and prisoners in popular culture and contemporary performance. They are repeated during the process of fieldwork, and again when writing up.

In this research project, I initially intended to enter several women's prisons in order to test several hypotheses about women and the institutional frame. However, the limitations of humanities researchers' entry requirements related to research clearance prevented me from accessing more than one institution. This is strongly related to the current interest in instrumental, quantitative research that supports existing regimes. It is not in the prison service's interest to grant access to research that is too critical of the institution and that begins from a position of identification with women in prison as incarcerated, potentially suffering human beings who are capable of agency. The result is that I was able to access one institution and remained

there for the duration of a longer project. My time on active fieldwork in the prison was reduced. This was extremely valuable in the awareness that this logistical limitation also exposed a weakness in many research projects that draw on applied theatre models. Resultantly, I have used this limitation in the argument in order to reflect on and through the prison's performance rather than make an account of a single mode of practice.

It is necessary to point towards three caveats that should be considered foundational in the thesis. The research does not attempt to identify performance/ resistance as 'good' and the institution as 'bad' but works across complexities and conflicts to engage with more nuanced views of the field and the ways women's everyday performances call institutional norms and values into question. However, as its fundamental position, this research is placed within a feminist criminology and radical feminist performance context, which question the structures of power that have led to the sense that the status quo is fixed and irrevocable. Also foundational is that the ideological positioning of criminal(ised) women as 'bad girls/ unruly women' dictates the ways they are staged in performance.

The second caveat is that women in prison are not a homogenous group, defined by a community of interests.[13] They are not a collective connected by any particular ideology, history, religion, language, or 'nation'. Rather, they hold as many positions of identification, belonging and resistance as women outside of prison.[14] They are considered a 'community of location', and part of what performance can do is explore how the location is mapped across other identifications. Yet, it is a mistake to imagine that women in prison would experience punishment in the same way, or manage pathways towards 'rehabilitation' in the same ways. The complexity of engaging with these multiplicities is evident throughout this thesis. Women in prison have no discernible common discourse, but they have a current common experience of being

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[13] See, for example, Jean-Luc Nancy's (1991) *The Inoperative Community*.

[14] This notion is somewhat refined in relation to the most recent feminist criminology which shows that disproportionate numbers of women from minority groups and poor people are incarcerated, which has led some criminologists to assert that race and poverty do assert a sense of 'community' which is criminalised. Yet, it is out of the scope of this thesis to fully explore the ways poverty, class and 'race' constitute criminal communities. However, the warning is acknowledged in the model of tragic containment (see Chapter 2).

incarcerated, which leads to my assertion that their common experiences can be understood through Bourdieu's notion of 'field' and 'habitus'.[15]

The final caveat to address is the preponderance of male theorists whose sociological principles I have animated in relation to concerns of women in prison.[16] I have clearly positioned this work as a feminist project, and thus it would be preferable to engage with existing feminist paradigms, and draw on works by feminist scholars. I do rely on feminist criminologists whose analyses of the patriarchal criminal justice system are foundational to this project. Yet, I maintain that there is a productive potential in the recuperation of theories (such as Bourdieu's) that are evidently useful for feminist analysis and to consider their value in the paradigm of women's prisons. In part, this serves to validate the theories, but does not, as some feminist perspectives would have it, mirror the experiences of women who must submit to the phallocentric discourse of the institution. Instead of 'reading' women through the hitherto 'masculine' theories, I attempt to 'engender' the theories (*vide* Toril Moi, 1991) by attending to the particular potential of gender categories and performances to trouble theory's singular force. The result is that feminist criminology's complaints about women's (re)victimisation in institutions designed for men are complemented by the critical theorisation of how women's everyday performances can be understood as gendered resistance against a range of oppressions.

The chapter descriptions below offer a sense of what approaches have been used in the research, as well as pointing towards how the arguments prove productive for an understanding of both social processes and cultural outcomes as 'performance'. Chapter One 'Against Representation: Performance Ethnography in Women's Prison' outlines the methodological approach in the research. The methodological issues set the ground for the whole project as space, agency and the dynamic of outside researcher offer important considerations for the argument. The chapter provides an argument for the relevance of an autoethnographic framing, which serves to locate my

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[15] This is considered in Chapter 2.
[16] This is particularly relevant in the example of Raymond Williams (1977) who has been critiqued for his obliteration of 'female' subjectivity through the use of the obligatory masculine pronoun, demonstrating a patriarchal bias. Yet, I animate his 'structure of feeling' in relation to Elaine Aston's (2003) feminist re-appropriation thereof.

own embodied praxis as performance practitioner/ researcher moving through prison spaces. The careful consideration of the relationship between prisoners and their locale invites a theoretical framing that analyses containment.

The second chapter 'Habitus and Tragic Containment' articulates the primary theoretical frame for the research. It is predicated on Erving Goffman's influential research on 'total institutions' (2007), and argues for the value of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of 'field' and 'habitus' (1987) in prison based research. Furthermore, the theoretical concerns posited by feminist criminology are threaded through the articulations of 'habitus', since I argue that both site and dispositions are inherently gendered. The research seeks to demonstrate that the operations of power, discipline, punishment and rehabilitation need to consider and acknowledge the ways gender (and other categorisations of race, class and ethnicity) are practiced, enforced, and performed. The theoretical concerns are indicated in a model that functions in several ways throughout the research; namely to explore the characterisation of women in prison as 'victims', 'survivors' or 'heroes'. This model is later used to analyse applied theatre performance, contemporary performances and the everyday performances of women in prison. The chapter offers the theoretical architectural blueprints that inform the remaining argument.

The third chapter 'Genealogies of Prison *as* Performance: Towards a Theory of Simulating the Cage' serves to elaborate the ways prison operates as both a cultural trope and a performative mechanism in a range of interrelated ways. This chapter takes on Foucault's conception of the panopticon, which sees each cell as a 'little theatre' (1977). [17] By means of establishing a genealogical sense of the prison's function within wider society, I introduce three examples; the Stanford Prison Experiment, conducted by Zimbardo and colleagues (Haney et al, 1973) and the performance art staging, by Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Coco Fusco of 'Two Undiscovered Amerindians visit…' (1992). The final example is Rideout's 'replica cell', which was installed at the Southbank Centre as part of the exhibition 'Art by

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[17] I have worked with the 1977 translation by Sheridan.

Offenders,' (2010). This detailed analysis of simulations of cells provides an important springboard for the argument as it outlines the public visibility of 'the cage', with the suggestion that simulated cells inevitably return audiences to a conservative, rather than radical, point of view about the function of prisons.

Taking another line of enquiry in the radial design of the thesis, Chapter four, 'Trauma, Strategies and Tactics: Problems of Performance *in* Prison', introduces the practices of applied theatre in prison, drawing on two main examples from Clean Break Theatre Company and Geese Theatre Company. Both examples are explored in relation to key concerns raised by trauma theory, articulated through an understanding of Michel de Certeau's 'strategies' and 'tactics' (1984). The chapter offers a critical perspective on the ways prison spaces and the functions of prison are enacted through arts programmes that may claim radical intent. In other words, despite appearances of emancipatory intent, when practiced within the prison, theatre practice is always already subservient to the hegemonic structures of the institution. The chapter argues that this relationship must be articulated, and not subsumed by the ideologies of 'transformation' or 'liberation' that inevitably do not stand up to scrutiny in relation to institutional discourses. As such, it offers a valuable set of challenges against which to analyse my fieldwork conducted in HMP Drake Hall.

Chapter five 'Ethnography: Performance *of* Prison' provides an ethnographic insight into the everyday habitus of women in prison. The chapter analyses the processes of the researcher entering and exiting the prison and the daily rhythms of prison work, education, and 'interventions' for the women incarcerated there. The main function of the chapter is to demonstrate the ways 'performance' tactics are utilised as a means of coping (through an understanding of Goffman's 'line' and 'face'). These performances are not (necessarily) transgressive or radical but tactics that amount to 'performances for survival'. This is understood in relation to masking past identities or challenging background stories and the ability to develop new personae within the frame of the institution as field. In addition, the chapter considers how prison rules and regulations demand and reward good 'performance' in ways that are explicitly gendered. The chapter returns to the understanding of carceral performance by exploring how the

habitus of women is in turn circumscribed by wider patriarchal discourses. The understandings emerging from research with women set the ground for a reading of contemporary plays about women in prison that is inflected with concerns from feminist criminology.

The research then turns towards contemporary plays *about* prison in Chapter six 'Staging Prisons', in an attempt to explore the ways in which public representations of prison have maintained the allure of the hidden cages of the prison. Prison spaces tend to be portrayed in limited ways, and prisoners as victims of 'the system' - a trope that is also well rehearsed in prison films. The plays I analyse reflect a wider array of positions for the characters. The model 'victim-survivor-hero' articulates the workings of these plays, which are Chlöe Moss' *Fatal Light* (2010)*;* Rebecca Lenkiewicz' *An Almost Unnameable Lust* (2010) and *Her Naked Skin* (2008); and Lucy Kirkwood's *it felt empty when the heart went at first but it is alright now* (2009).

The final chapter 'Performance *through* Prison: Institutional Ghosts and Traces of the Traumatic' seeks to engage with the step away from prison as the site of performance; not as the site of performance of sentences, but as a phantasmagoric repetitive image that maintains a presence after women have been released. In this chapter, I explore how the argument has defined prison as a field. The two examples I analyse are Clean Break's education programme and the charity Women in Prison. The chapter considers to what extent the prison maintains a performative function in the lives of women post-release. Incarceration is seen as a process towards successful reintegration in society – a rehearsal for successful performance of citizenship and belonging. As such, prison is discursively framed as a performative process: a space that gathers a group of social actors together to collectively and individually undertake a temporal programme that is intended to lead to rehabilitation; in which the citational preparation for *becoming* is itself a performance.

The chapters collectively engage in telling a multi-faceted story that draws upon several disciplines. The thesis thus does not provide clear answers to the 'problem' of women in prison. That would suggest that the question asked how performance could

resolve women's relationship with incarceration, which occludes the ways crime and justice are always already socially constructed and culturally mediated. Rather, using performance as methodology and object of analysis allows me to problematise both the institution and the women's responses to incarceration. The throughlines of the argument could be grasped in a number of ways: one reading of the argument relates to spatial relationships and representation; another details a set of challenges raised by feminist criminology and how performance manifests some of these concerns.

The study engages women in prison in re-framing both their own experiences and examples of performance practice to explore alternative characteristics by considering them in relation to a spectrum of 'victim-survivor-hero'. This is a novel addition to existing knowledge. The aim is not to seek ways of theatre representing women in prison to the extent that 'the public' can identify with them. Rather, it serves to expose the ways performance strategies and tactics perpetuate rigid typologies of women (both in prison and upon release). The argument points towards the need for radical revision of the potential of performance to disrupt hegemonic spaces, to shatter mimetic assumptions, and to expand epistemological approaches to the subject of women in prison. In particular, the research articulates the importance of artistic interventions and theatre representations to move beyond characterising women as merely victims or survivors.

CHAPTER ONE:
AGAINST REPRESENTATION: PERFORMANCE ETHNOGRAPHY IN WOMEN'S PRISON

Introduction

For Diana Taylor, performance is defined as 'simultaneously connoting a process, a praxis, an episteme, a mode of transmission, an accomplishment, and a means of intervening in the world' (2003: 15). What is under investigation in this thesis is women's repertoires of daily life in prison, or what I consider in Chapter 2 to be prison 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1990). I am also interested in exploring repertoires of embodied practices as 'storing and transmitting knowledge' (Taylor, 2003). Thus my methodology is concerned with how best to exploit the operations of performance itself in order to investigate day-to-day performances in and of prisons as well as re-animate debates on how cultural products perpetuate or disrupt hegemonic understanding of the world of prisons. My intention here is to outline a methodological approach that explicitly defines the importance of critical performance ethnography (Denzin, 2003) in relation to the subject of women in prison. In particular, I offer a focused justification of the informing framework I have drawn from Dwight Conquergood (2002a). I am intent on unpacking the possibilities this research opens up for a radical re-visioning of women in prison by troubling the ways cultural representations rely on fixed, deterministic and normative roles. The methodology has engaged with women's own articulations of subjectivity inside and outside the prison, and how they propose new understandings of prison for spectators and audiences of performances about prison.

This chapter makes an account of the methodological framework in the thesis by attending to the potential for performance as a methodology (more specifically, the use of performance ethnography) to engage with the specific problems I have identified in the field of performance in prisons. This research project is predicated on a set of dualisms that are made visible through investigation of how prisons stage separations of good/ bad, inside/ outside, now/ then. I am concerned with how carceral spaces stage stories of women's procedure through the mechanisms of

rehabilitation to emerge as citizens post-release.[1] The mechanisms of criminal justice produce profoundly resonant images of societal inequalities by firstly, criminalising marginalised people; and secondly, rendering them doubly marginalised due to the residual stigma of incarceration. In addition, cultural representations of prison and prisoners' stories create the space in which structural oppression and marginalisation are made visible in relation to the prevailing logics of crime and justice. A study that attempts to engage with criminal justice must take an explicit position on these defining logics, and their concomitant dualisms. Thus, it has been necessary to develop a multi-method approach that draws on feminist research in order to augment the largely positivist research frameworks that have characterised research about performance in and of prisons.

This is a multi-layered investigation, though the arguments in this and subsequent chapters demonstrate that the interweaving of performance, ethnography and autoethnography provide an important counterpoint to the extant documents of prison theatre and applied theatre in prison. Indeed, since the contents of this chapter are concerned with justifying this methodology, it may appear as if the entire thesis would be presented as an ethnographic wandering through prisons, with descriptions of creating and observing prison theatre. Instead, I argue for a robust methodology in which the embodied, subjective encounters with performance in and of prison are foregrounded in relation to analysis of plays and theatre projects. In other words, ethnographic tools perform a function in chapters that do not explicitly appear to be ethnographic. This chapter places a somewhat overt emphasis on the methodological implications of ethnography, although not every chapter accounts for direct fieldwork experience. Rather, ethnographic principles have guided the holistic research design.

The methodology offers a contribution to new knowledge since it firstly identifies the current shortcomings in existing research and practice, and proposes an iterative and located critical reflexivity. Prison performance is understood through the interpretive

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[1] This follows Nina Billone's (2009) argument that incarcerated people do not count as citizens since they do not hold the civic responsibility of the vote. The UK is remarkable in Europe for consistently refusing to grant prisoners the right to vote despite European Human Rights laws. See Prison Reform Trust, 2013a.

labour of both making, witnessing and thinking about performance in prisons. I would like to add that this methodological approach emerges from a privileged position within higher education rather than the industry of arts in criminal justice, and, throughout the thesis, I make account of the ways this privilege has inscribed the possibilities open to me for critical analysis.[2]

The project employed two methodological strategies: firstly, I conducted arts-based practice and research with women in prison. I conducted weekly theatre workshops with 13 women at HMP Drake Hall in Staffordshire over the course of 2 months. Secondly, I engaged in reframing prison theatre – live performance, play texts and archival accounts of performance – in relation to the fieldwork. Both sets of 'encounter' with women in prison – in the site and through staged representations – have led to my understanding of the performance of prisons. My chosen methods attempt to counter the exclusionary and somewhat mechanistic, messianic overtones of written accounts of many arts interventions in prisons (see Cheliotis, 2012b; Ruding, 2012). In this chapter, my account of the methodology does not merely attempt to list research methods and justify the relevance of fieldwork methods. Rather, I have reflected the predominant models deployed in contemporary applied arts practices in order to position my own practice and research choices. As such, this chapter includes some critical consideration of the context from relevant literature.

Performing (for) Survival: Defining the Project[3]
This chapter outlines a methodological framework for the thesis by making claims for a specific approach to data collection through theatre practice in prisons. However, it also serves as a foundation to the wider approach that runs through the project. Defining the project by means of arguing for a particular methodology maps theatre

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[2] In chapter 4, for example, I critique the paucity of rigorous research that engages with critical questions in the field of arts in criminal justice, while acknowledging that companies face funding agendas alongside the institutional aims of specific prisons. My awareness of the economic context frames my understanding of the tendency to over-report 'success', and to do so in the terms of commissioners.

[3] The PhD project forms part of a larger research investigation that explores the particularities of performance in sites of extremity and oppression (such as prisons, concentration camps or refugee camps). One of the outcomes of the project is a forthcoming edited volume edited by Lisa Peschel & Patrick Duggan (forthcoming, 2015).

and performance practices across epistemological concerns. Performance, in this thesis, infiltrates and responds to every research choice – from determining the practical details of conducting performance practice in prison to defining how data analysis methods may be animated in appropriate ways.

The introduction already outlined the foundational questions of this research. Several additional questions have helped to drive the shape of the project, suggesting a mode of enquiry, rather than being answered in this project. Some of these questions engage with disciplinary borders and boundaries, for example considering how to challenge/ critique applied theatre models in criminal justice. Other concerns relate to the categorisation of 'victim' and 'survivor', in particular to how we can further understand the complex negotiation of identifying as/ rejecting the label of 'victim'. It would be necessary in a longer term research project to consider to what extent and in what ways 'survivors' in prison are victimised, as well as engaging with how prison itself operates along the dialectic of victim—survivor. Concerns relating to performance and the performativity of prison also demand further research. The four main criminological categories used for exploring how prisoners cope with incarceration are: regulation, deprivation, adaptation and resistance (Goffman, 2007; Sykes, 1958).[4] The research considers how performance cuts across these four categories of meaning to animate, trouble and distress fixed understandings of women's incarcerated bodies.

The thesis offers a theoretical analysis modeled through a range of performance modes (from applied theatre, through site specific performance, via stage productions and everyday performance). By means of documenting the rationale behind the research design and analysis, this section makes a claim for an ethnographic approach that is augmented by performance. Since the research field includes several

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[4] These categories are discussed in greater depth in later chapters. What is important to note at this point is that 'resistance' is the tactic I am most concerned with, firstly because resistance positions actions as choices with potential impact on the field or environment, and therefore hold more political and social potential for the re-visioning of the institution. However, this also raises the need for questioning how resistance is understood, on whose terms, and with what repercussions. My specific understanding of resistance emerges forcefully in Chapters 5 and 6, whereby I am not merely concerned with a normative model of resistance to the regime (in the form of damage to property or rioting, for example), but also more personal, embodied acts of resistance that disrupt the prison's functions (such as self-harm or hunger strike) as well as the risky choice of developing friendships or romantic relationships within the institution.

overlapping and intersecting areas of interest, this methodological overview attempts to do several things at once: namely, to engage with the wide implications of an ethnographic methodology; but also to refine the tools for this specific project in relation to its feminist approach, its critical approach and its location in women's prisons. This journey includes gaining access, establishing rapport, and gaining consent, conducting research focus-groups/workshops, and leaving the active fieldwork aside for reflection and writing up (Brock & Pettit, 2007; Denzin, 2003; Freire, 1988; Hesse-Bieber & Leavey, 2008; Madison, 2012, Mazzei & O'Brien, 2009; Rhodes, 2001; 2009; Taylor, 1996a; 1996b). This final stage sits alongside 'member checking', which is an important means of ensuring that ethnographic research reflects accurate and fair data, according to the 'members' participating in the field-based research.[5] However, characterising this as a journey does not imply a chronological shift from one 'stage' to another. Rather, my re-working of traditional ethnographic methods in the specific location has resulted in a more iterative and dialogic pathway into and out of prison. Reflexive writings from my research diary have been regularly updated. Thus, the 'writing stage' mentioned above is not distinct from the planning and implementation of research, but rather indicates that there is a distinct mode of editing and writing up the findings after a clearly defined period of fieldwork. I also outline and justify a further ethnographic frame that is deployed in this research: that of autoethnographic reflexive accounts which, I argue, augment the ethnography of performance in women's prison by articulating the researcher's performance in relation to the stages of entering and exiting the 'field'.

Transgressing Disciplines: From Ethnography to Performance Ethnography
In the course of this chapter I present three key challenges to the research, and propose the methodological choices I have made that counteract these challenges. Firstly, there is the potential for prison ethnography to be accused of appropriation (Liebling, 1999; Owen, 1998; Sutton, 2011; Waldram, 2009; Wacquant 2002; 2005). Secondly, ethnography makes particular demands on research in relation to documentation of fieldwork (Castellano, 2007; Crapanzo, 2007; Feldman, 1995; Lee-Treweek & Linkogle, 2000; Lovell, 2007). Finally, in a thesis that aims to challenge

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[5] See D. Soyini Madison (2012) for an explicit overview of critical ethnography.

partial representations of women in prison, there are methodological implications for the research methods in the attempt to countervail the limitations textual notation proffers to the complex, embodied and emergent phenomenon of being in prison (Phillips & Earle, 2010; Waldram, 2009). Throughout the methodological design, I have been aware of what Philip Taylor has called 'crystallisation'. This occurs through examining practices that reject 'positivist notions of truth, validity and falsification' which serve to confirm 'the importance of struggle, ambiguity and contradiction' (1996b: 44).[6]

Prisons as institutions pose particular problems or challenges for research. I suggest that there are four central problems that are made evident in pursuing fieldwork-based research in prisons. These problems are not necessarily discrete, chronological or hierarchical, but rather interpolate each other. The first ontological problem is of how to understand being in prison (in particular the distance between entering and leaving (practitioners and officers) and living there (prisoners)). The second is an epistemological problem of how to understand prison (its material conditions, its social and political functions and its daily operations), and what we know of prisoners (through consuming representations via cultural products in media and performance modes). Thirdly, I work through the methodological problem of how to avoid appropriation of prisoners' voices. Finally, I am concerned with the ethical problems associated with doing research in prisons.

This chapter seeks to unpack these four interrelated problems by examining their implications for research design, fieldwork, analysis and dissemination. The wider research project is inspired by the radical performance-based ethnographic research conducted by Dwight Conquergood.[7] As such, I use several of his provocations to frame the research methodology, because I believe that an engaged, politically motivated research is necessary within performance studies – not merely because themes in the contemporary performances with which I am concerned are political –

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[6] Laurel Richardson and Elizabeth St Pierre's (2005) Creative Analytic Practice (C.A.P) Ethnography is also a cogent approach, in which writing is considered to be a way of knowing.
[7] His work with Hmong refugees (2007) provides a valuable model of collaborative performance processes as research methodology. His activist perspective on the performativity of death row (2002b), offers a model of explicit political positioning through radical research trajectories. These are further explicated in his writing on methodologies (1989; 1991; 1995).

but because performance itself problematises 'publicness', space, spectatorship and action.

By rethinking the 'world as text' to the 'world as performance', Conquergood suggests that new questions arise which can be clustered around five intersecting points. I outline his points, providing further exploration of how this project aims to engage with each. He asks researchers to engage with performance and cultural process by considering what the 'consequences of thinking about culture as a verb instead of a noun, process instead of product' might be (1991: 190). In this project, this consideration is explored in relation to the prison habitus; in particular both 'institutionalised habitus' and 'transgressive habitus'. [8] The implications for methodology are located in my choice to develop a consultative process with women in prison through performance in order to develop a working understanding of how (re)presentations of women obliterate the multiple complexities of lived experience. This suggests an iterative return to co-production of meaning through the fieldwork process as I developed the model victim-survivor-hero in particular. Conquergood's second point requires thinking through performance and ethnographic praxis: he asks 'what are the methodological implications of thinking about fieldwork as the collaborative performance of an enabling fiction between observer and observed, knower and known?' (1991: 191). The project proposes a feminist participatory process in which collaboration is central to data collection and analysis. This is analysed critically in relation to ethics, authenticity and representation.[9]

Thirdly, Conquergood questions the relationship between performance and hermeneutics, asking 'what kinds of knowledge are privileged or displaced when performed experience becomes a way of knowing, a method of critical inquiry, a mode of understanding?' (1991: 191). These considerations are explored in detail in the chapters relating to the performance of prison as well as performance through

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[8] For an explicit overview of 'habitus' and how the term is used in this project, see the theoretical overview in Chapter 2.
[9] See Chapter 4, 5 and 6. Each attends to a different model of performance practice in relation to these concerns.

prison.[10] I have been particularly aware of the ways in which 'resistance' poses particular problems in the research since (as a visiting practitioner/ researcher) I did not intend to valourise destructive acts over compliance with institutional norms. There is thus, inherent in this research, a tension between the activist intentions of questioning the efficacy of institutions for so many of the female inmates as well as a recognition of the limitations of short term contact through an arts programme to effect change. Rather, the research points towards the challenges for performance practitioners involved in cultural production to broaden and deepen the scope of their representations of life behind bars.

The penultimate consideration relates to performance and scholarly representation. What are the rhetorical problematics of performance as a complementary or alternative form of 'publishing' research?[11] This research was designed around the possibilities of performance representations within prison to challenge hegemonic narratives for women participants and the prisoner/ staff audience. However, Conquergood's suggestion relates to the wider academic labour of writing and disseminating work once researchers leave the field. In my case, I have elected to ensure that I have maintained accuracy (through member-checking) in order to ensure ethical academic practice. However, I was also aware of the possibility of perpetuating a divide between academic and field registers, and thus, have engaged in publishing in other modes and formats, including in a magazine disseminated to all women's prisons in the UK as well as in a theatre industry journal, in order to reflect the diversity of the wider audience for this research.[12] Finally, Conquergood demands that research should consider the politics of performance. 'What is the relationship between performance and power?' (1991: 191). This question cuts across the analysis in the thesis as a whole forming the basis of the investigation into the performativity of

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[10] See Chapter 5 and 7. I am particularly invested in considering to what extent the institutional knowledges privileged by (many) applied theatre documentation strategies perpetuate a silencing of the complex, messy and often deeply conflicted workshop experiences for both women and practitioners.

[11] While reflexive accounts appear throughout the thesis, a critical analysis of the research is discussed in the conclusion.

[12] See Walsh, A. (2012a) Performing Prisons, Performing Punishment: The Banality of the Cell in Contemporary Theatre. *Total Theatre Magazine,* Summer edition, pp. 32-33; and Walsh, A. (2012b) Performing for Survival. *Women in Prison Magazine*, Spring 2012, pp. 34-37.

prison.[13] By using Conquergood's questions to frame the research, I position this methodology in the realm of activist ethnography. However, I have sought to extend the methodological contribution of this research by not merely applying these questions to a specific context of women in prison. Rather, I have attempted to offer an explicitly feminist perspective to these challenges. In doing so, I propose that there is an important set of tactics deployed by women in prison and performance practitioners making work about and with women.

Interdisciplinary studies that engage with ethnographic methods have tended to pay obeisance to what Clifford Geertz calls 'thick description' (1973).[14] His mode of mapping the multi-layered fieldnotes through descriptions makes allowance for extended metaphors and engages detail. Yet, his approach has been sharply critiqued by Conquergood (1991) for perpetuating the researcher's privilege in translating lived realities into text.[15] Thus, while I do employ metaphors, I deliberately avoid Geertzian models in order to favour a feminist approach that engages explicitly with location and intersecting vectors of marginality (Abu-Lughod, 2000; Minh-ha, 2011). It has thus been important, in this study, to ensure that my feminist ethnography of and with women in prison retains awareness of these critiques. Abu-Lughod says that researchers should

> find ways to write that work against the typifications of communities that made them into distinct and alien cultures because of the way such distinctions are inevitably hierarchical and tied to larger geopolitical structures of power (Abu-Lughod, 2000: 262).

In this research, I attempt to avoid constructing and perpetuating positions that assume a 'we' – readers that are necessarily distinct from the performers and performances under investigation. Occasionally, where I have been tempted to position myself alongside other audience members, for example, it has been necessary to use 'we' as I participated/ spectated alongside others. I do not assume there to be a unifying experience, but rather, respond to the dramaturgical framing of events that

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[13] Chapter 3 engages with these concerns.
[14] Geertz says: 'Doing ethnography is establishing rapport, selecting informants, transcribing texts, taking genealogies, mapping fields, keeping a diary, and so on. But it is not these things, techniques and received procedures that define the enterprise. What defines it is the kind of intellectual effort it is: an elaborate venture in […] 'thick description' (1973: pp. 5-6).
[15] This is also expounded upon by Bacon, 2005.

(more often than not) do make such assumptions. These instances are clearly signalled in the text.

Peter Caster's engagement with performances about prison demonstrates the value of activist-identified performance that proposes mobilisation through recognising and witnessing (2004). He is particularly concerned to demonstrate how performance can (unwittingly) stage separations between an imagined 'us' (audience) and 'them' (the protagonists and their stories), which should be actively challenged. Activist research methodologies propose strategies that destabilise these presumptions, particularly in relation to what 'solutions' are proposed to problems (Richie, 2004). Feminist research approaches have also provided valuable negotiated approaches in which research 'problems' and 'solutions' are not seen as fixed or from one particular hegemonic perspective, but, rather, negotiated through dialogic means (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1981).

I believe the case for ethnography as a research approach is in confluence with the site and nature of prison fieldwork (Wacquant, 2002). Yet, there is still the need to unpack how performance operates within the site as a research method with and through ethnographic methods. Firstly, it is justifiable since most studies of female prisoners reflect the low literacy levels (Hughes, 1998) of women in prison, and as such, performance becomes a means of privileging embodied epistemologies rather than text. Secondly, because engaging in performance predicates alternative ways of thinking and doing for the women – who tend to become used to routines and habitual ways of engaging or retreating from prison life. In a wider argument for moving away from text as primary source in ethnography, Conquergood posits:

> The hegemony of textualism needs to be exposed and undermined. Transcription is not a transparent or politically innocent model for conceptualizing or engaging the world. The root metaphor of the text underpins the supremacy of Western knowledge systems by erasing the vast realm of human knowledge and meaningful action that is unlettered, "a history of the tacit and habitual" (2002: 147).[16]

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[16] Furthermore, his approach considers the possibility that polyvocal texts and sources are necessary when working with marginal or oppressed peoples. 'Oppressed people everywhere must watch their backs, cover their tracks, suck up their feelings, and veil their meanings. The state of emergency under which many people live demands that we pay attention to messages that are

His warning adds to the criminological approach that prisoner's natural suspicion of 'authority' could result in skewed data – either because respondents resist participation, or because they provide answers they believe the researcher wants to hear. Some of the reasons for this could be the opposing desires to either form allegiances with 'outsiders' who may be perceived to have empathy, leading prisoners to share too much personal information; and the tendency to assume that outsiders will stigmatise and judge prisoners and thus withhold information. Both poles present challenges for the external researcher, who must navigate the charge of emotional manipulation and create an atmosphere of trustworthiness and openness to engage participants. The claim for manipulation (or in 'prisonspeak', 'conditioning') is one of the foundations of security awareness. In some autoethnographic sections I make account of such moments, reflecting also on the slipperiness between engaging affect, performing victimhood and the desire for witness.[17]

My own navigation of trust and mistrust and gaining access to an institution has been made possible by strong affiliation with an insider. My gatekeeper to HMP Drake Hall was writer in residence there, which is a role I formerly held in male prisons. Her presence served to pacify the bureaucrats and engage women participants for the performance project.[18] Thus, incarceration, its traces and tropes are explored not only as I see them written on the bodies of the women I observe, but also through the phenomenological autoethnographic reflections on my own journeys into and out of prisons – invoking the ambivalences and ambiguities of such labour. The unfolding development of an ethnographic approach that engages with performance is risky, unsettling and contingent.[19] It is necessarily tough, challenging preconceptions at every point: from negotiating entry to daily justifications of materials, traces of paranoia about institutional rules – whether aspirin counts as contraband, or whether

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encrypted; to indirect, nonverbal, and extralinguistic modes of communication where subversive meanings and utopian yearnings can be sheltered and shielded from surveillance' (2002: 148).

[17] See Miles & Clark, 2006 and Peaker & Johnston, 2007.

[18] This gatekeeping function is explored more fully in Chapter 5.

[19] See McLean & Liebing (2007) for a collection of valuable of the 'shadow side' of fieldwork, exploring risk and dangers of choices in the field.

participants have been deliberately sent somewhere else as a 'sabotage' by unsupportive staff.[20]

The critiques I highlight above necessitate a move beyond mere participant observation or standard interviews in prisons in order to collect different modes of data. Feelings, dynamics, images, metaphors and moments of performance can yield complex and rich data that allows analysis to move beyond 'subjective' or 'objective' binaries to an intersubjective creative map of words and gestures. Standard ethnographic models of 'participant observation' in social sciences [21] become augmented by the fieldwork process being reframed as and by performance.[22] The suggestion that performance offers alternatives to the ethnography of the 'static other' has been largely taken up by performance studies as a field (see Schechner, 2006). Bacon asserts the need for a 'performative imagination' that cuts across field-based practices and reflexive practices (2005), while Hare states that performance ethnographies 'should show, instead of tell. They should unsettle the status quo and taken for granted assumptions.' What is more, they should make 'space for multiple, multi-layered voices, experience and attitudes to be expressed' (2008: 2).

Feminist informed performance ethnographic methodologies have the potential for engaging a specific and located view of a problem. Yet simultaneously, ethnographic practice in the field of prison can engender what Mary Bosworth calls the 'tyranny of intimacy' (1999: 73). In the case of women's prisons, ethnographic accounts can help expose misery, chaos, violence and abuse; but too much concern with personal narratives can cause research to lose sight of the contextual causes and effects.[23] Criminologists Coretta Phillips and Rod Earle suggest that:

> In popular culture the spectacular 'othering' of prison and prisoners substitutes for, and obscures, its banality and its grinding dullness, distancing people from responsibility for its more mundane realities. This is not to suggest a simplistic political solidarity with men and women 'behind bars' is

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[20] See Clark, 2004; McAvinchey, 2006b; Weaver, 2009.
[21] See Garfinkel, 1967; Heritage, 1984; Goffman, 1990; Lemert & Branaman, 1997.
[22] See Denzin, 2003; Madison, 2012; Mienczakowski, 1995; Pelias, 1999; Probyn, 2004; Turner, 1982.
[23] See also Waldram, 2009.

either possible or necessary for criminological researchers, but registers the profound ethical ambiguities of conducting such research (2010: 20).

This warning notwithstanding, Richie shows that the value of prison ethnography lies in its ability to 'show how amid profound chaos and despair, women's prisons could be sites of resistance and reform' (2004: 449), suggesting that such values encourage feminist scholars and activists outside to reflect more deeply, and to respond boldly and in radical ways. This is the spirit of Conquergood's ethnographic methods, which form the basis of my own approach.

However, prior to shifting register to outline and justify the methodological choices in this project, it is necessary to signpost another method that is used throughout the thesis: autoethnographic framing. Wendy Chapkis provides a clear rationale for the use of autoethnographic reflections, suggesting they become a means of revealing one's own 'investment in debates […] while exposing deeply conflicted reactions to the practice' (2010: 489). She adds that proximity and engagement can be seen as resources and not impediments to good research (2010: 491). The framing of the research with explicit autoethnographic accounts of my own position as relatively privileged outsider to the criminal justice system engages with a tradition of feminist scholarship in which personal, embodied, experiential ways of knowing are rendered valuable for scholarly interest.[24] 'Ethnographic writing is not cultural reportage, but cultural construction, and always a construction of self as well as of the other' (Stacey, 1988: 24). These sections intend to expose and interrogate the operations of power and privilege that my gender, class, 'race', ethnicity and education bring to bear on my engagement with women participants in the field. As such, the autoethnographic mode is sometimes poetic and often personal, reflexive and interrogative.[25] This choice highlights my personal investment in the research process, serving to destabilise the perception of a neutral or objective researcher. My voice is raised in dialogue with the women's, and together, the dialogue (and the complexities,

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[24] See Abu-Lughod, 2000; Bacon, 2005; Chapkis, 2010; Minh-ha, 2011; Probyn, 2004; and Richie, 2004.
[25] They appear, as in the introductory chapter, as typographically distinct sections in order to signal the shift in register.

disagreements and reflexivity that are implied by dialogue) leads to rethinking theories and practices of performance. Furthermore, this choice adds a triangulation of experience to the research materials.

The autoethnographic approach makes allowance for the need to traverse conventional disciplinary borders. I do so by counterposing personal archival experience and knowledge alongside more current fieldwork immersion. In a departure from the traditional modes that favour 'objective' observation, critical ethnography supports a researcher 'doing' something in the field, as argued by Madison (2012). This is because 'doing' can provide closer, more accurate understandings of the research participants' lifeworlds, as suggested by Loïc Wacquant's notion of 'apprenticeship' (2005; 2011). Yet, it is important to acknowledge that the practices in this project (namely theatre based workshops and focus groups) are not traditional ethnographic practices in the field. However, they supplement the observational data gathered during time spent waiting, observing, being moved from one building to another. 'Doing' moves the researcher from the outmoded objective position into an embodied and located position prized by feminists. This view is upheld by Diana Taylor, who considers that ethnographers also play a role in

> the drama that he or she (in theory) is there to simply observe. The encounter is constructed theatrically, staged in the here and now, rather than as a past-tense narrative description, but always with its eye to future readers (2003: 76).

Critical Perspectives: Performance Ethnography in the Context of Prison

Many of the foundations of ethnography presume that an 'outsider' is entering an unknown context in order to observe, document and analyse its social structures, beliefs and rituals in an attempt to bring back something 'new' (Castañeda, 2006; Waldram, 2009). Many radical scholars working across disciplines have asserted that such rigid adherence to norms of ethnographic practice is to be avoided (Ferrell, 2009). At the heart of my approach, then, is the need to question all of the assumptions that appear to permeate an ethnographic methodology. The critical perspective outlined by

D. Soyini Madison (2012) to this specific project raises several pertinent points that I outline below.

Ethnographies should reflect on the role of 'outsider', and whether indeed a 'culture' or fieldwork site can ever be entirely unknown. This is particularly important in a prison setting, since so much popular culture and the news media characterise institutions in very particular ways. In my case, I needed to guard against pre-fixed categories from my own archive of prison experiences, since each institution is different, and since I am also changed as a result of prior experiences. 'Outsiderness' is both a privileged position marked by status, keys, polite introduction to the norms and a marginal position in which the daily knowledge of place, rhythm and covert meanings is lost due to the novelty of the experience. For this reason, I chose to include some of my prior prison experiences in archival research diaries to provide the level of detail that can only really be gleaned from long-term fieldwork.

In addition, one should be aware of the politics and power dynamics of 'observation'. There is an important need to place the research process within the wider issues of surveillance, and the dynamic between prisoner- participants and the researcher needs to acknowledge the direction of the gaze. In this regard, I draw on Kershaw's exploration of the panopticon and performance (1999; 2004), and McCorkel's depiction of embodied surveillance as gendered (2003). The researcher should be aware that activities sanctioned by the institution are automatically tainted by 'coercion' and 'control'. I engage with reflexive fieldnotes in order to explore this feature, mapping theories and phenomenological experience against specific instances, quotes and images emerging from fieldwork.

With these initial two dilemmas attended to, there is the further common ethnographic dilemma of 'taking' and 'leaving'. The important concern as anthropology evolved was about going into a host community in order to retrieve something for the benefit of the already privileged researcher. This extended to the initial research questions, the language used to describe activities, and the moral and ethical lens applied to cultural performances. In this research, I needed to identify

ways to ensure that data were not lasciviously sought for a predetermined end, but that the actual, unfolding contribution of participants shaped and determined the findings. A related point is concerned with honouring the voices and stories that emerge and collaborating (through a participatory ethnographic approach) to make meaning (see, in particular, Madison, 2012). This includes regular member checking. This model is particularly relevant for performances that claim to represent prison populations.

While these questions have emerged through considering empirical fieldwork in one women's prison, I am also aware of the need to engage with claims of 'validity' and 'reliability' and so any wariness I demonstrate of manipulating a creative process with women is weighed against the need of the wider project to demonstrate epistemological value beyond a single site. This particular issue also contributed to the design of the project including the charity Women in Prison (WIP) as an additional site for research. The possibility that the fragile and contingent nature of institutional research could limit the potential scope of this project led me to identify further respondents. Despite this choice emerging from a delay in accessing the site of prisons, it has nevertheless served to contextualise the study within the wider policy milieu, and thus forms an important counterpoint to the empirical data gathered in prison.[26]

My concern is that 'value' needs to be unpicked – certainly in relation to who determines the conditions of value; but also relating to defining the terms of value, and the transferability of said value. For example, the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) values research that can assist in defending the 'seven pathways to reducing reoffending'.[27] My argument against this is that arts in general – and (relatively) short term projects in particular – have an unreasonable burden to prove that reoffending is reduced because there are so many further contextual considerations that need to be made. It seems impossible to attempt to document how an arts project stopped one person from stealing handbags, or conclude that five participants refrained from causing arguments on their wings or houseblocks as a

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[26] Further accounts of Women in Prison (WIP) are to be found in Chapter 7.

result of participating in an arts activity. Yet the evidence and impact-driven desire to document 'change' pervades the sector, dictating the perspective from which the practice will be applied, and also forming the philosophical background to how it is evaluated and disseminated.[28]

Most scholarly work on theatre in prisons tends to fall within one of two camps: literary analysis of tropes and prison thematics within play texts, or accounts of applied theatre processes with prisoners. Both rely on a preponderance of prison imagery (walls, fences, journeys to and from prison), concern time, and explore the interpersonal dynamics of prison and its characters. Literary and dramaturgical analysis is helpful in articulating the ways the panopticon frames and forms the subject of inquiry. By contrast, the applied theatre approach positions the work as 'doing' something; claiming transformation by examining behaviours 'before' and 'after'; as well as describing the processes of creative participation 'during' workshops and rehearsals. While it is valuable to classify cases in order to view the multiple ways prison becomes an imagined site, both approaches fix the prison as architecturally and temporally rigid; reinforcing the view that the institution's impact remains as an inevitable traumatic trace or spectre even after leaving it.

By contrast, my vision of this research is as a critical consideration of performances in and of prisons. The prison itself is seen as a character and a site with its inhabitants and workers as extensions of the site (both extending and subverting its operations). The research process itself is characterised as moving through and around the institution – subject to the tensions, regulations and controls of bureaucratic power – as well as opening up spaces of radical possibility within the prison imaginary. Such a process demands rethinking the ways 'objectivity' is valued in empirical research; insisting on a range of alternative epistemological and writing strategies in order to reveal the intersubjective positions of researcher self and artist self in the site. In

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[27] The seven pathways dictate interventions in the prison service, as they relate to the core issues facing prisoners, according to NOMS (National Offenders Management Service) (2011): housing, work, health, addiction, money, family, and behaviour.

[28] News articles and internal evaluation reports tend to valorise 'goodness', 'cooperation' and 'change' without critically reflecting on the details or assumptions implicit in binary thinking. This seems to be a given model in criminological research. See Caulfield, 2010, 2011; Caulfield & Wilson, 2010; Ellis &

pursuit of this methodological and theoretical animation of prison *as* performance, the thesis generates new knowledge.

> ***Fictional Release***
> *I'm reading a short story by Italo Calvino. Short stories are all I can hold onto at this time, because longer works make me feel guilty, but I'm gasping for a fictional release from the grips of theory. Only, Calvino's story has drawn me back in to the prison. He conjures a character, Edmond Dantés, who has been incarcerated in a fortress for years, who addresses the reader directly as if confessing his obsession with imagining his position within the prison.*
>
> *It's a writing experiment – such that the description of the character demands that the reader also imagine her way inside and outside – attempting to remember the many facts, half-memories, postulations and lies told by Dantés – in relation to the second layer of information we are given about the notorious escapee Faria, whose scratchings and regular rhythmic breakouts/ break-ins form the soundtrack to Dantés' time.*
>
> > Everything that is unclear in the relationship between an innocent prisoner and his prison continues to cast shadows on his images and decisions. If the prisoner is surrounded by my outside, that outside would succeed in bringing me back each time I succeeded in reaching it: the outside is nothing but the past, it is useless to try and escape (Calvino, 2002: 287).
>
> *In the manner of a Calvino reader, I pause in the story and try to fathom whether he has succeeded in turning the inside of my head into a page in his story. Time passes as I try and get to the end of a sentence just to affirm that my reality is indeed, outside the prison. The prison is outside me.* (Research Diary, April 2012).

Over the last several years I chose to work as a freelance artist in sites other than prisons. Some of the antipathy I had developed towards the community of arts practitioners in prisons is due to their willingness to collaborate with institutions in order to gain access by develop offending-focused programmes, for example.[29] It is possible to assert that the end justifies the means, but there is a complex interrelationship between the mechanisms of power and punishment and the ways

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Gregory, 2011. For a particularly cogent example in relation to women in prison and a theatre education programme, see Herrmann, 2009.

theatre is instrumentalised to furthering those very aims.[30] Despite some practitioners positioning themselves in opposition to the institution (Heritage, 1998) the overwhelming majority of research on arts in prisons is related to evaluating the 'effectiveness' of the intervention. This is almost never done in the terms of the intervention itself, nor on terms negotiated with participants, but in the language of the regime using terms such as 'compliance', 'education attainment' and the 'numbers of hours of purposeful activity' (Miles & Clark, 2006).[31] My own position is that the arts are simultaneously more likely to benefit the prisoners in a number of ways; and to benefit the institution – which my experience has shown is not always in commensurate measures. I am referring to a suspicion of the tendency to instrumentalise the arts for a policy-driven agenda that does not always take into account the differing needs of prisoners.[32]

Whilst it is clear that there is a wealth of activity occurring in prisons, and behind each of these activities, a flurry of evaluation and report writing to ensure sustainability, this project does not attempt to provide an overview of these activities. Instead, the methodological approach starts from the realisation that a single theatre programme would not be able to 'prove' reduced risk of harm, or even gesture towards 'transformation'. Rather, there is the sensibility that co-researching the stated research 'problem' through performance engages the participants and the researcher in reflexive thinking through, and phenomenological relations to the object of inquiry. The project builds out of a belief that theatre has a responsibility to stage and witness untold stories. Furthermore, it places prison not as the central fixed point that blots out all other meaning-making in participants' lives, but as another node in the narrative of each individual, along with family, identity and belonging. One of its contributions is its refusal to engage in terms such as 'transformation' ubiquitous to 'applied' theatre that pacify funders and please audiences. The addition of an autoethnographic frame of practitioner/ researcher entering prisons charts the

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[29] See Chapter 4 for further exploration of the implications of institutional sanction on creative arts practices.
[30] James Thompson provides a clear sense of this (1998, 2001, 2003, 2004a), as does Baz Kershaw (1999, 2004).
[31] For other examples, see Arts Alliance (2011) and New Philanthropy Capital (2011).
[32] Matarasso (1997) outlined the issues related to viewing the arts as instrument or ornament.

banality of petty bureaucracy and the limited imaginations of institutions as the primary limitations of prisons. Its approach is highly targeted at a specific time, detailing a critical socio-economic context for prisons in the UK.[33]

Whilst I realise the above is polemical, positioning me towards the activist end of the spectrum of research approaches, I nevertheless feel the pathways of the research allow for critical reflexivity, and indeed question the position of applied theatre as a method imbricated within power structures. This is necessary because the arts are not value-neutral interventions that assert their worthiness into areas of deprivation and need. Rather, dynamics, agendas and values that are generated through arts-based project design are influenced by commissioners, funders and institutions. Thus, rigorous attention must be paid to the entire process of developing projects – both applied theatre residencies and playwriting residencies.

In the process of conducting research for this project, it is necessary to explore the possibilities for documenting a process in order to disrupt hierarchical power structures. In lieu of prison as an instrument of both legitimisation and punishment through documents (sentences, prison records, security incident reports and offender management files), it is important to explore how prison influences, shapes and infiltrates the ethnographic processes of note making, meaning generation and member checking. Similarly, it is necessary to think through how the researcher/ practitioner is implicated in ontological oppressions by being sanctioned by the institution. Furthermore, the theatre-based methodology draws on participatory strategies for engaging the women as agents of meaning - making. However, participation in and of itself does not radically alter the meanings and narratives of imprisonment, and this is where my thinking departs from the established canon of applied theatre approaches.[34]

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[33] The specific historiographic context of the state of UK criminal justice and performativity of prisons is further explored in Chapter 3.

[34] Preston highlights the complex and difficult task of navigating 'myriad of agendas, power relations and competing ideological interests' (2009: 127).

Nevertheless, this project proposes that performance provides articulations for subject positions not always possible in other ways within the prison (in other words, seeing performance as making possible translations across discourses). This is done within theatre workshops by engaging body, affect and imagination. My experience in prisons has convinced me that small ruptures within creative workshops provide spaces for participants to reflect. Creative improvisations are embodied in different ways from the routines and habits of prison work, education, and the cycles of legal processes. The workshop is seen as a space in the prison somehow set apart from its reality through re-framing. Unlike the rules and regulations that govern the institution, the laws of performance can bend and shift. However, as later analytic chapters demonstrate, this 'setting apart' is not always productive in the pursuit of transformation of institutions.[35]

Some of the methodological questions relating to this investigation are what are the possibilities and limitations of ethnographic research strategies in combination with performance processes? And how does a frame of performative autoethnographic writing animate/ contextualize the analysis? While these questions are raised here, their resolution is evident in chapters analysing the research materials, most specifically in the concluding chapter.

Ariadne's Threads and the Labyrinths of Arts in Prisons

My autoethnography is an account of entries and exits; a subjective collection of dossiers, letters, monologues and interruptions of theory that have helped forge the frame of the research by writing through its innate tensions, gates, perimeters.

In this account, I'm positioned as Ariadne[36], unravelling a thread of possibility that I will use to navigate the labyrinths (both physical and theoretical) of this research. The threads may themselves lead to blind corners, further pathways leading nowhere, or they may be useful for the reader to hold onto as a means of tracing the journeys and repetitions into the labyrinth. Once we both (reader and I) emerge, we

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[35] Indeed, one of the only prison theatre programmes that deliberately engaged with the institutional frame in pursuit of wider systemic change was conducted at Queen Mary, University of London. People's Palace Projects' five year 'Staging Human Rights' (People's Palace Projects, 2013) was led by Paul Heritage (1998; 2002; 2004).

[36] In the myth, Ariadne helps Theseus to find his way into and out of the labyrinth to kill the Minotaur. It is a myth of escape and abandonment, since once Theseus returns after killing the bull, they flee Knossos together, and he leaves Ariadne on the beach.

can face the possibilities of abandonment together. Hopefully we will both be able to keep the threads as mementoes of our own tracks of knowledge making. (Research Diary, May 2012).

Fieldwork Methodologies: Locating Performance/Research Practice in Prison

This short section provides some of the methodological implications of arts based programmes in a prison context. It is productive as a means of considering the overlapping fields of concern in both performance and research practices in the criminal justice system with a specific focus on methodologies.[37]

The Anne Peaker Centre's *Handbook for Artists* (Peaker & Johnston, 2007) reports that the prison population is approaching the highest annual figure ever recorded in England and Wales – 80 000.[38] The handbook explores the practicalities of working in custodial and correctional settings, particularly providing arguments for a variety of art forms as methods. Jenny Hughes' overview of arts practices in prisons in the UK examines the many issues identified as threats to arts delivery in prevention, in secure settings, and in re-integration contexts; namely the lack of professional best practice and standards in the sector, and the 'roles within the administration and implementation of the intervention' (2005a: 51). She also considers the need to justify the use of arts in a system aimed towards reducing offending, and the issues of 'proof of effectiveness' that have elsewhere been shown to be difficult to quantify.[39] This has particularly been the case within the system of attainment targets that pervades education and correctional services, under stress from government to respond to reduction of numbers, and without budget or resources to support the facilitation of 'soft skills'.[40] Hughes' contention is that the research practice around theatre in prisons is weak, and asserts the need for technical and conceptual review, but acknowledges the reflexivity of many theatre practitioners working in prisons is

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[37] Chapter 4 furthers the review of the field of applied arts in prisons.

[38] Peaker and Johnston show that 'this is nearly more than 20000 more than in 1997' - an astronomical rise in just 10 years (2007: 17). And in the years since then, the figure has risen to over 86 000. Women make up just 5% of the prison population in the UK; with the most recent figures suggesting that 'just under' [sic] 4000 women are imprisoned. That figure is contextualised with the incarceration figure of 13,500 women each year, highlighting the 'churn' of women incarcerated for short-term sentences. (See Prison Reform Trust 2013b).

[39] See Belfiore, 2002 and Matarasso, 1997.

valuable in developing theories of change within this context (2005a: 9-11).[41] She also sees criminal justice as a foundation for the 'government's drive to tackle social exclusion' (2005a: 13). She says

> The arts are seen as an effective response to the need to innovatively engage offenders, many of whom have had negative experiences of formal education, in learning experiences. The arts are seen as an effective means of re-engaging disaffected groups and bringing about a state of 'readiness to learn' through the development of self-esteem and basic personal and social skills (2005a: 39).

Interestingly, Hughes' study of arts practice in the criminal justice settings includes a section of 'impact on the institution' (2005a: 38-39). She suggests, having reviewed the sector, that arts provision reduce 'disciplinary problems and violence in prisons' (2005a: 39). However, as in Paul Heritage's view, the focus is not on how the art form may seek to transform the institution, but how it may collude within its structures of power, 'reducing rule-breaking' (2005a: 38) institutionalising inmates further by making them compliant – more 'docile' (Foucault, 1977). This view is rarely considered in a critical way by artists writing about their own practice – perhaps because of the precarity and marginality of arts discourses, which seem to be concerned with positivistic accounts rather than reflexive accounts.[42] Yet, this raises some important points regarding the ethics of arts practice in prisons, particularly in connection to the expansion of considering representation beyond what Phelan calls the 'traps of visibility' (1993: 10).[43]

In light of the relationship between spectacle and punishment, James Thompson (2003) entreats practitioners to avoid the performance of punishment which pervades

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[40] In Chapter 4 I locate my own work in relation to the wider field of applied theatre in prisons that has gained currency in recent years.

[41] See for example, Cleveland, 2003; Escape Artists, 2006; Johnston & Hewish, 2010. The Arts Alliance, founded in 2008 by arts organisations in criminal justice, has developed an evidence library as well as training programmes to ensure more robust research is accessible.

[42] I have written on this tension in the 'Negotiating Values of Arts in Prisons' paper for the TaPRA Postgraduate Arts Conference 2012.

[43] Matthews writes of the spectacle of suffering that historically warned the public of the hellish connotations of crime. He says 'culprits were expected to show repentance and to confess their crimes before the assembled crowd. Public confessions were often the route to a quick and relatively painless death' (1999: 2). He claims that after the public forms of torture and humiliation of the 18th and 19th centuries, outlined by Foucault, 'punishment was required to be more universal and to penetrate more deeply into the social body if it was to create a docile and responsive workforce' (1999: 12).

the context of prisons, and thus casts a shadow on any performance based project in prisons asking for whom is the performance intended, and how will the prisoners be viewed? He says that we need to examine 'how our performances relate to other performances of punishment and check that they do not display prisoners to the further delight and voyeuristic pleasure of the crowd' (2003: 57). Sketching the morally ambiguous terrain of arts practitioners working in prisons, Paul Heritage asks, 'in entering the prisons, do we seek to create that tranquility or inspire the rebellion?' (1998: 234). In a further provocation he says that

> Theatre has never had an easy time within the prison system and yet it seems very appropriate to prison. Perhaps the performative nature of punishment and the necessary tension between the hidden and the public, which prisons depend on, makes them natural sites for theatre interventions (2004, 97).

It is precisely this compelling interplay between performance, power and the public that informs this research. The performativity of punishment and surveillance are explored in more detail in chapter 3. At this point, I gather the strands of thread binding the arts and prisons together to piece together a methodological approach in which to place my study.

Thompson's critical writing (2001, 2003, 2004a) explores the ethical framing of work in prisons, and can be seen alongside Heritage's (2004) for its rigorous attention to the movement of power and shifting dynamics of the capacity of theatre to mimic narratives of exclusion and domination. In addition, there are several core texts that are concerned with the practice of theatre making within prisons; some of which provide practical advice and outline strategies for coping with excluded participants[44]; whilst others reflect on the placing of theatre within the prison setting, for example Kershaw (2004) on the pathologies of hope in prison theatre. Michael Balfour's edited volume (2004) alongside Thompson's (1998) formed the primary texts for the kinds of practices that were practiced in the UK. US theatre in prisons programmes have been explored by Rachel Williams (2003), and recently, Jonathan Shailor (2011). Yet, many of these practices have been critiqued. For example, Balfour suggests that the cognitive-behavioural approach favoured by institutions, and which underlined the

TIPP Pump! and Blagg! Programmes, is constrained by its disconnect from informing 'grand narratives'. He says that

> the personal construction of the world becomes more than something that is learnt and unlearnt; it is something influenced by common ideologies held by different groups of people determined by social formation like class, gender, race, and age (2003: 15).

By combating the perceived market-driven prison industrial complex (Rusche & Kirchheimer, 2003), the arts offer a means of understanding the 'affect' of incarceration. There is the desire to engage with novel means of limiting harm whilst in custody, which the arts have been proven to do.[45] Baz Kershaw says that

> in any disciplinary system designed by some to control others […] there will probably always be a 'space' for resistance, a 'fissure' in which the subject can forge at least a little radical freedom […] We should see them as crucially *constituting* the dramaturgies of freedom because they represent an absence that creativity seeks to grasp (1999: 156).

Kershaw sees theatre as determined by power, class and hierarchies; and radical theatre that which disrupts or de-stabilises. He specifically refers to how received notions of 'good' and 'evil' are blurred in radical theatre practice. Specifically useful to an analysis of institutions is the performance of absence, aligning prisons to a postcolonial space, or a space of exile (1999: 153). Performance can open up opportunities for radical resistance in the fissures appearing in even the most oppressive sites and contexts (1999: 156). The site of resistance and its performativity in prisons are discussed at greater length in Chapter 3. As I stated earlier in this chapter, my project thus embarks on a dual path: firstly, to conduct arts-based practice/ research in prison with women; and secondly, to engage in reflexive processes of re-framing prison theatre and the performativity of punishment in relation to the fieldwork. The methodology I outline here provides a counterpoint to the 'worthiness' of some applied theatre and performance practices by evoking a critical gloss through the theoretical framework provided by feminist criminology and 'habitus', which are discussed in relation to each other in Chapter 2.

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[44] See Andy Watson about Geese Theatre and the use of masks as psychological defences, 2009.

[45] See, for example Miles & Clarke, 2006; Hughes, 2005a; Peaker & Johnston, 2007.

My performance practice draws on established theatre in prison methods, for example, the earlier work of Thompson (1999, 2003, 2004a) and Baim et al (2002). This includes games and exercises as well as devising methods in order to create collaborative performance. The methods develop from session to session, depending on the specific group of women. In other words, the method is reactive to and dependent on the specific responses in the room. Some of the initial stimulus materials included extracts from plays by Clean Break. These short (2 page) extracts formed thematic starters for devising material around several themes: friendship inside, dependencies and triggers (*This Wide Night,* Moss, 2008); the voice upstairs, the stories we tell ourselves, masks (*Dream Pill*, Prichard, 2010); and dreams deferred (*it felt empty when the heart was gone but it's alright now,* Kirkwood, 2009). These were chosen as a means of iteratively reflecting on the subject matter of representation as well as providing a starting point for discussion on women's own experiences.

In the context of this research, these methods form the basis of my approach to data collection. Instead of only participant observation and interviews, participatory performance forms a triangulated method, extending the potential for 'ways of knowing' not attributable to regular qualitative methodologies (Leavey, 2009). The practice of conducting performance workshops with incarcerated women is not merely a data collection strategy, but workshops themselves become the locus of enquiry concerned with the range of techniques, shifts in interpersonal dynamic and aesthetic choices in improvisation; all aiming to explore 'habitus' through the model of archives and repertoires.

Some of the specific theatre-making strategies I employed in early workshops are derived from a range of practical sources. Even though the workshops as such are not the focus of this research, I include some details here in order to justify the arts practice approach as dialogic, inclusive and co-operative. These techniques have been developed over time as part of my professional practice in multiple prisons in both South Africa and the UK.

One technique makes use of Brecht's 'accident and account' scene in order to explore witnessing. Briefly, the technique requires performers to engage with a range of 'accounts' of an event. Brecht's technique aimed to gather different perspectives to highlight multiple 'truths'. This relates to Brecht's wider concerns about making visible the politics of the operations of power.[46] A second informing practice comes from Kathleen Berry's 'acting against the grain' (2000) techniques of exploring power structures within texts (prejudices, assumptions and stereotypes). This technique offers a critical perspective on characters' views and derives from a pedagogic practice. A devising and rehearsal technique I use (derived from dramatherapy techniques and from Boal's 'theatre of the oppressed') called 'counter-stories' in which performers freeze action to explore their thoughts on the scene. This can be used as a distancing technique, and allows for both character's subtext and performer's affect to be articulated while maintaining awareness of the potential vulnerability of the original storyteller.[47] If it is appropriate with the target group (due to literacy levels), I use extracts from scripts to explore characterisation, 'triggers' and alternatives. This technique asks the women to re-frame the scene in relation to their own knowledge and experience, or to use imagination to consider implications and potential outcomes. This is intended to engage with thinking through issues of representation by considering how theatre can move away from 'realistic' portrayals that can seem deterministic.

The exact nature of the creative workshops emerges through the process in which women's responses to stimulus texts, objects and stories (shared within ethically structured boundaries during workshops) are used in order to extrapolate fictional characters and stories. The result is that, despite starting with individual details, the collaborative nature of the workshops means the final outcome will not be attributable to an individual, yet each participant recognises certain aspects of their own contribution. The results of the research process are edited and montaged together in collaboration with the women and myself (as suggested by Saldaña, 2011).

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[46] See Lehmann, 2006.
[47] See Boal, 2002.

The practical methods outlined above demand careful and detailed documentation strategies. Researchers are warned to engage with reliable and consistent means of recording workshops, focus groups and interviews (Silverman, 2010). Yet, most prisons do not permit access to sound recording devices, and video and photographic documentation is limited for internal security reasons and because of the need to protect victims of crime. Thus, the means and modes of documentation become of primary importance when engaging in prison based research (as outlined by McAvinchey, 2006a).[48] To counteract this challenge, I have developed documentation strategies that include a range of sources to be reflexively put into dialogue with each other during the fieldwork and in the ethnodrama writing up phase of research. Firstly, I kept a practitioner's reflexive diary (including both 'archival' reflections and current thinking, shifts, reflections and notes). The diary allows reflection on a range of different levels, engaging with material conditions: space; the workings of the regime and institution: time, activities, staffing, policies; emotion, affect understood through embodied or linguistic expression. I made notes relating to personal narratives – particularly articulations of 'habitus' – that were specifically to do with everyday life in prison, and not details relating to crimes or legal cases. I documented aesthetic choices relating to images, objects, genres, and metaphors. Finally, the diary includes the researcher's affect, notated in reflections, notes, and concerns.

This diary also includes data relating to the project set up (Institution Meetings and Taster workshop), relating to the bureaucratic journey of gaining access. Then, the workshops during the prison residency were documented by both participants and the researcher. Session plans were reflected alongside the materials generated in workshops such as written notes, stories, images, and maps. The 'documents' emerging from the process-based performance (in prison) form the basis of the performance.[49] Interim 'results' were shared and negotiated with participants and the

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[48] McAvinchey (2006b) also engaged these themes in her unpublished PhD thesis 'Possible Fictions: The Testimony of Applied Performances with Women in Prison in England and Brazil', Queen Mary, University of London.

[49] As an ethical model of practice, these sessions were not public performances in order to ensure women remained safe. See Appendix A & B for the approved ethics & consent forms.

wider prison community by staging a work in progress sharing. This is a means of building theory through both induction and deduction.

A further level of data collection occurred in the form of interviews with volunteers from the participant group and the focus group of women not involved in the workshops. Interviews that were held outside prison were recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Those occurring inside prison were notated by the researcher and notes confirmed with interviewees. The need for engaging with wider responsibilities emerging from receiving permissions is made evident with reference to interim reports.[50] The final and most demanding stage, according to Madison (2012), is the more solitary process of ethnographic writing where data are explored through relevant codes generated from pre-existing theory and making allowance for new connections and models to emerge.

Preparing to Face the Minotaur: Bullish Bureaucracy[51]
How does it feel to have much of the research process contingent on permissions/ bureaucracy/ piles of paper? It's been 10 months since I first contacted NOMS for permission to enter prisons and conduct fieldwork. I was convinced that being hyper-organised and having a background in prison theatre would give me the credibility to enter without too much hassle. Instead, I have been staggered by the loops of accountability. When I worked in prisons regularly I could help artists and other organisations get into prison to do workshops. I knew it was almost impossible to get through the gates without someone with the keys.

What prisons have I created in my construction of this project? Does lucid thinking only emerge outside of the walls of prison? Instead of feeling able to imagine a wide ranging theoretical frame for practical investigation, I've been constructing prisons within prisons – theoretically hermetically sealed notions that do not greet empirical evidence with a smile, but seek to claim it and box it up. Why this result necessarily? Certainly, some of the writing has been masquerading as social science, with an emphasis on ethics, outcomes and validity. That was because it seemed to me that what the prison valued was conflicting with what I could produce – they were certain to be

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[50] The reports had different audiences: for NOMS/ for the prison/ for the organisation/ for the participants; and thus employed distinct registers.
[51] Jenny Hughes' account of 'ethical cleansing' (2005b) highlights similar concerns with the obstacles to research caused by bureaucracy.

suspicious of uncategorised theory – to begin with they needed clear explications of what I meant by 'performance'.[52]

What plans and alternatives do I have for these silences/ gaps/ lacunae? In meeting the silencing power of the prison in the last few months, I decided to engage in some collaborative exercises. Initially, I sent an invitation to women to participate by writing some answers on a postcard to me, which I would transform into a mini installation. Then, I approached Women in Prison (a charity) in order to engage with their staff and explore tropes of prison from women who have left and are campaigning against it. Both mini-projects are underway, but moving slowly. Is all of this delay a means of the process of research mirroring the infinite frustration of time experienced by prisoners? (Research Diary, May 2012).

Concluding Remarks: Towards a Claim for Methodological Contribution

The focus of the research and its strength is in its specificity as a located ethnographic account of one women's prison which engages with everyday performances/ habitus in prison in relation to performance/ dramaturgy (thus, different from other social science accounts). By means of re-mapping the findings of this empirical investigation, the research also engages with the field of theatre in prison to critically assess the role theatre plays in furthering discipline and punishment. In doing so, it develops a critical conversation between modes of practice (theatre performances, empirical data and literature). Rather than concentrating on defining a particular practice as 'successful', this is a critical exploration of the effects and impacts of performance and theatre on how perceptions of prison are mediated through cultural production. I work towards articulating the ongoing traces and tropes of prison in women's performances for survival.

Drawing this section to a close, it is worth reflecting on the chosen structure for the thesis, which straddles several disciplines and employs two main theories in pursuit of one empirical investigation. It would be both complex and reductive to attempt to separate out the various theoretical strands from the threads of this project (like Ariadne) by, for example, writing about prison spaces, or about criminological trends.

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[52] Gómez-Peña (2000) and Diana Taylor (2003) write about 'performance' not having a commensurate word in Spanish. At times, in this research process, it has seemed as if I were negotiating complex translation from the language of performance studies to the language of the Ministry of Justice and the National Offender Management Service (NOMS).

Rather, the threads are woven together using examples from performance and play texts as a means of approaching the tropes of prison, punishment, and in thinking through how the model 'victim-survivor-hero' operates. Also, as the prior section highlights, I am aware of the limitations of suggesting that a single site can provide generalisable data. Thus, while my primary concern was to engage in a fruitful and productive research process with women participants in prison, I am not aiming simply to represent their experiences. Instead, I have chosen to investigate how prison tropes are reflected through performance. In turn, this might be a means of turning attention back to the lived experiences of women in prisons (and moving out of prisons) and seek to understand the ways prison serves to metaphorically and literally constrain imaginations, erase transgression and deny agency.

Castañeda's characterisation of an emergent research audience through the process of fieldwork (2006) comes closest to articulating the ethical stance of this research.[53] Namely, that research processes are bound to present a set of representational problematics by virtue of textuality, privilege and the limitations of academic registers. Whilst many instances throughout this research are concerned with ethical dilemmas raised by fieldwork encounters, or by performance representations, I have also attempted to maintain a critical awareness of the potential for my own perspective to be implicated within ethical quandaries. These are largely explored through my autoethnographic research diaries, and are intended to offer a further level of analysis to the cultural materials explored, rather than attempting to assert a moral or ethical 'superordinate project of representation' (Castañeda, 2006: 85) in which my own experience of 'being' in prison perpetuates the circulation of problematic 'knowledge' or experience. Instead, I have crafted a methodological approach that engages three modes in conversation; namely, the need for academically rigorous attention to what may be called 'critical objectivity'; the desire for a subjective reflection on experiences of performance in and of prisons; as well as the triangulation with women's own experiences as foregrounded. This is both sound academic practice as well as inherent

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[53] 'While the ethical dilemmas reported in the written ethnography are often about the real, specific dynamics of fieldwork, there is a tendency for the discussion of these dilemmas to be immediately connected to a moral discourse of critique (i.e., the poetic-political analysis of cultural production) that references more encompassing or "global" sociohistorical contexts and trans-local issues. In other

to the critical activist approach to performance ethnography in which I have located the study.[54]

The autoethnographic sections have appeared, in this first chapter, as 'wounds' in the text, puncturing the steady academic discourse that surrounds. In the following chapters, I make autoethnographic interventions that are then explicitly attended to in critical detail thereafter, so that the contribution is always clarified.

Conquergood asks 'what are the methodological implications of thinking about fieldwork as the collaborative performance of an enabling fiction between observer and observed, knower and known?' (1991: 191). This research project departs from the established models of applied theatre, in which a particular methodology is explored in relation to a set of outcomes that are often defined in relation to the institution's aims. An important contribution to new knowledge relates the ways in which we learn about prison and performance: the thesis aims to avoid having the measures or indicators of performance understood in such stark terms as 'success' or 'failure'.

There have been well-regarded projects that are offending behaviour focused, or concerning violent behaviour, or alcohol abuse or relating to social 'masks'.[55] Each of these projects has collated a wealth of data to evidence the changes in behaviour of participants. However, in my own research design I sought to turn the interrogative gaze towards the role of performance itself, rather than place an additional scrutiny on the women participants, who rather became co-researchers exploring the ways performance operates for them within the institution itself. The object of investigation is rather the space created by performance strategies themselves. There has been a proliferation of immersive theatre events in recent years that have exploited the

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words, the quandaries of fieldwork are pushed into another register of discourse and analysis' (2006: 86).

[54] Giardina and Denzin state that critical cultural studies 'should move in at least four directions at once: engagement at the level of the personal and the biographical (and our location to and within the world around us); the launching of critical discourse at the level of the media and the ideological; the fostering of a critical (inter)national conversation on what is happening (a coalition of voices across the political, cultural, and religious spectra); and the deployment of critical, interpretive methodologies that can help us make sense of life in an age of global uncertainty (Giardina & Denzin, 2011: 322).

[55] Indicative examples are Theatre in Prison and Probation's Blagg! and Pump! Programmes (see Thompson 1999) and Geese Theatre's mask work (see Watson, 2009).

tropes of prisons, particularly in relation to challenging the cathartic divide between actors and spectators.[56] In some of those examples, contemporary performance practices serve to re-invigorate the potential for understanding, feeling and imagining prison time and prison spaces by asking audiences to enter cells, experience unexpected tenderness, and often, the discomfort and trauma of constant fear of punishment alongside new logic of human interaction. The choice to examine these transactions of affect alongside a performance-led research approach means that the framework of performance is expanded by considering prison in a range of ways; and simultaneously, that the prison itself is augmented as a site of possibility as well as containment.

In concluding this section on methodology, I return to Denzin, who calls performance ethnography 'the single most powerful way for ethnography to recover yet interrogate the meanings of lived experience' (1997: 94). He has also insisted that research should be pedagogical, political and performative (2003). The intersections of ethnography and performance set the ground for a challenging and vital piece of research. Importantly, this methodological approach allows for complex issues and responses to be reflected in a performative output. It privileges polyvocality, collaboration and consensus-building processes in order to develop the 'final' thesis, which is not final but itself forms part of the wider conversation about institutions, their inhabitants and the performances that are played out daily in their walls. In this light, chapter 2 builds upon the framework outlined here, by enriching the conceptual tools at hand in the construction of a robust research model. Chapters 1 and 2 offer the epistemological and logistical mortar that binds the project as a whole. In particular, chapter 2 further specifies the research problem of how women in prison present and represent their day-to-day activities, manifesting what I later (in chapter 3) explore as the performance of prisons.

Although this chapter has explicitly framed the methodology of the research, each subsequent chapter refines theoretical trajectories in relation to methodological

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[56] For example The Factory (Badac Theatre, Edinburgh, 2008); The New World Order (Hydrocracker, Brighton Festival, 2011); a tender subject (Mark Storor/ Artangel, Smithfield Meat Market, 2012); 66 Minutes in Damascus (Lucien Bourjeilly/ LIFT, Shoreditch Town Hall, 2012). See Walsh, A. (2012a).

choices. As such, I attend to methodological concerns throughout the thesis, since one of the primary arguments in the work is that prison's meanings and manifestations are given legitimacy by the repeated performance of power, and prisoners' performance of complicity or resistance as they 'do time'. The next chapter sets out the argument for exactly how everyday habitus of women in prison is both defined by and describes the field of the institution.

CHAPTER TWO: HABITUS & 'TRAGIC CONTAINMENT'

Introduction

The driving compulsion behind this study is the need to unravel the public/ private dyad in relation to women in prison, how they perform identities and are represented through performance. A common view is that prison is an impermeable location in which unruly women (Faith, 2011) are held while they are stripped of their civic function in society (Billone, 2009) for (presumably) 'offending' that society.[1] This view suggests that the women's personal narratives become obliterated by the looming structural force of the panopticon.[2] Its strategies of surveillance make little allowance for the accrual of many imperceptible shifts of attitude that collectively become 'change'. Rather, 'transformation' is a stated aim of incarceration. In light of this, it is worth considering Erving Goffman's characterisation of 'front' as a performance, which, if successfully executed, can lead to freedom.[3] Firstly, transformation itself is problematic when understood as operating according to hegemonic normative structures. In addition, from a feminist perspective in relation to criminal justice, it is necessary to question the utopian ideals of 'freedom'. This theoretical chapter aims to tell a coherent story from different disciplines. It thus serves as a theoretical frame for the thesis. It covers the ground that leads to the emergence of novel ways of viewing women in prison, their daily performances and theatre *about* these women.

The aim of this chapter is to articulate a feminist structure of feeling (Aston, 2006) in relation to Pierre Bourdieu's (1990) notion of 'habitus' in order to form a frame through which to consider performance. This is done by developing an argument for a gendered habitus as an empirical and theoretical tool, and is further specified by exploring habitus in the context of women's prison. Bourdieu thus forms the backbone of this theoretical approach, and therefore a specified and micro-social analysis is

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[1] In this chapter, I argue against using the term 'offence' or 'offending'.
[2] Bentham's famous architectural innovation when designing the panopticon allowed a central watchtower (and a single officer) to maintain surveillance over a large number of prisoners by rendering them constantly visible. Foucault characterised each cell as a 'little theatre' (1977: 200). See Foucault, 1977; Bleeker, 2007; Kershaw, 2003. I further this argument in Chapter 3 as well as in relation to the spectral presence of the institution post-release in Chapter 7.
[3] Goffman's earlier work on 'line' and 'face' describes the ways social actors adopt performative tactics or roles according to specific situations. See Goffman's work on 'interaction rituals' (2005). However, my main point of interest is in Goffman's close analysis of social behaviours within an institutional setting,

preferred. For this reason Goffman's notion of the performance of everyday life remains important. My agenda in constructing this theoretical approach is to re-appropriate the work of male theorists by extending their terms to fulfil the needs of a feminist project. Habitus, I argue in this chapter, is (en)gendered. Every thread of my later arguments is pulled through the frames I propose here; and thus, since one of my fundamental critiques relates to how women in prison are ontologically and epistemologically framed by a phallocentric system of criminal justice, my theoretical frame needs to question inherent hegemonies. I argue that performance itself, and the theoretical and methodological tools wrought in relation to researching such performance, are a means of redefining subjectivities and re-animating material conditions that are taken for granted in other epistemological approaches.

The starting point for the research is the notion of women in prison as unmarked/ un-remarked (to use Phelan's term (1993)); and a key concept through which women's actions and performance will be explored is that of disrupting what Sedgwick (1990) termed sedimented performances. This is, I propose, performing (for) survival. The study treats survival as located within the present, drawing on the past but pointing towards a future.[4] Survival is both embodied and imagined. Prisons, as sites of containment, which necessarily play upon the prisoners' reflection on the past and preparation for the future, become productive sites for exploring how survival is scripted and performed. Within the context of 'corrections' and the Foucauldian panoptic conditions of surveillance as inherent to the site, the research shows how programmes in prisons ask women to rehearse belonging, good behaviour and repentance, all of which rub up against hegemonic belief structures that are gendered and political.[5] The time-bound process of incarceration is seen to be one in which women come to terms with themselves (their bodies), their prior actions (and habitus), and their ongoing identity paradigms (as mothers and partners, for

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and thus his term 'front' is used. In addition, 'front' implies a degree of artifice that is productive in the analysis of social performances.
[4] The echo of Raymond Williams' temporality (1966) is deliberate. See Duggan (2012) and Eagleton (2003).
[5] Chesney-Lind & Irwin (2008) reflect that the racial and class-biased applications of punishment 'justifies' harsh controls of girls and women as 'gender outlaws', 'all the while cautioning the daughters of the powerful about the downside of challenging male dominance' (2008: 3).

example). This temporal/ transient link between performance and the processes of rehabilitation offers a frame that can be useful as a means of conceiving of 'survival'.

Within criminological narratives, offending and crime are seen as repeated cycles; borne out by data from the UK showing that the average re-offending rate for women leaving prison is 37%.[6] At a policy level, most research engages with the problem of re-offending; in practice, prison programming reflects the pressure to reduce these cycles by following 'Seven Pathways to Reducing Reoffending', discussed further in chapters 5 and 7. The notion that a short term custodial sentence would adequately engage women in programmes that effectively 'transform' their behaviours without simultaneously addressing their material conditions seems flawed; especially since incarceration itself is seen as a significantly destabilising factor on housing, and whether children may have been taken into care. Even if women do not lose their homes, it is likely that family ties have been strangulated as a result of the long distances between women's homes and where they end up being incarcerated.[7] These cycles and 'failures' carve a deep groove of repetition from custodial sentence to further crime. From this basis, I draw a model of what I call 'tragic containment' in which I describe the cyclical narratives of crime and punishment in juxtaposition with a model of tragedy developed through re-working the traditional cyclical notion of tragedy.[8] The purpose of this model is to open both cycles to alternatives that may begin to dismantle the sense of an inevitable repetition. After a brief overview and critique of the main tenets of feminist criminology, I move towards viewing women in prison as operating on a survivor-victim spectrum, which is problematised with the addition of a third potential vector of 'hero'.

Several themes emerge in the mapping of the theory in relation to performance, which are further explored in later chapters, such as how women's everyday performances sit on a shifting spectrum from docility to resistance. Women who 'resist' in various

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[6] Reconviction data are complex; the charity Women in Prison state 37% is the average rate in the UK for women; while for men, the rate stands at a much higher average. See the media report on the Ministry of Justice reoffending data (Travis, 2010).

[7] These factors are discussed in the Corston Report, 2007; Kennedy, 2005; Prison Reform Trust, 2011a; Rickford, 2011.

ways are said to be 'acting up' or seeking attention, raising questions about the role of audience in relation to women's prisons.[9] A key dramatic theme is of prison as a space of excess time – a caesura in real life – offering a space for reflection. There are also plays that aim to share women's stories that tend to engage the themes and ethical concerns of 'witnessing'. Finally, the underlying project of prison is ostensibly to effect a 'transformation' from 'offender' to civilian. Alongside Bourdieu and my feminist re-appropriation of his theory of habitus, I engage with trauma studies for some valuable concepts that add to the criminological frame. This chapter attempts to pull apart the multiple theoretical threads that inform the study before weaving them together in the form of two models that are then used to engage with performance in and of prison. Throughout, I signal the theoretical approaches by offering examples that will later be taken up as part of the critical analysis project, and, in each section, the modalities of performance are prioritised.

This chapter argues that in the context of women's prison, a resistant (gendered) habitus works against the notion that Foucault's 'docile bodies' lack agency. This is done by showing that the agency displayed may result from and be inscribed by traumatic past experiences (such as abuse/ violence/incest) but nevertheless disrupt the hegemonic discourse through expressions of resistance (hunger strike, dirty protest, destruction of property, insurrection). As a theoretical framework, it generates an understanding of how a gendered habitus becomes a means of women asserting agency in the terms they define for themselves. The two driving considerations of the chapter are, firstly, that theatre can provide an aesthetic frame through which to consider prisons and the performativity of punishment. Secondly, engendering habitus becomes a means of framing women's performances of transgression and resistance of domestication.

Prison Terms: Avoiding 'Offence'
In this project, I have elected to use the term 'prisoners' in order to refer to the collective group of people who reside, work, and perform everyday tasks in prisons

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[8] My working through of tragedy is largely based on Eagleton (2003) and Diana Taylor (2009) using more recent thinking on tragedy's relationship to trauma (Duggan & Wallis, 2011).
[9] 'Acting up' is further explored in trauma theory; in particular in recent works relating performance to trauma. See Duggan & Wallis (2011).

because they have been incarcerated there as a result of committing crimes.[10] This is a somewhat unusual choice, since most recent literature refers to 'offenders' (Hedderman et al, 2008).[11] Whilst I can recognize the need for institutional uniformity in nomenclature, and as such it is sensible for all government and third sector publications and directives to use the same term, it is troubling that arts organizations have adopted the terminology without problematising it sufficiently.[12] This choice of terminology positions this research (or, indeed, other arts practices) within a specific methodological frame, since the research subjects are named according to their community of place, rather than attempting to define people in prison as 'offenders' or those who have left prison as 'ex-offenders'. On the one hand, it is important to acknowledge that prison's purpose, activities and ethos in the UK is (nominally, anyway) concerned with 'rehabilitation' of those who have committed crimes.[13] On the other, the title 'offender' implies that the subject is *still offensive,* that is, still actively participating in the activities which are deemed offensive to society; which seems to run counter to the conception of prison as a rehabilitative site in which behaviours and attitudes can be 'corrected'.[14] It is possible that departing from the term in this research does not adequately challenge the latent moralising implicit in the term, since its use will not be restricted by those operating within the institutional field. Nevertheless, this choice points towards the critical overlap of institutional and so-called interventionist discourses. I also see this choice of terminology as a performance of resistance on my behalf against characterising all prisoners as 'offensive'. Having justified the terminology used, I turn to examining the initial

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[10] 'Work' here refers to the everyday work of institutions (such as cleaning, laundry and cooking), which are done by prisoners, as well as prison industries that are run as factories for various industry contracts such as (dog food packaging, fixing wheelchairs, and assembling badges). Prisoners get an average of £10 a week for their labour, which allows them to purchase items from the canteen. Some female prisoners have reported getting less than £1.50 a day. See a recent article about a new law that deducts 40% of earnings to be put towards victim awareness causes (Scullion, 2011).

[11] Cabinet Office Social Exclusion Task Force, 2009.

[12] The Arts Alliance, for example, is the umbrella organisation that provides resources, training and lobbies government for continued support of the arts in criminal justice. It has used the term offenders in all publications, in line with government policy terminology (Arts Alliance, 2011).

[13] The vision and values of the National Offender Management Service state: 'Our role is to commission and provide offender management services in the community and in custody ensuring best value for money from public resources. We work to protect the public and reduce reoffending by delivering the punishment and orders of the courts and supporting rehabilitation by helping offenders to reform their lives. Our Vision: We will work collaboratively with providers and partners to achieve a transformed Justice system to make communities safer, prevent victims and cut crime'. Available at: <http://www.justice.gov.uk/about/noms/noms-vision-and-values.htm>. [Accessed 20 December 2011].

[14] Goffman's view of 'rehabilitation' is that it claims to reset 'the inmate's self-regulatory mechanisms so that after he [sic] leaves he [sic] will maintain the standards of the establishment of his [sic] own accord' (2007: 71). However, he maintains that the changes made by incarceration are often not those intended by the institution.

theoretical foundation of this study by considering how Goffman's 'frames' and Bourdieu's habitus may be re-appropriated and applied to the analysis of performances in prison.

Performativity of Punishment: Goffman's Frames and the Total Institution[15]

Erving Goffman (2007) contributed to the performative turn in sociology by investigating the ways in which everyday life can be read as social performances.[16] In addition Goffman's investigation into the social functioning of asylum inmates and staff became a means of defining a 'total institution', which is defined as a place of residence and work in which individuals in the same situation who are removed from the wider society for a period of time and who 'lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life' (Helmreich, 2007: xxi). Other total institutions are prisons, boarding schools, residential homes and orphanages. Characteristics of these sites are that everything occurs within one place under one authority; that individualism is erased as all are treated alike; time and activities are governed by strict rules and sanctions; and that these are enforced in order to maintain the order of the institution.

In his detailed analysis of such institutional spaces, Goffman suggests that surveillance is a critical operation, so that uniform compliance enhances the visibility of any infraction of rules and regulations.[17] During their time within the institution, inmates undergo a process of 'disculturation' (2007: 13), in which everyday habits are 'unlearned' in order to better acclimatise to the new structures (including timetables, rules and regulations, and restricted personal agency). This process can serve, in the long term, to render inmates incapable of managing certain features of daily life if and when they are released (2007: 13). The shock of release from confinement to 'freedom' is richly mined in popular culture (*Buffalo 66*, Vincent Gallo, 1998; *Sherrybaby*, Laury Collyer, 2006). This is also the main thematic thrust of Chlöe Moss' play *This Wide Night*, (2008) which characterises Lorraine as a naïve and confused woman unable to navigate the complexities of finding the office to validate her

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[15] In this section I occasionally use the term 'inmates' since Goffman's study was concerned with the total institution in general, extrapolating from intensive fieldwork with asylum inmates.
[16] See Goffman's seminal work *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, 1990, *The Goffman Reader* 1997, and *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*, 2007.

housing plan, or successfully engage with strangers in the pub. Her time in prison has 'institutionalised' her, and her reintegration into society is painful and difficult (2008: 10).[18] The chasm between incarceration and freedom is wide, traversed with difficulty; often it is so difficult that ex-prisoners would voluntarily return to the institution rather than continue to struggle with daily life which includes accessing accommodation, organising benefits, facing stigmatisation, and the explicit difficulty in finding work as an ex-prisoner (Gelsthorpe, 2010; Goffman, 1963; Opsal, 2011). Goffman's work on stigma may help explain how ex-prisoners are tinged with negative perceptions, with a tendency to engage a partial view 'from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one' (1963: 2-3).

For Goffman, one of the main accomplishments of total institutions is

> staging a difference between two constructed categories of persons – a difference in social quality and moral character, a difference in perceptions of self and other (2007: 111).

His words point towards a troubling tendency - despite centuries of prison reform initiatives - of a strong social imagery of the transformative power of institutions. Such an agenda seems to underlie many of the work-based, educational, and therapeutic interventions in custodial settings, and marks many prison arts activities with cloying grammars of hope and change. In other words, instead of challenging the institutional norms and values, 'transformation' as a discourse positions the institution and its activities as benevolent, charitable and in pursuit of 'the public good'. Rather than being radical or resistant, this discourse actively supports and reinforces the oppressive structures of the prison.[19] This is particularly problematic in connection to arts activities that otherwise lay claim to a radical agenda.[20]

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[17] Foucault takes this notion forward in his well-rehearsed analysis of a panopticon; where architecture serves to support the sensation of surveillance (1977).
[18] This play is analysed in greater detail in Chapter 7.
[19] An important exception to this is the work of the Prison Reform Trust. (See Prison Reform Trust, 2010; 2011a; 2011b; Rickford, 2011).
[20] I examine Clean Break Theatre Company and Geese Theatre Company in this regard in greater detail in Chapter 4.

It is productive to use Goffman's terminology to mark out the site of research, since he conceives of everyday habits as 'performative'. In particular he writes of the 'fronts'[21] employed by inmates:

> managing the guise in which [he] appears before others […] for this he (sic) needs cosmetic and clothing supplies, tools for applying, arranging, and repairing them, […] In short, the individual will need an 'identity kit' for the management of his [sic] personal front (1997: 20).

Here, Goffman is referring to material objects which can help prisoners feel secure, but the psychological armoury developed as coping strategies are also considered 'fronts'. For Goffman, fronts can be intentional or unwitting, and involve 'setting' through the use of spatial and material objects 'appropriate to the performance', such as a 'uniform' or 'props' (Goffman, 1997: 97-101).

Jenny Hughes, for example, recounts the ways 'fronts' and veneers of toughness impacted on her long-term drama project with women in HMP Styal. Incarcerated women have been considered 'more resistant, volatile and less predictable group' than men (1998: 49). She describes the vulnerabilities of participants, and admits that drama can intensify the 'dangers of prison' by destabilising or calling into question the 'general deadening routine and intrusiveness of prison life' (1998: 49). In other words, if the drama serves to dislodge the 'fronts' it can expose vulnerabilities and insecurities. In practice this has meant that institutions are suspicious of any activity that might arouse or stimulate psychologically painful memories. It is clear that there are many contextual considerations for prisoners, including anxieties about their cases, uncertainties about prison life and their futures, and there can also be issues relating to drug dependency, and for women in particular, potential worries about children (Hughes, 1998; Rickford, 2011). I engage with some of these tensions in later chapters,

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[21] In both the US and the UK, Geese Theatre Company has developed a mask-based practice to explore prisoners' uses of 'fronts' to cope with criminal activity initially, and then different 'fronts' for managing prison life. Some of the fronts or masks they have developed include 'Mr Cool', the 'Stone Wall', 'The Joker', 'The Rescuer' and 'The Victim' (Mountford & Farrall, 1998: 113). Each mask is used in workshops to explore habitual destructive practices in order to provide prisoners with self-awareness of their choices, responses and affect in high- risk situations. Their techniques are strongly underpinned by dramatherapy, and are often integrated into therapeutic programmes (Watson, 2009). A major criticism is that their work has tended to be delivered in male prisons, and that their understanding of female prisoners' 'masks' and 'fronts' is limited.

particularly in connection with gaining access to the institution, and the risks of performance, failure and participation in-group activities.[22]

Goffman insists that the daily strategies of the inmates are related to the staff and the wider institution; and thus his analytic framework sets the ground for detailed consideration of how each impacts on the other. In my empirical accounts of the project, I thus endeavour to consider prisoner 'performances' within the wider setting – not just the drama that occurs within theatre-based workshops, but the narratives of hopes and desires, fears and anxieties that permeate the atmosphere between classroom, gym, and wings; or performances of everyday life within the context of the institution. These routines and ruptures in routine relate closely to Bourdieu's conception of field and habitus (1990). In order to develop a more concrete frame for analysing the prison and its inhabitants, I turn to Bourdieu in order to explicate the theoretical thrust of the approach to this project.

This chapter seeks to review how the micro-sociological theory of habitus can be re-appropriated through both feminist concerns and through analysis of performance. This is done in order to engage with how gender in performance is both informed by, and resistant to, the institutional field. It seeks to model a theoretical approach to performance, through which further (everyday) performances in prison might be productively explored. The chapter posits that both formal theatre and everyday performances in prison provide a means of foregrounding the slippage between articulations of 'equality' or 'gender neutral punishment' (Opsal, 2011) and practices that remain fixed in discursive binaries of good/bad; chaste/whore; compliant/deviant. It is necessary to revisit social theories such as Bourdieu's habitus in order to examine how gender is performed. In doing so, I explore how the 'criminal field' and the 'institutional field' are interrelated; and also how the feminist field interrupts the phallocentric one. Furthermore, I propose that habitus needs to be re-articulated in the wake of these 'fields' that appear to be in conflict.

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[22] My own experience of conducting a fieldwork residency at HMP Drake Hall is explored in Chapter 5, while applied theatre practice is considered in Chapter 4.

(En)gendering Habitus[23]

The roots of Bourdieu's conception of 'habitus' are seen in ancient philosophy, in the Aristotelian notion of *hexis*, which concerned a consciously acquired yet entrenched 'state of moral character that orients our feelings and desires in a situation, and thence our actions' (Wacquant, 2004: 315). For Bourdieu, habitus is a social aptitude arising out of specific situations and milieus, and is thus variable, transferable, and not static. It is a set of practices and behaviours that produce patterns that replicate the social structures in which they are more widely located, at the same time differentiating between individual and societal principles. As a means of explaining specificities on a micro-level, habitus is located within a trajectory of past events as well as structuring present representations and actions. Yet it is not meant to be a fixed description archiving a single social structure, but rather to reflect the multiple dynamic intersections of the many spheres of influence (personal, economic, political, etc.) that constitute a life. The concept is thus useful for exploring the multiple vectors operating within a prison, since even while we suppose it is an immutable, unique and bounded place, the lives of its inhabitants are also contextualised by 'race', class, gender and economics, as well as, increasingly, mobilities and migrations. Habitus becomes productive for this study precisely because it makes allowance for traces, dispositions and practices from 'before' prison to be understood within the new 'field'; and by extension, posits that the routines, embodied behaviours and attitudes of prison may well remain as traces and tropes upon release. As a theory, then, it pays heed to performances, both tacit and implicit, by seeking to locate them within a wider social context.

Lois McNay points out that for Bourdieu, habitus incorporates the social into the corporeal, making a distinction between his system of durable, transposable dispositions, and Foucault's sense of 'discipline', which is deterministic.[24] On the contrary, for McNay, Bourdieu's habitus is 'a generative' structure because there is a relationship between individual habitus and the social circumstances or 'field' (1999: 100). Bourdieu says

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[23] The notion of engendered habitus is modeled explicitly in relation to Rebecca Lenkiewicz' plays in chapter 6. Parts of this section have been published in slightly different form in *Contemporary Theatre Review*, and formed part of a TaPRA PG Award essay (Walsh, 2014).

> an institution can only be efficacious if it is objectified in bodies in the form of durable dispositions that recognize and comply with the specific demands of a given institutional area of activity; the *habitus* is what enables the institution to attain full realization (1990: 57, emphasis in original).

Applying this concept to the prison, the institution is only read as efficacious if it produces docile bodies that are in service of whatever contemporary socio-economic political field makes necessary.[25] This is where Bourdieu's thinking relates to Foucault's formulation of biopolitics, and where the intersection with feminist critique becomes valuable. For Foucault, the inevitability of biopolitical mechanisms signals the need for complex resistance tactics. A feminist view would reiterate the need to undermine the phallocentric assumptions and discourses that circumscribe the institutions. In other words, glossing Judith Butler's critique, to resist the prevailing objectivity of the field.[26] Importantly, in this conception of habitus, an individual may have a predisposition to act in specific ways but there is potential for innovation and creative action. This provides a productive measure for the specific site of prisons that contain bodies for a certain present, as punishment for past behaviours, with the intention to rehabilitate (or transform) prisoners' behaviours for their future return to society. In other words, if transformation is the rhetoric behind rehabilitation, it becomes valuable to see habitus as a model of exploring and understanding what behaviours are carried into and through prisons; which 'performances' survive the corrections regime; and furthermore how habitus is engendered by the processes of incarceration. Running alongside such questions, then, is the consideration of how performance gives an insight into these temporal processes and dispositions.

Bourdieu's conception of habitus as the 'intertwinement of corporeal being and agency […] transcends the opposition between freedom and constraint characteristic, for example, of liberal conceptions of the subject' (McNay, 1999: 104). In this chapter, then, the related notions of 'habitus' and 'field' offer a way of ensuring that multiple

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[24] Cited in McNay, 1999.
[25] In the wider discourse of criminal justice, 'efficacy' is considered to be the attainment of reduced re-offending (which is where the policy and research attention focuses) and successful reintegration (which is closely related but less of a priority, in terms of programming and budgeting).
[26] See McLeod, 2005.

subjectivities are considered; and particularly reviewed in relation to gender. Indeed, exploring the performative practices of prisoners serves to dismantle the traditional views of outside=freedom and inside=constraint, for example. Such refusal to play to these distinctions is, in several of the plays discussed in Chapter 6, specifically circumscribed by the characters' gender. Yet, Maria Shevtsova points out that 'habitus survives contingencies and, by sheer dint of its survival, becomes institutionalized [sic]' (2002: 58). Since immanence is a productive concept for performance studies, implying an embodied readiness, rehearsal, and preparedness for performance, an engendered habitus becomes a useful means of examining performances and performativity in (and of) prison.

Toril Moi offers her view that gender as a social construction is inscribed by differing contexts (1991); and in the context of women's prisons, prisoners' habitus is (en)gendered by the roles, rituals and rules of the institution. Further, this shifting spectrum of personal habitus and institutional habitus becomes foregrounded when analysing how women are characterised primarily in relation to gender norms. Whilst I am not trying to claim that all women in prisons are victims and therefore blameless (clearly, arguments about how crime and justice are performed are wide-ranging), analysing performance provides ways of exploring how women's habitus is informed and delimited by prison as an extension of patriarchal hegemonic structures of society in general. The sections below explore how a feminist criminology can be put in conversation with a feminist re-appropriation of Bourdieu's habitus.[27]

Bourdieu has been critiqued for setting gender aside in his conception of habitus, but feminist theorist Moi finds that 'appropriating' Bourdieu's microsociology animates the potential for undoing or overcoming 'the traditional individual/social or private/public divide' (1991: 1020).[28] For Moi, the two interrelated concepts 'field' and 'habitus' each generate power games. Field is seen as a competitive space that functions according to its own specific logic, and habitus is a 'system of dispositions adjusted to the game of the field' (Moi, 1991: 1021). Furthermore, conceiving habitus

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[27] The understanding of habitus comes from Bourdieu, 1977 and 1990.
[28] Moi's views have been explored further by Lovell, 2000 and McLeod, 2005.

in relation to critical feminist theory, Lovell states that what Bourdieu 'offers that is most powerful is a way of understanding both the arbitrary, and therefore contestable, nature of the social, and its compelling presence and effectiveness' (Lovell, 2000: 15). Moi's analysis explores how these two concepts of habitus and field rely on often unspoken rules or norms; and thus a feminist appropriation must unpack the ways in which phallocentric discourses continue to inscribe them. In order to make a full account of how habitus should be re-imagined in relation to gender, Moi shows that Bourdieu's focus on embodiment offers a way to insist that embodied practices, gestures, movements and ways of looking at the world form important challenges for research (1991: 1030-1031).

Yet, concerning the sociology of theatre, Maria Shevtsova highlights a further concern about the slipperiness of habitus, since one must account for individual and 'group' dispositions as well as

> to the dispositions incarnated in or interiorized [sic] by the practice of a field in its distinction from another field - a distinction that is only possible because it is relational, that is, always defined in respect of something else that it is not (2002: 57).

Applying these concepts to performances of punishment, therefore, is to explore the ways the spaces and dispositions of the institution are perpetuated by both explicit and tacit forms of power that legitimate them. I suggest that docile prisoners comply with the disciplinary field because they have been habituated to do so: they perpetuate the institutions' norms, values and rules by enacting the relations of prisoner/ officer, by engaging in programmes and by following its timetables. Such 'habituation' is clearly not voluntary, but inflicted, or enacted, through punishment, deprivation and other violences. I suggest that such (symbolic and actual) violence is not gender neutral, but on the contrary serves to highlight specific issues and vulnerabilities ascribed to gender. Compliance also correlates with increased privileges, so women may submit to a lesser form of punishment to be granted a privilege (such as a family visit).[29]

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[29] These are called Incentives and Earned Privileges (IEP) and are governed by Prison Service Orders. Also see Kennedy, 2005; Heidensohn, 1996 and Gelsthorpe, 2010.

One of the contributions of this research is the modelling of theory re-appropriated for feminist concerns. Having argued how habitus is re-appropriated for a productive approach to performance, I turn to a critical feminist perspective.

> [F]emale is what is not susceptible to transformation, to life or death; she (it) is an element of plot-space, a topos, a resistance, matrix, and matter (de Lauretis, 1989: 251).

According to de Lauretis, the insistent emphasis of a feminist approach to criticism is that gender must be accounted for, not only as a biological difference, or a 'problem' of signification, nor even as a cultural construction of masculine desire, but 'as a semiotic difference' (1989: 255).[30] In the case of arts arising from and with women in prison, then, it is important to ensure that analysis does not merely extend to describing 'difference' arising from gender (such as how women's behaviours are different to men's; or how women's institutions differ) but to construct gender-specific models that incorporate and problematise the ways women themselves perceive and perform their gender within the site. This provides an ontological position from which to consider how gender becomes a means of being-in-the-world; and then considers gender from an epistemological point of view – or how gender shapes and determines the ways women (and the researcher) construct prison-specific taxonomies of knowing. The kinds of issues these suggest are, for example, the codes and habitus of the institution and the adaptations women make whilst in prison; or, to re-position that statement in relation to performance studies, the ways women's pre-existing habitus in relation to institution are informed and contained by the field as much as improvisations within the carceral landscape.

Judith Butler's seminal work on 'gender trouble' (1999) explains that gender should be overthrown or rendered 'fatally ambiguous precisely because it is always a sign of subordination for women' (1999: xiv). Her controversial work demonstrates (alongside Foucault), the ways that juridical powers serve to produce the subjects they require, so feminism has ascribed woman as 'subject' by virtue of applying the linguistic and

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[30] de Lauretis draws on Derrida's concern with difference, but, as with other feminist scholars, she resists the implication that Derrida could speak 'from' the position of women. She would invoke Kristeva and Irigaray alongside Derrida for a particularly nuanced feminist sense of 'difference'. (See de Lauretis, 1987: 32).

political categorisation it seeks to dismantle. In other words, there is an inevitable cycle of signification (through language and policy) that impacts practices (1999: 3). For Butler, this signals the political need to interrogate the 'subject' even while acknowledging that the 'subject' is constituted by systems that are being called into question.[31] Some of the concerns thus raised in relation to this research are whether it is possible to 'perform' outside of the discursive limits of gender, if 'woman as subject' is foreclosed by law. Within the context of prison, we might question how gender ambiguities are 'read'; especially with regards to the claim feminist criminology lays at the feet of the statue of Justice – that she is blind to 'difference' but nevertheless founded upon and entirely committed to upholding phallocentric ideals about what a just and fair society is. Indeed, most feminist criminologists maintain that gender-neutrality is not helpful in punishing or rehabilitating women; and that on the contrary, gender-aware penology is needed.[32]

If a feminist model of theatre in prisons is to function, then it should rupture the gender assumptions in its own structuration. We can see the difficulties feminist critics have identified by returning to de Lauretis' claim that 'woman' serves a specific function in mythic (and all narrative) structures (1989). Her view then serves as a challenge in this research since the processes of collaboratively creating performance asserts new potentials for 'woman' as more than *topos*, or boundary, but as protagonists with agency. Yet, de Lauretis would undoubtedly return readers and audiences to the question of how agency is manifest in the wider context, and as Nina Billone points out in relation to The Medea Project, incarcerated women do not simply 'gain' agency from participating in performance (or education) programmes.[33] The value of such a conception for this study is that it serves to locate the work as critically reflexive of the context of prison as a performance of punishment and arts activities (including this research) as implicated within those narratives. As I describe later in this chapter, the prevailing discourses in arts in criminal justice are generally less critical of the complexities of power imbrications.

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[31] I am aware that Butler's formulation in this regard is informed by Derrida.
[32] See Corston, 2011; and Gelsthorpe, 2010.
[33] See Billone 2009; Fraden, 2001; Warner, 2001; 2004. The Medea Project is run by Rhodessa Jones with women in US prisons. It is explicitly framed as transformative and empowering and has, of all the

Feminist criminology asserts that criminal justice institutions discriminate unfairly against women at the level of criminalisation (arrests); in the process of trial; during sentencing and whilst in prison.[34] The primary argument is that women's dispositions and material situations (both in the commission of 'crimes' and during incarceration) need to be understood and responded to in gender-appropriate ways. Frances Heidensohn explores the sociology of imprisonment and its relation to gender. Her argument poses that female criminality is not in itself distinctive. She highlights the ways in which public and private behaviours are limited and controlled in gender related ways (1996: xi). Furthermore, she asserts that women are doubly punished, not only for wrongdoings, but also for 'not keeping to their proper places' (1996: 83). Her critique of criminal justice lies in its definition of deviant or transgressive women in sex-stereotyped ways. She suggests that incarcerated women are often seen as 'not-women' or as 'masculine, unfeminine women' (1996: 96). She goes on to demonstrate that the ways in which dualisms of good/bad, chaste/unchaste, virgin/whore are reiterated in popular media, as when public portrayals of 'bad' women are made, there is always reference to the 'possibility of good' (1996: 99). For Heidensohn, such stereotyping is inevitably tied to the enormous amount of advice, moralising and guidance offered to women 'on how to be good women – that is, good wives and mothers' (1996: 103). Conformity, then, does not just mean complying with the rule of law, but obeying the multiplicity of patriarchal structures of society.[35]

This insistence on gender role normativity is a startling feature of contemporary punishment, but is geared towards supporting the view that women are inferior in society. Smart asserts the prevailing normative discourse sees 'femininity [a]s the antithesis of criminality' (1977: 182). Foundational to her view is that women commit less crime, 'since their performances of identity are over-controlled, and that when they do, they commit them within man-made frameworks of controls' (1977: 199). Yet,

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prison programmes in the US, received the most favourable response from criminal justice bureaucrats who often authorise temporary release for women to present productions in public.
[34] See Kennedy, 2005.
[35] See Carlen, 1983; 2002.

despite the persistent call for 'gendered' institutions in the UK,[36] Gelsthorpe shows 'the treatment of women in the criminal justice system in general, and in prisons in particular, has continued to reflect a curious mixture of 'hard' and 'soft' measures – punishment and 're-education' or moral tutelage' (2010: 380). Theatre can play a role in the explication of such 'tutelage' by exposing how hegemonic rules of the field can be resisted and re-imagined.

The emphasis of this study as a whole reflects the need to engage with both micro-level and wider contextual controls. By choosing to frame the theoretical concerns through feminist criminology, I point towards the functions of theory to specify the field of study. These choices have practical implications for methodology, which I have outlined in Chapter 1.

Towards a Model: 'Victim-Survivor-Hero'

> *I'm at Whitehall, at a Third Party Solidarity event that launches* Release*, a book edited by Leah Thorn (2011b). It is a collection of testimonies, poems and stories about self-harm written by women in prison. There are policy speakers and women currently in the community who have come to read their work. The room is stifling hot, and the air of congratulation is sticky. We are told we are witnessing the 'power of words to heal'. The pain and relief and pride of the women sharing their work were palpable; but I was struck by what was left unsaid. At least, until one woman who had contributed to the volume interrupted the editor to make a claim that we all seemed to be agreeing that gender and sex discrimination were occurring in prisons; and that women make up only 5% of the prison population in the UK but account for 53% of the cases of self-harm in custody. She said 'this is not a sex thing, this is not a gender thing, this is a wrong thing'. Her outburst felt like an authentic moment – rupturing the smooth fabric of the event with its fierceness. Here, in this unsanctioned utterance, she found release.* (Research Diary, 13 July 2011).

Prison populations tell important stories about who is criminalised and why. Recent newspaper articles have claimed that conditions in women's prisons are not fit for purpose, whilst highlighting the high rates of poor mental health in women's

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[36] This was the primary finding in home office reports commissioned during the last eight years. See Corston 2007 and 2011.

backgrounds.[37] Yet, reform campaigns and feminist criminology seem to reiterate the 'problem' of women in prison is their inevitable 'victimisation', marginalisation and exclusion from alternative pathways in society. The result is that both discourses maintain an outraged tone while being unable to find other ways of speaking about (and for) women in prison. One of the contributions of this work – since it encourages women participants to co-author the performance – is to identify appropriate ways women can create their own meanings and stories from within prison. Inevitably, these too, will be defined in terms that already hold power and exclusion (since I am aware that statistically many of the women I worked with are not literate, and some may have another mother tongue). Performance provides embodied and affective alternatives to literacy by engaging active pedagogic processes. Chapter 5, which is an ethnography of theatre workshops at HMP Drake Hall analyses how, this is done, proposing that performance modes come closest to generating agency in productive ways.

Chesney-Lind (1997) explores the ways victimisation of women 'offenders' is often related directly to their gender, for example through sexual abuse, incest and rape. In addition, such 'victims' often conform to societal gender role expectations relating to aspirations and relationships (prioritising motherhood, domesticity and care over alternatives), with the result that 'the victimization [sic] related to their gender continues into their adult relationships with both pimps and customers' (1997: 142). The gendered view of punishment and the concomitant roles legitimated by the criminal justice system has resulted in a limited spectrum of behaviours for women. This can be seen in a complex dynamic triad of victim-survivor-hero, whereby women may be seen in one frame predominantly, but a change of lens, or discourse may move her towards another of these labels. Returning to the account that prefaces this section, the outburst of the woman in a formal parliamentary event shifted the focus

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[37] The chief inspector of prisons, Nick Harwood, is cited in this article by Paul Peachey (2012) as saying 'Prisons, particularly as they are currently run, are simply the wrong place for so many of the distressed, damaged or disturbed women they hold... I think the treatment and conditions in which a small minority of the most disturbed women are held is... simply unacceptable. I think, I hope, we will look back on how we treated these women in years to come, aghast and ashamed.' A former governor of HMP Styal reflects the conditions women endure in articles by Mark Townsend, 2012a and 2012b.

from women as victims to survivors and, further, to having agency to state their own case.

Such a model is morally informed by the foreknowledge that women in prison have been tried and found guilty of crimes – a consideration that emerges as a theme or trope throughout this thesis, but which is not intended to be the focus of investigation. The question for audience members and, more directly, for practitioners creating theatre about prisons, is how to escape the moralising, and indeed, whether that is necessary, or possible. A brief snapshot of a moment in between prison theatre workshops evokes the moral spectrum I faced meeting a woman in the corridor.

> ***Archive: Scar(r)ed***
> *I was between sessions in a large women's prison in the Midlands, and waiting to go to the bathroom. This is one of the measures of control visitors are also subject to whilst working in prisons: there is no freedom of movement, so your comfort breaks need to be scheduled. One of the women who would be in our session found me lurking in the corridor, and approached me with her arms outstretched: she wanted me to see her scars; to witness her suffering. She could see I was looking, listening. I was trapped in an ethical moment of performativity. Instead of remaining the outsider being viewed, I was now an important witness of an individual's 'abject' body. I can't recall what I said to her, or how I politely assured her that I had indeed heard her story. I know that I remained in the bathroom for some extra minutes to collect myself.* (Research Diary April 2012).

The extract from my research diary highlights witnessing as a key trope in the practice of conducting arts in prisons, and returns to the traces of trauma theory in shaping the ways I, as a researcher, witness and respond to women's narratives of traumata. This woman shifted her performance when she realised I was actually listening to her; she became more animated, more assured. She knew how to 'perform' her scars for maximum effect. She had found a narrative that allowed her to shift between casting herself as a victim and demonstrating her survival. Self-harm is not necessarily an indication of suicide attempts, but rather, researchers say that it can be seen as a survival tactic for people (overwhelmingly women) who seek release from inner

turmoil (see Kilby, 2001).[38] Self-harm becomes a means of manifesting the pain and anguish that cannot otherwise be expressed – a performance which conforms to a limited script: the self-harmer is seen as a nuisance for drawing attention to herself and at the same time, pitied for the self-destruction she enacts upon her own skin. We might see self-harmers as belonging simultaneously to both the category of 'victim' of an original trauma and the (self inflicted) pain, and 'survivor' – which as a category necessitates repetition as its mode. The performativity of trauma as outlined by Duggan and Wallis (2011) and Stuart Fisher (2011) raises a range of modes for performance itself: including repetition, witnessing and issues of representing what Caruth calls the 'unspeakable' (1996). This loaded term provides important considerations for performance, which, in its liveness, consists of embodied narratives alongside text, which dismantles the silence or lacunae of trauma.

The three categories I highlight above are animated in relation to one another as lenses through which performance is analysed. It is clear that these are not categories that are foreclosed or fixed, but rather they interrelate. These lenses provide a means of scrutinising the performance evidence in later chapters.

Victim – the UN has raised the need for debating the meanings of 'victimhood', particularly since other societal inequalities such as race, ethnicity, poor mental health and poverty also intersect with the notion of victimhood. The UN recognises that women's vulnerability in patriarchal society reinforces the sense of women as 'always already' victims (Erez, 2007). Fassin and Rechtman (2007) also warn of the dangers of not contesting the trope of 'victim'. It is all too easy to fall back on categories of inequality and oppression as 'proof' of victimisation. For Fassin and Rechtman (2007), the medicalisation of trauma has contributed to the lack of critical openness about what constitutes a 'victim'. For the women themselves, the category of 'victim', multiply applied, directs 'blame' away from themselves, as personal agency had been limited. This is evident in prison programming that prioritises addiction awareness. While such programmes help women understand the mechanisms of addiction, they

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[38] Further explorations of self-harm as instances of reality in 'unreal situations' appear in Chapter 6, drawing on the thinking of Duggan (2012).

also reinforce a lack of agency by encouraging a dependency narrative.[39] Simone Weil-Davis (2011) reflects on the narratives of 'empowerment' that permeate prison programmes as a double bind. She suggests

> the unspoken imperative remains that the elicited agency must be limited to personal healing and recovery. Reflection on structural, institutional injustice […] is dubbed whining, a shirking from the accountability that makes personal transformation possible (2011: 210).

Furthermore, Shoshana Pollack (2000) has critiqued the self-esteem discourse that has infiltrated criminal justice (particularly regarding women) arguing that political agency provides the context for subjective agency (cited in Weil-Davis, 2011: 214). By diminishing the agency women in prison hold in relation to their future pathways (employment, education, maintaining family relationships) and in relation to their bodies, women are disempowered. Yet, as development studies, psychology and humanitarian research has shown (Fassin & Rechtman, 2007), the disempowered often hold on to positions of victimhood when they become defining; particularly when they are related to accessing aid or other benefits which accompany philanthropic giving or welfare. In relation to arts in prisons, then, the benevolent guest artist 'giving' salve to the victimised participants has been an under-researched phenomenon.[40] All too often, women's victimhood is firstly assumed, and secondly perpetuated in the delivery of programmes in prisons.

Survivor – The complex interrelationship between having survived violence, trauma and hardship and the predominance of moral victory that accompanies survival erases the difficulties and conflicts (perhaps also guilt and sense of loss) in 'surviving'. This might be due to a loss of stable identification.[41] Such complexity is evident in the ways women and girls are characterised as protagonists in plays about prison – since 'survival' traces imply 'being done to', rather than implicit agency. Performing (for) survival serves to break open and disassemble the existing habitus by imposing

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[39] This is explored in a US context by Lynne Haney (2010).

[40] This has been considered by Thompson, 2011b. I explore the notion of 'salve' more deeply in Chapter 4. Examples in other sub-fields of applied theatre are refugee performance (Balfour, 2013; Jeffers, 2009; Salverson, 2001).

[41] I have used the work of Fassin and Rechtman (2007) in thinking through the complex responses to surviving trauma.

urgency, pressure and limitations to the improvisational options available to the actors. In prisons, as Goffman has outlined, prisoners' dispositions are purposefully erased in specified ways; and new features and behaviours that are important for their survival of the context of the institution come to replace them (albeit temporarily). For example, I see that women's tendency to mistrust everything and question their own beliefs as a performance of and for survival. In Chapters 4 and 5 I explicate how this can be understood in relation to de Certeau's (1984) formulation of tactics.

Hero - it is compelling to believe that people who overcome past violence and trauma are heroes. An example used in several Clean Break plays is the tentative heroism of women who escape years of domestic abuse, in the process committing crimes. In these cases, women's crimes are directly the result of both prior victimisation and the survival of systematic oppression. Yet, I must acknowledge that such narratives are also culturally informed; and that, for example, it is common for victims of sex trafficking not to report their victimisation for a range of reasons not related to fear of being caught by police, but which concern sense of honour and family, for example. Furthermore, there is a strong moral and cultural code that exists within certain sectors of the prison population to represent themselves as 'strong'.[42] They appear to cast themselves as heroes: often acknowledging their crimes, and asserting their current position as morally superior to their prior selves. Often this occurs through testimonies of 'transformation'. This trope is often repeated in narrative structures, and is powerfully illustrated in the case of serial killer Aileen Wournos, who was put to death in Florida for murdering seven men. Though she never claimed innocence, she became a born again Christian in prison and her 'transformation' became an important part of her appeal against the death penalty (Hart, 1994).

Elaine Aston has written about a Clean Break production, *Yard Gals*, in which she investigates how Rebecca Prichard constructs girl gang identities as nihilistically seeking to create 'girl power' (2003: 72). Aston's consideration of feminist structures of feeling (2003) is a useful way to consider how the victim-survivor-hero tropes are

negotiated aesthetically in plays such as Rebecca Lenkiewicz' *An Almost Unnameable Lust* (2011) and *Her Naked Skin* (2008) (Chapter 6), Lucy Kirkwood's *it felt empty when the heart went at first but it's alright now* (2009) (Chapter 6) and Chlöe Moss' (2009) *This Wide Night* (Chapter 7). Victim-survivor-hero provides an important and original contribution to thinking through performances because it is a means of reflecting on how simultaneous positions can be used to reflect on the multiple subjectivities of women in prison, in contrast to many theatrical representations of women in one of the three lenses. Shifting identification can occur through discovery of a new set of behaviours (as proposed by Geese Theatre, for example); yet, women in prison may make conscious choices to deploy one or more 'categories' of identification for specific purposes. For example, if the mode of 'survivor' is valourised within the current system, women may choose to model behaviours that highlight or present their survival in order to achieve something. They may, for example, be more likely to access interventions such as mandatory courses relating to drug and alcohol abuse if they adhere to the perceived 'correct' attitude to addiction, rather than maintain an attitude of victimisation or blaming others, for example. Dramaturgical means of reflecting shifting identifications are explored in greater detail in later chapters.[43]

The frame feminist criminology provides has given a grounding for understanding how women in prison are described in terms of their victimhood, closely intertwined with women as survivors of traumatic pasts (often with lives characterised by deep poverty, lack of education, alongside structural inequalities in relation to employment, drug addiction, sexual abuse, domestic abuse and violence).[44] The literature tends towards highlighting the wider conception of women as oppressed, while largely avoiding the complex task of viewing multiple contingencies of understanding human agency as including both victimising narratives of marginality and exclusion and the perceptions of female criminals as active perpetrators of crimes (in other words agents of

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[42] This view comes from a writer in residence who has published several books with women in prison (Thorn, 2011a: Personal Interview). In chapter 7, I engage with the theme of 'strength' used in *This Wide Night* (Moss, 2008).

[43] I explore the potential for playwrights to experiment with chronology, multiple sites and the relationship between women's feelings and experiences in prison alongside the structural socio-economic contexts that give rise to public opinion. See Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

[44] Prison Reform Trust, 2011b.

transgressive meaning). Such ellipsis is telling, because it discursively insists on placing women's agency as inherently 'good', and the 'system' as patriarchal oppression, or 'bad'. Lynda Hart reflects on the preoccupation with the '(im)morality of women and the ever-present paranoia that women possess an inferior sense of justice'. She goes on to state that psychoanalysis 'obsessively reproduces "women" as implicitly dangerous' (1994: 25). This relates to the discursive characterisation of all women as dangerous, modelled by Cesare Lombroso (1895), which is dealt with in Chapter 4. Furthermore, these factors are reflected in the ways the model victim-survivor-hero are analysed in relation to performance in chapters 4, 5 and 6.

I have demonstrated that criminology in the first instance, and feminist criminology in retaliation, both maintain and confirm 'woman' as a problematic signifier, to be grounded by means of further identification; namely by assessing and articulating how 'good' or 'bad' she is. Rather, there is the need to determine a third possibility whereby binaries are re-positioned as fluctuating. Perhaps the performative model provides an alternative to thinking in terms merely of subject vs. oppressor, if it develops in such a way as to disrupt victimising narratives without denying their impacts. In other words, instead of functioning in a simple 2-dimensional operation (subject/object or survivor/ victim), the characterisation of woman (her habitus, her stories) rather shifts between nodes of potentiality that are specific in time and space.

Baz Kershaw considers prisons to be inherently theatrical because they 'stage the absolute separation that society seeks to impose between good and evil – or […] between acceptable and unacceptable forms of subjectivity' (1999: 131). Performances in turn, can work towards unpicking the threads of what 'unacceptable subjectivity' might be, by, for example, engaging the audience in a new relationship in which affective witnessing predicates the literal meanings of the text. Hans-Thies Lehmann's notion of postdramatic theatre posits that theatre's promise of being together invokes a sense of community (2006). In relation to the concerns of women in prison, performance thus opens up spaces for dialogue, creativity and belonging that transcend the fixed categories of the institution.

Locating Habitus in a Prison Context: The Cycles of 'Tragic Containment'

Institutional research must make account of its informing discourses as a means of unpacking the dynamics of power implicit within it. The fieldwork approach is grounded in a profound sense of the difficulties of incarcerating women in this milieu, many of whom have repeatedly been characterised as not 'belonging' in prisons. In recent years, the UK has been shown to have incarcerated a record number of women with multiple and complex needs, especially mental health needs (McAndrew & Warne, 2005; Rickford, 2011). This awareness fuels my own desire to explore performance practices that challenge and subvert the insidious characterisation of women as 'unacceptable'. In this context, then, power is evident in the institution itself (its informing discourses, and the socio-economic context); in the relations between staff and prisoners; the prisoners' activities in the institution (both sanctioned and unsanctioned); and in their progression out of the institution. It is thus necessary to examine not only the formal or legitimate narratives, but to explore how rule-breaking and transgression operate as performative ruptures of the prison habitus – the framework of analysis is then both institutional habitus and personal habitus. I have already made an account of habitus as an informing theory for the research. Fieldwork methods reflect the need for both members' own accounts of their habitus as explored in relation to an outsider's perspective. This dialogue forms a crucial element of the study. I am aware that 'institutional habitus' and 'individual habitus' need to be further specified, which occurs through fieldwork observation. In this regard, I do not perceive ruptures to be positive and docility necessarily negative – for example, self-harm may be a woman's means of rupturing the institutional regime, but has obvious negative effects for herself and others. [45]

I explore the prison habitus as a means of defining the gender-specific norms and values that permeate the prison system; then moves to a consideration of how individual prisoners' habitus upholds or rejects that frame. The use of theatre practice as a research/data collection method becomes an approach in which alternative strategies are explored in a safe frame of make-believe. The 'as if' of theatrical

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[45] This definitional work is discussed in the chapters analysing women's performances in prisons: both my original empirical work in HMP Drake Hall (Chapter 5) and the discussion on staging prisons (Chapter 6).

imagining is a crucible for rehearsing and articulating alternatives to the current status quo – or rather, to imagining and embodying behaviours that could replace destructive habitus (Boal, 2002). In other words, the performative potential allows space for subjective ontology that can exist within a repressive regime without dismantling it – to claim the space for productive repertoires.

Herein lies a fundamental tension of the project; since radical practice would seek to dis-articulate power structures but the demands of sanctioned entry into a secure institution invites complicity with its narratives. This places a certain pressure on the project to maintain awareness of the multiple ways its own formulation and practices embody and apply coercion, domination and erasure. Kershaw writes that 'anyone who ventures into prisons to 'do' performance is, initially at least, bound to seem to the inmates to be party to the authorship of their oppression' (1999: 133). Thus, limitations are evident in the extent to which objective claims can be made about a single project and its impacts – concerns that predominate in the literature on arts in prisons.[46] This important consideration is mentioned here by means of signalling a conscious choice in the design of the project; which is the choice to engage performance-based research methods not as a means of defining and defending a particular model of practice (in which case impacts and evaluations would be necessary) but rather as a means of embodying the inclusive, dialogic feminist ethnography that can provide characteristics of wider communities (Ferrell, 2009).

Below, I outline a simplistic model of a cycle of crime and punishment by expressing the 'stages' (though not necessarily discrete and definite) through performative terminologies, specifically utilising the terms of tragedy, as outlined by Eagleton (2003). I use this as a starting point – an extended metaphor – rather than a predetermined lens, because tragic structures more or less fix and thus limit the subjective potential for demolishing its cycles. Ideally, from an activist perspective, such as the charity Women in Prison, the frame needs to be dismantled at policy level and through the various practices in order for the notion of 'inevitable' consequences to be dispersed. Yet, since this research is placed in a critical feminist perspective, it is

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[46] These concerns are explored in more detail in Chapter 4.

important to note that wider structures of inequality and oppression are not dismantled, and thus oppressive cycles are maintained.

Terry Eagleton's view of tragedy is that it involves a protagonist being trapped in 'irreducible dilemmas, coerced into action by daily compulsive forces' (2003: 62). He cites Barthes:

> Tragedy is only a way of assembling human misfortune, of subsuming it, and thus of justifying it by putting it in the form of a necessity, of a kind of wisdom, or of a purification. To reject this regeneration and to seek the technical means of not succumbing perfidiously (nothing is more insidious than tragedy) is today a necessary undertaking (in Eagleton, 2003: 70).

Diana Taylor furthermore explores the notion of 'containment' as central to the tragic form, since, she argues, it 'orders events into comprehensible scenarios' (2002: 95). For her, the potential for destruction of tragedy is inherent to the form itself, which is miniaturised and complete, reassuring spectators that 'the crisis will be resolved and balance restored. The fear and pity we, as spectators, feel will be purified by the action' (2002: 95). The tragic model thus forms a practice of containment intended to 'warn' witnesses (audiences) of inevitable consequences, in the same way as punishment is used as a means of deterring the wider public from disobedience (Foucault, 1977; Kershaw, 1999). Recent scholarship has begun to explore the ways trauma, tragedy and witness become cultural 'tropes' by virtue of their proliferation (see Wallis & Duggan, 2011; Duggan & Wallis, 2011).

We may see the two fields of performance and prisons as interlocutors, and in reading carceral spaces as sites of performances (both transgressive and docile), consider the values of catharsis as a means of working through the emotions inevitably raised in such performances. Such a view proposes that the performance is framed as tragedy; which is a limited but productive view of prisons and those imprisoned within them. Ford argues that tragedy's special pleasure arises from 'pity and fear through imitation that the tragic poet is obliged to reproduce' (1995: 110). He traces the multiple definitions of catharsis from the medical sense of purging, restorative 'pill' through to the sacred moral refinement of the spectator's soul (both notions resonate with a Foucauldian sense of prisons historically as restorative). Yet, Ford rejects the notion

that tragedy could be merely a physiological purging of painful emotions, as this reduces the value of the art form to the status of emotional orgy (1995: 111-112). It is not necessary to be purged of the feelings arising from tragedy, since 'to feel pity we must first judge the suffering to be undeserved; to feel fear, we must calculate that a given disaster is such as might happen to us' (1995: 112).

Arts practices in prison are crystallised around the notion of incarceration as potentially transformative, or, to use the language of tragedy, cathartic. Such a view exposes the burden on punishment to change prisoners' future performances of self. Furthermore, it points to the public response to stories of incarceration – if the point of presenting theatre dealing with these stories is for public catharsis, then how are we to transform the protagonists' experience from always already 'tragic' into something that can be transformed? The tension here is that tragedy might be seen to 'fix' or 'sediment' the categories of identification – such that women in prison find their repertoires limited (in particular, considering the ways in which women's characterisation as 'criminal women'/ 'offenders' remains a trace that continues to delimit their identities). This concern demands attention in the chapters devoted to furthering theoretical analysis, yet I propose a confluence here based on my thorough grounding in the arts in criminal justice.

The model I propose below is a theoretical tool that maps criminological concerns of context, habitus and institutional habitus and the inferences for cycles of re-offending. By means of introducing the concerns of criminality through cycles of tragedy, I propose that there is a dramaturgical structure that can be seen in individual acts of crime and pathways through prisons. It remains to be seen how tragedy as a model can be productive for the exploration of the empirical participatory research in prisons. Yet, it serves as a valuable tool for the consideration of key plays from Clean Break, as well as providing structures for the theatre-based processes of research fieldwork in HMP Drake Hall, seen in chapters 4, 5 and 6.
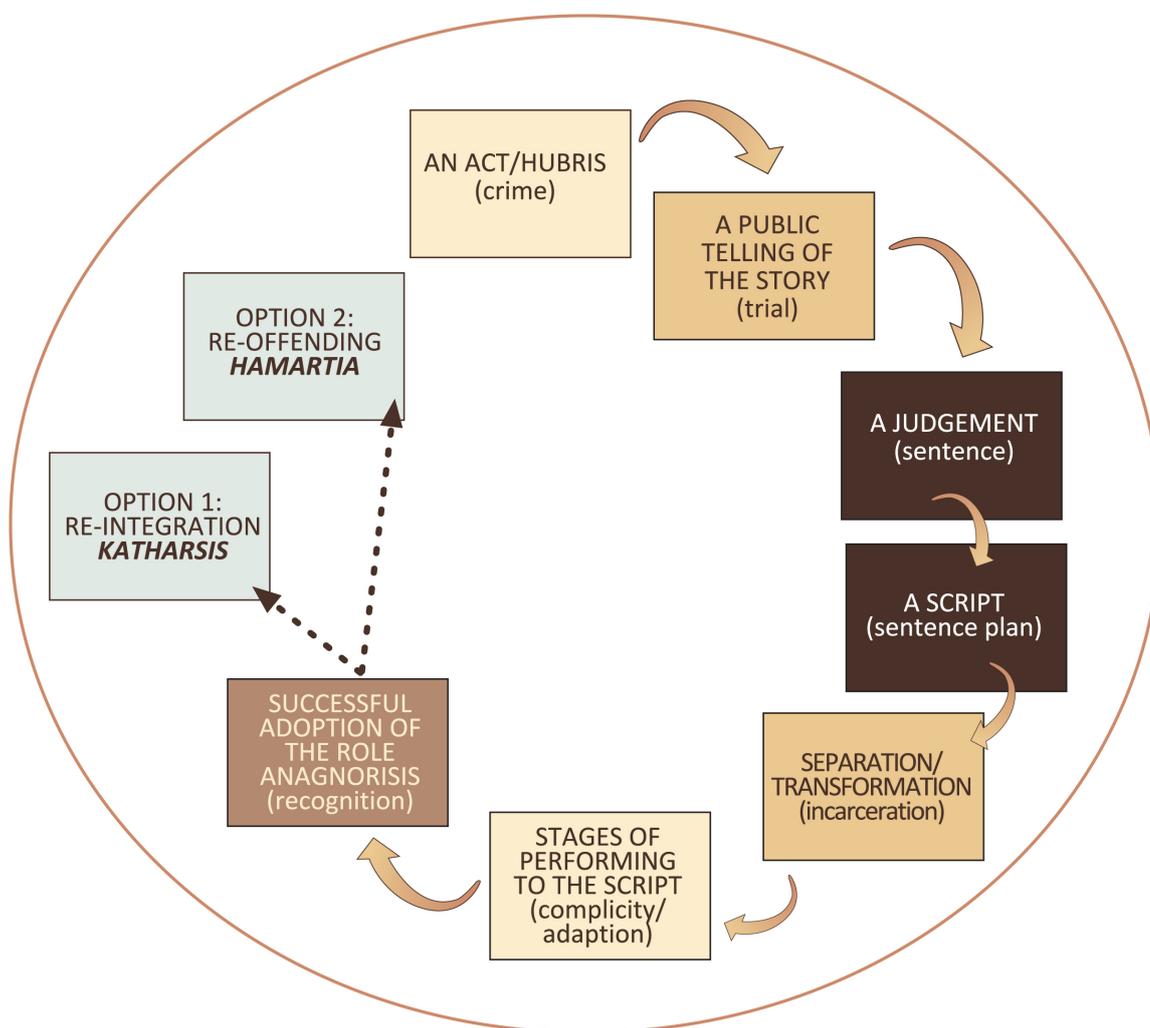
Table 1: Tragic Cycles/ Cycles of Incarceration

By examining the cycles of incarceration alongside a structure of tragedy, I intend to put the structures in conversation with one another. The purpose of the model is to provoke questions on the structure of feeling that emerges from mechanisms of crime/ punishment/ rehabilitation. I explicitly return to this model at various points in these chapters. As such, the model provides the theoretical and methodological dimensions for subsequent analysis, yet it is re-worked in relation to the findings from fieldwork, in chapters 5 and 7. In that respect, the model points forward to the emergent nature of the empirical research.

> *Archive: Play, Pause, Repeat:*
> *The first time I watched* This Wide Night *in the Soho Theatre (August 2008), I was struck by my resistance to imagining the residue that prison can have upon women's lives after release. I struggled to accept that the two*

characters Marie and Lorraine could hold so tightly to their mutual experiences of prison without being able to articulate them. I suppose I maintained that freedom from prison meant a freedom from its insistent repetitions. Later, when I was touring with the performance to women's prisons, I heard over and over how the traces of prison continue to affect women insidiously, often returning them to a cycle of re-offending. I came to see the characters' struggles not merely as representing women adapting to post-release circumstances, but as examples of women navigating complex interpersonal concerns. (Research Diary, January 2012).

The model of tragic containment links most directly to the concerns of trauma theory, in which the traumatic event re-plays the original event through embodied or psychological repetition (Caruth, 1995, 1996). One of the common conceptions of trauma, particularly in the medicalised view of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), is to what extent psychological repetition impacts on the sufferer's ability to function in the world. Repetition of the traumatic event, in various ways, functions as 'proof' of the original trauma; and so the complex functioning of repetition and continued harm exposes the iterative workings of time for a traumatised psyche.[47] Women affected by criminal justice (and the ways they are represented in Clean Break's plays) are engaged in the processes of responding to traumatic events (often sustained domestic violence) through psychic repetitions. I am concerned with how aesthetics reflect the transformative nature of trauma where the traumatic event serves as a moment of change for the subject – such that the world is not phenomenologically experienced in the same way thereafter. The traumatic moment remains as a 'trace', a repeated memory. Our assumption, as consumers of popular culture, may be that incarceration is highly dramatic, but its overwhelming state is banal repetition. In this project, I am interested in trying to see how repetition is a behavioural but also aesthetic strategy for women in prison.

Archive: I've Stood at so Many Windows
East Sutton Park Open Prison, watching the play This Wide Night *(2008).*

There were about 20 women one evening watching this play about 2 women who meet up again on the outside. It's a complex story about the shift in relationships and expectations and how 'the real world' casts a different shadow on promises made in prison. One of the women participating revealed that the most significant scene in the play for her

[47] See Caruth, 1996; Fassin & Rechtman, 2007; Leys, 2000.

was watching the younger woman look out of the window, tracing raindrops running down the window. As she reflected on this scene, she re-enacted standing at the window, saying 'I've stood at so many windows, watching the world'. (Research Diary, September 2011).

Having glossed the value of trauma theory to the models I propose, it is valuable to explore the role of time more deeply by considering how the model of repetition and the shadows cast by trauma are reflected within the dramaturgies of the plays; and furthermore, how my fieldwork processes engage with time as a trope.[48] The model articulated above becomes a touchstone to which I return in subsequent sections; firstly in order to consider the implications of a (feminist) criminological view of women that perpetuates their victimhood; and also to consider the limitations of arts projects that are predicated on the cyclical (value-driven) agendas of rehabilitation or 'transformation'.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has undertaken to thread through the framing methodological principles outlined in the previous chapter by applying Bourdieu's sociological concept of habitus to the concerns of feminist criminology. Its fundamental purpose is to outline an argument for 'engendered habitus' that enriches and anticipates findings in later chapters. Conceiving of habitus in this way led me to construct a model of victim-survivor-hero, since the rich criminological literature and performances about women in prison alongside my own archival experiences working in prisons suggest that fixed and deterministic categories were both inaccurate and unstable. The research project needed to be located within a critical discourse that engaged with shifts and changes even while acknowledging prisons as seemingly monolithic, impenetrable and immutable institutions of control. Ruptures to the institutional habitus, and departures from fixed cycles have thus emerged, through both chapters 1 and 2, as the focus of this project. Habitus provides the tool for conceiving of these as performance; and furthermore, expands the ways we can understand the institution (or field) itself. Finally, in relation to the predominance of 'resistance' in the research of women in prison, the model 'tragic containment' is put forward as an analytic touchstone in the

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[48] Time is briefly explored as a dramaturgical frame in chapters 6 & 7.

research. The theoretical grounding here provides an understanding of the filed as productive of durable dispositions. The next chapter attends more explicitly to the ways in which prison constitutes an institutional field for the performances of women; and as such, it proposes that prison itself must be understood *as* a set of performances.

CHAPTER THREE: GENEALOGIES OF PRISON *AS* PERFORMANCE: TOWARDS A THEORY OF SIMULATING THE CAGE

Introduction

This chapter furthers a theory of prisons *as* performance. In order to do so, I undertake a genealogical exercise that considers how spectacles of punishment are specific, local and historically informed. This is necessary in order to argue that it is in the conscious, aesthetic framing of prison's performance that the relationship between politics and the apparatus of the theatre and performance can be understood. The central proposal in this thesis is that performance (understood broadly in relation to performance of the everyday and theatrical performance) offers a way of knowing about and a way of relating to prison as institutional frame. I attend to the ways aesthetic choices become foregrounded in the discursive repetition of prison as a cultural inheritance of how bodies are punished. This provides the materials that are developed in later chapters in relation to empirical investigation of how women's bodies are punished in prison in the UK. What is needed is a prolonged critique on prisons as sites of cultural imagination; by exploring the spectacle of their surveillance functions as well as considering the relationship between the prisoners' bodies as objects of a punitive gaze by a perceived 'public'.

While the thesis attends to how incarceration, removal, programmes of rehabilitation and re-entry cycles perpetuate distinctions between 'us' and 'them', this chapter investigates the means by which 'the cell' itself performs this function. In doing so, I am concerned with how prisons stage this distinction in spatial, aesthetic and affectual ways. I am interested in the means by which the functions of prison systemically contribute to a moral, ethical and aesthetic separation of certain types of bodies,[1] and to what extent the prison's successful 'performance' demands a particular repetition of the restoration of societal norms predicated on law. Performance here is intended to be understood in the McKenzian (2001) dimension as how the prison and the

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[1] I am referring here to the well-rehearsed critique of the neoliberal milieu (in the West) in which disproportionately, people of colour, poor people and immigrants are criminalised. This is particularly so in the USA and the UK (See Wacquant, 2009; 2010b). These concerns are taken further in Chapter 6.

analysis of the prison labours.[2] This chapter seeks to extend the argument offered in Chapter 2, in which prison's public/private dynamic can be reconsidered through performance. In light of the ways criminal justice is concerned with the spectacle of 'successful' rehabilitation, this chapter is concerned with the power of carceral spaces. Prisons, here, are analysed *as* performance. A point to raise here, which will be examined in detail in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, is about the assumption of a linear progression of the cycles of incarceration, and how such linearity becomes disrupted by performances of resistance. Performance studies offers important tools in this regard by engaging with the contexts, settings and nuances of actions and receptions of the subject of investigation. It is this particularly political realm that circumscribes this study.

Derrida's (1993) work on performativity is glossed here in relation to the means by which the violence of the law serves both as an interruption of time but also as a performative promise. 'Justice' functions through promissory demands that an act equals a sentence, and that a sentence equals a predetermined set of processes relating to removal, rehabilitation and transformation before expulsion into the 'real' world.[3] In this view, the appearance of the subject at the end of the sentence legitimates the performative function of the sentence. The maintenance of cultural tropes that highlight dangers and risks of prison also maintain the discursive power of the law.[4]

 In a recent special edition of *Law Text Culture* (2010) contributors explored the interaction between performance studies and law in order to consider the theatrical presence of the law. The fruitful dialogue between disciplines suggests ways performance can be considered as more than a metaphor or dismissive claim of in-

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[2] I am grateful to R. Justin Hunt for this formulation that emerged through a dialogue at Critical Encounters at the University of Lincoln, 20 January 2014.

[3] I am drawing on J. Hillis Miller's (2007) eccentric unravelling of the differences between Austin's speech act performativity, Butler's notion of performativity and the Derridean. For a further reading of the performativity of the law in relation to speech acts, see Theron Schmidt (2010).

[4] Later chapters demonstrate that the 'public' perceptions of prison life are perpetuated through cultural and mediatised imaginaries. Much of this requires a restoration of harsh, punitive conditions that can reassure the 'public' that justice is being done. For a particularly rich examination of the performance of punishment, see Thompson (2004a). Paul Khan's evocative account of legal performance and the imagination of sovereignty is also noteworthy (2006).

authenticity. Juridical meanings are considered in relation to witnessing (Wake, 2010); prison architecture's performance via presence (Branco, 2010); and the emergence of the theatricality of political apology (Schmidt, 2010). The collection positions juridical processes as needing to be analysed as theatrical problems, or what Schmidt considers 'problems for theatre, but also ideas that theatricality problematises – such as problems of representation, authenticity and spectatorship' (2010: 55). As Leiboff has suggested, 'the theatrical militates against law's insistence that actions and events are rendered according to the narrative and chronological certainties of the Aristotelian well-made play' (2010: 388). While the work is compelling, this academic discourse engaging with (or appropriating) performance demonstrates the promiscuous 'value' of metaphors. Indeed, 'performance' as a term is often used to indicate the success of worth in capitalist terms of a company.[5] Instead, I use three performance examples to model my argument about prisons *as* performance.[6] As such, performance becomes a methodological concern - or to put it differently, performance becomes the research lens.

The following two sections engage with unpacking what is understood by carceral spaces. I attend to the operations of power and subjectivity before arguing that performance studies provides valuable analytic tools for investigating the aesthetic and cultural work done as prisons perform their functions. The argument is supported by a working through of the genealogies of prison *as* performance, in which three examples of cells in public spaces, or what Dominique Moran calls 'transient carceral landscapes' (2012; 2013), are analysed.[7] Each of these examples explores the carceral landscape in a socio-political context, and through staging, each of them raises

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[5] This dual sense of 'performance' is also explored in Jon McKenzie's work on disciplinarity and performance (2001). When considered in relation to prisons (many of which are private companies), the idea of 'performance' needs to be robustly problematised. While not explicitly attended to in this thesis it is attended to in a conference paper on the balance between neoliberal values of the institution and values in arts based investigation in prisons (Walsh 2012c).

[6] It is important to acknowledge that 2 out of the 3 examples were explicitly staged as performance in public. The first – the Stanford experiment – was a simulation set up as a psychological experiment. Its value in the subsequent understanding of prison spaces and impacts on affects and cognitive functions as well as the bodies of prisoners, leads me to analyse this as a performance.

[7] The transient carceral landscape relates to the transportation and mobility of punitive measures of control. See also the edited collection by Moran, Gill & Conlan (eds.) (2013) *Carceral Spaces: Mobility and Agency in Imprisonment and Migrant Detention.* Examples include prison vans, temporary holding cells, etc.

important questions about (racialised, sexualised) bodies in relation to the spectacle of suffering.[8] The examples provide scenes of subjection in which the relation between optics, audience presence and the implications of the relations between the two are explored.

Carceral Spaces: Power, Punishment and the Panopticon
In her investigation of the connection between architectures of power and visibility, Patricia Branco investigates the similarities between two historically significant prison and theatre spaces, which she sees as having

> both specular and spectacular functions, in which space acts as a manifestation of power to shape the place or stage where law and theatre come to life and perform their spectacle (2010: 277).

What Branco's formulation offers is the sense that the panopticon is not merely an architectural structure that renders individuals visible to the central authority in the watchtower, but also to each other such that individual punishment is always already co-performed. She offers a description of the ways

> space serves the purpose of inflicting the power of law over the prisoners and where each and all are both actors and spectators in the spectacle of oppression that involves them all (2010: 284).

For Branco, prison architectures provide an understanding of the operations of power from a vertical (top down) and a horizontal approach, which can be between prisoners. The notion of an external audience/ witness (such a theatre practitioner, or researcher, or theatre audience to a play staged in prison) further complicates the operations of this power dynamic, so that spectating and spatial politics are in conflict. The architecture of prisons and the ways space performs domination and punishment have been well rehearsed since Foucault's history of the birth of the prison (1977). One of his major concerns was the investigation of operations of power and visibility in Jeremy Bentham's panopticon (which literally means 'to see everything'). Bentham proposed a radial design, in which a central watchtower asserts the illusion of being

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[8] Throughout these considerations, I have foregrounded a feminist concern with the subjective positionality of female bodies, rather than bodies in general, in order to ensure that women's double marginalisation is always attended to in the research. Chouliaraki's (2008) work on the spectacle of suffering has been valuable in this regard.

able to see into every cell, effectively turning each of them into 'so many cages, so many small theatres, in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualized (sic) and constantly visible' (1977: 201). Foucault's understanding of the panopticon resulted in a theory of how discipline is meted out through the notion that conformity or docility result from 'eliminating autonomy and reforming the 'self'' (Kershaw, 1999: 131). One of the main functions of the panopticon was to engage in surveillance for economic reasons – employing fewer staff to oversee many more workers, asylum inmates or prisoners.[9] Foucault shows how Bentham's concept was that power should be 'visible and unverifiable' (1977: 201); and resultantly, there is a dissociation of the 'see/being seen dyad: in the peripheric ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen' (1977: 203). The panopticon provides valuable structural metaphors for the modelling of visibility and spectatorship, but needs to be considered critically in relation to women. In particular, the women prisoners-as-objects are rendered doubly marginalised in their positions as subjects to the all-powerful (male) gaze.

In order to enter the argument about the prison *as* performance, I begin with a theatrical response to the notion of the panopticon. This brief framing section is intended to not simply acknowledge a formative cultural representation of the spectacularisation of the criminal body. It also provides a means of considering the function of the theatre in framing, aestheticising and reproducing values related to social justice. In turn, I make use of this entry point later in the chapter when I discuss three genealogical examples of the transient carceral landscapes.

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[9] In the surveillance society, the panopticon has been translated into constant surveillance through CCTV imagery and biometric data. Mahjid Yar's (2003) excellent exegesis about the pathologisation of surveillance is instructive in this regard.
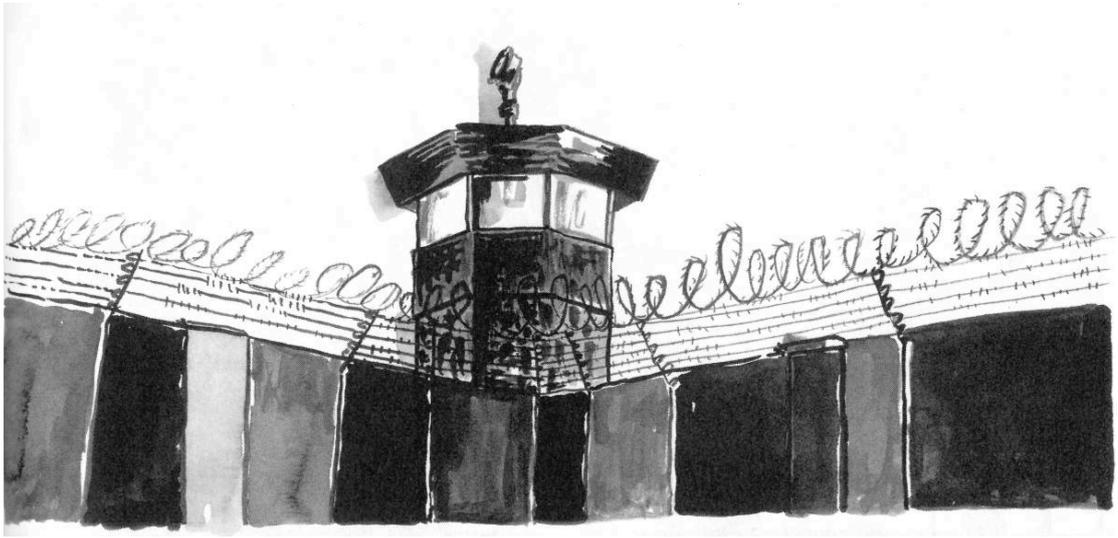
Image 1: Panopticon

Ahrens, L. (2008: 75) 'Prisoners of a Hard Life: Women and their Children' *The Real Cost of Prisons Comix*.

Caryl Churchill's play *Softcops*, written in 1978, was intended to be a work about the soft measures of control inflicted by institutions of society. Churchill acknowledges the influence of Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, which results in a play about the attempt by 'government to depoliticise illegal acts, to make criminals a separate class from the rest of society so that subversion will not be general' (1990: 3). In the play, set in France in the 1830s, she stages a conversation between Bentham and Pierre, in which Pierre demonstrates a spectacular performance of punishment by presenting a man stretched out on 'the rack'.[10]

> Pierre. […] here you have the shock and at the same time the reasonable explanation of how the crime came about and how to resist any such tendencies in one's own life.
>
> Bentham. But this sight is not giving us a pleasure greater than the man's suffering. I've seen enough. Release the man at once.
>
> Pierre. I must devise punishments that will continue to be a novelty and a real attraction to the public.
>
> Bentham. Stop stop. It goes on and on.

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[10] The rack is a torture device that aims to stretch out the body, pulling limb from limb. The person being tortured is tethered to the rack, and the tethers are tightened by turning a wheel. This is discussed in Foucault's discussion on the spectacle of the scaffold (1977: 32-69).

> Pierre. That's the perfection. It can go on all day and every day. Don't worry Mr Bentham, come closer. He doesn't feel a thing. Can you see now? The wheels turn but he is not stretched. It's an optical illusion (1990: 39).

Bentham then tells Pierre about how he has spent years working on a project that related to increasing productivity of workers. It comprises, he says of an iron cage.

> Bentham. A central tower. The workers are not naturally obedient or industrious. But they become so.
>
> Pierre. The workers gaze up at the iron cage?
>
> Bentham. No, no, your idea has to be reversed. Let me show you. Imagine for once that you're the prisoner. This is your cell, you can't leave it. This is the central tower, and I'm the guard. I'll watch whatever you do day and night (1990: 38-39).

Pierre spends some time undergoing a humiliating, drawn out experience of being watched, and he narrates his sensations. Finally, he begs Bentham to tell him whether he has correctly understood the purpose of the panopticon:

> Pierre. [...] Instead of thousands of people watching one prisoner, one person can watch thousands of prisoners. I've always wanted to affect the spectators. You're affecting the person who is seen. This is a complete reversal for me (1990: 40).

Churchill offers an important consideration for the investigation on prison as performance, which is the need to analyse the directionality of the gaze (or the intentionality) and the implications of power differentials between bodies staged as/ for punishment. Her play stages the danger and violence inherent in even the spectacle of prison *as* performance. Risk, pain and danger characterise prison life, and architectures and daily patterns in turn reflect such dangers.[11] Having said that, I propose that it is simplistic to characterise carceral spaces as merely 'dangerous'. What is risky, for me, is the tendency to subsume the dangers of surveillance and the

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[11] Several examples of prison literature as well as reflexive practitioner research make account of these rhythms of daily life. Many of them do not escape dualities and perpetuate a victimised narrative of prison life (Graney, 2004; 2006; James, 2003; Lamb, 2007). Throughout this research, I maintain that this tendency returns prisoners to a marginal position. Instead, prisoners writing autobiographical work and artists

powers it grants authorities over the bodies of the incarcerated subjects with the erasure of agency proposed by Foucault's 'docile bodies' (1977).

Theatre and performance scholars have rarely satisfactorily critiqued the theoretical notion of the panopticon, I contend, because it provides neat and compelling arguments for the relationship between the audience and the performer. Instead, I propose that performance can, instead of co-opting the imagery of the panopticon and its dispersed surveillance, problematise the direction of the gaze, the assumptions about audience homogeneity, and introduce complex affectual responses to the subject of crime and incarceration.[12] What needs further investigation is exactly in what ways power and punishment are performed in and through institutions and their day-to-day apparatus. Kershaw, for example, acknowledges that Foucault's view insists on an ethical reading of the performance of power and punishment (1999). Conquergood demands that research should consider the politics of performance, asking for consideration of 'the relationship between performance and power' (1991: 191). The examples in this chapter begin to unpack how understanding prison *as* performance troubles fixed understandings of the functions of juridical systems that are predicated on 'right', 'wrong', inside and outside.

In the chosen extracts from *Softcops* (1990), Churchill stages the moral and ethical implications of the aesthetic spectacle in the scenes between Bentham and Pierre. In other scenes, too, prisoners are displayed, marked out with placards stating their crimes, and paraded in chain gangs around France. The play's debt to Foucault is evident in its exploration of the shifting modes of punishment relating to a range of social attitudes to crime. Most importantly, however, the play positions visibility of the criminal body as paramount. The scene above exposes the force of seeing/ being seen dyad that is so central to the notion of the panopticon as well as to performance.

The workings of the law offer the separation of criminal bodies as a reassurance of

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working in a range of media with prisoners could and should engage with a broader spectrum of focus that engages not merely with prisoner as object and institution as omniscient.

safety. We (the public) are, paradoxically, meant to assume that society is safer when more men and women are locked away. Yet, criminology has offered multiple rebuttals to that assumption, demonstrating that there is increasing criminalisation of intersecting social issues such as class, poverty and lack of education. This follows Foucault's assertion that the carceral landscape 'assures, in the depths of the social body, the formation of delinquency on the basis of subtle illegalities' (1977: 301). It is necessary, however, to ensure that there is a robust critique of the assumptions that dictate what makes society 'safe' or what constitutes a 'risk'. These concerns, rather than being objectively true, are culturally informed and contextualised by economic and political milieus. What lies beneath the ongoing redefinition of effective performances of safety and security is a wider concern about nations, sovereignty, and belonging and how these are circulated through cultural production.[13] This accounts for the insistence of markers of inclusion and exclusion that repeatedly coincide with the markers of what is considered criminality. What is worrying is that this mapping of criminality against poverty, class, race and exclusion from the mainstream has not abated since Charles Booth's mapping of the criminal underclasses in London in the 19th century.[14]

Criminal justice in general, and prison in particular, stage the separation of 'others' by literally marking out carceral spaces as constituting the punitive inside and the outside as freedom, the protected 'us' against the 'them' from whom we need protection. I propose that performance apparatus is employed to do so, although this reading can be subverted through resistance. Yet, in their hegemonic legitimacy, prisons are physical stages set aside for removing undesirable 'Others' from the society to which they once belonged. Prisoners and staff perform set functions, marked out by deliberate costumes and behavioural scripts (or habitus). Prisoners and staff do not

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[12] A recent controversial example of this is South African director Brett Bailey's *Exhibit A*, *B* and *C* series that stage the postcolonial body as object in an apparent attempt to subvert the power of the Western gaze. See for example Krueger, 2013; Larlham, 2009; Third World Bunfight, 2012; Vlachos, 2013.

[13] In particular, this can be seen in the works about photography and capturing atrocity such as Peggy Phelan's work on Abu Ghraib photographs (2009), following Sontag's (2004) concern with how aesthetic framing reinforces the imaginary of nationhood and civic responsibility. Taylor, D., Chaudhuri, U., & Worthen, W. (2002) reflect specifically on the manner in which performance attends to these matters. The philosophical implications of this are furthered in Judith Butler's works *Precarious Life* (2004) and *Frames of War* (2009).

occupy the same spaces, so prisoners' steps are directed by painted lines on the ground, with particular areas marked out as 'out of bounds'. Staff, additionally, have the capacity to navigate through any door, fence or gate. Most importantly, prison staff maintains good order and discipline largely by rigid adherence to rules about when and where prisoners may move, with whom they may associate and what activities are sanctioned.

It is not merely between prisoners and their guards that there is a staged separation between 'us' and 'them'. In the visits hall, red chairs indicate prisoners and blue chairs indicate visitors. This is practical for the officers, who spend most of the day correlating the numbers tally, as they can more easily count red chairs rather than become confused when there are many bodies in seats of the same colour.[15] It also serves as a reminder for those participating in the visit that the prisoner is not merely a member of the family, for example, but is first considered a prisoner. In other words, the personal agency of the subject is subsumed by the role as prisoner. It is this erasure and denial of difference that has inspired feminist scholars to develop critical tools that insist on the placing of subjective, embodied experiences in their analyses (Abu-Lughod, 2000).[16] As such, it is necessary to develop research that takes cognisance of the means by which difference, marginality and Otherness are staged by prison apparatus. As a means of considering the performance of prison's disciplinary operations, the next section works towards an understanding of the aesthetics of prison, in which I articulate what I call 'prison cultures'.

Prison Cultures: Performance & Cultural Constructions of the Institution

> Against the backdrop of unfettered markets and enfeebled social-welfare programs, when the penal system has become a major engine of social stratification and cultural division in its own right, the field study of the prison ceases to be the province of the specialist in crime and punishment to become a window into the deepest contradictions and the darkest secrets of our age (Wacquant 2002, 389).

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[14] His poverty maps and sociological treatises can be accessed from an online archive: <http://booth.lse.ac.uk/> Accessed 5 August 2013.
[15] This is particularly the case with sentenced women prisoners who are largely allowed to wear their own sweatshirts and trousers, rather than the representation of the iconic orange or plain khaki jumpsuit seen in popular media (for example, *Orange is the New Black*, 2013).

Conquergood asks researchers to engage with performance and cultural process: 'What are the consequences of thinking about culture as a verb instead of a noun, process instead of product?' (1991: 190). In this section, Conquergood's suggestion that culture may be considered to be in the process of being constructed serves to frame the investigation. Thus, I begin with examples from the literature that explore the interrelationship between stages and prisons, and move on to a critique of the dynamic between witnessing stories and participation. The main contribution of this formulation is to set the ground for an understanding of a genealogical understanding of how prisons (and their simulations or replicas staged in public) operate in relation to the social and political milieu.

It is my assertion that prisons perpetuate and rely on a perceived fixity (or spectacle) that is consistently undermined by changing repertoires of discipline and punishment. Rather than sketching a fixed or already existing 'prison culture', I evoke three historically located examples of how prison has been 'performed' in the public eye, in order to begin to carve out a lexicon of terms and practices in the realm of performance. Prison, performance, power and punishment are explored alongside one another as a means of thinking through how 'prison cultures' are multiple and variable. The purpose is to consider the powerful narratives that performing the prison and the prison's performance play in shaping wider understandings of the functions of incarceration; both for the 'protagonists' (the incarcerated), and for the 'audience' (the 'public', or society).

In an article about a now-famous performance in prison, Erin Koshal (2010) writes of a noteworthy staging of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* in San Quentin high security prison in the US in the 1980s.[17] She explores the productive connections evident in the prison-audience responses to the play with their own narratives. Didi and Gogo's existential waiting (2010: 190) becomes aligned with the political and social uncertainty faced by prisoners as they await orders, judgments, or what Koshal refers to as a 'state of exception' (cf. Agamben, 2005). Koshal privileges a political reading of

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[16] This is explicitly dealt with in my methodological work in Chapter 1.
[17] All reference to the performance is from Koshal, 2010.

the text by examining its staging in prison. For her, the issues of rights, participation and recognition of prisoners as humans are prefigured in the performance space as prisoners in the audience engage with representations of a predicament – of in-between-ness, in which the future is to be determined by an unseen force. She says that in San Quentin,

> the prison was a carceral theatre in which performance became a way for prisoners to negotiate the demands that they make themselves recognizable and also respond to conflicting norms and identities inside and outside the prison (2010: 205).

Furthermore, Koshal indicates that the prisoners' need to perform 'according to an institutional norm of 'acceptable personhood' as that term was defined legally and by the prison' (2010: 205). Her depiction of the prisoners' responses to the play prefigures the importance of the aesthetic frame through which prisoners could reflect on their own performance: compliance or defiance of prison rules, docility or resistance, recognition of the script dictated by the prison sentence, and the concomitant performance for parole. This example of performance reflects the concerns I have already articulated regarding the apparatus of power and punishment, but more precisely brings into focus the ways the aesthetic, as well as moral and social frames are deployed in the understanding of prison itself as performance. The next section sets up the concept of prison cultures, whereby we may begin to see prison scenes and settings through the focus on the body of the prisoner as 'subject' not only of punishment but also with an aim to be 'rehabilitated' or reduce reoffending, which are the lynchpins of contemporary criminal justice in the UK.[18]

The volume *Captive Audience* by Thomas Fahy and Kimball King (2003) provides examples of the ways in which the invisibility of imprisonment is challenged by staging concerns in theatres. They suggest that the (albeit defined) duration of confinement in auditoria witnessing stories of and about prison breaks apart the shroud of secrecy of institutions, and that the shared experience 'makes us aware of both our role as passive observers and our tacit acceptance of the abuses within the prison system' (2003: 1-2). Theatre, for them,

Individualizes [sic] the people held captive by telling their stories, and raises questions that are typically ignored: How and why are they in prison? What steps can be taken to prevent this outcome? In doing so, these works [...] challenge viewers to recognize [sic] the social forces that contribute to crime and ultimately, to act (2003: 1-2).

Yet, I would claim that these questions point towards an omission in many contemporary plays in which prison tropes are mined. Their overreliance on cathartic models of performance in the book undermine this intention, which is what James Thompson suggests when he argues in his review of the volume that the

intersection of prison as performance and performances that tackle prison as theme/metaphor is most acutely foregrounded when inmates themselves are invited to the stage. In these moments, the panopticon can be replayed (with the audience now guards) or the gaze be returned (as prisoners are empowered to look back at their captors) (2005: 466).

In applied theatre practices in prison, there is a subversion of the gaze: from the controlling and dominating gaze of the panopticon to the (presumed) more empathetic relationship between speaker and witness. Thompson's (2005) critique is directed at the blind spot of Fahy & King's study which ignores a fairly established (though not highly publicised) practice of the arts in prisons, particularly the use of theatre as both an entertainment for prisoners, but increasingly, using acting, improvisation, and devising methods in order to engage with offending behaviour in alternative ways to standard psychotherapeutic resources offered to prisoners.[19] These are what Goffman calls 'removal activities' (2007: 68), which are intended to be sufficiently engrossing for participants in order to 'lift' them out of themselves, making them 'oblivious for the time being to [their] actual situation' (2007: 68-69). Yet what he acknowledges is that while the intention of these activities (such as arts therapies

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[18] Both strategies of the criminal justice system are explored in more detail in Chapters 5 and 6.

[19] Applied theatre practice is explored more fully in chapter 4. Cogent examples of these practices are discussed by, amongst others, Balfour, 2003, 2004; Thompson, 1998, 1999, 2001, 2004; Watson, 2009.

or crafts) is to alleviate psychological stress, it is in their 'insufficiency […] that an important deprivational effect of total institutions can be found' (2007: 69-70).[20]

Kimball and King's study outlines some valuable areas for this investigation since it foregrounds the epistemological poverty of literary or dramatic sketches of prison. On the contrary, it is clear that prison as a trope is forged through a range of performance strategies, and not merely 'represented' in contemporary plays. In this study, I exploit a wide understanding of performance, and in this chapter in particular, I evoke performance practices in order to re-imagine the ways prisoners as 'protagonists' and audiences as witness can be troubled.[21] I aim to challenge the moment of encounter between audience as witness to prisoners' stories in order to grasp how performance can shift fixed binaries, and have the potential to re-imagine the worlds of prison and beyond.

I have offered analysis of the prison as performance by attending to space, apparatus of power and subjectivity. By drawing on aesthetics of prison and punishment, I have set the ground for examining genealogies of prison *as* performance. This allows us to understand the ways in which prison simulations project different issues into the cultural milieu as they are framed variously as scientific (Stanford Experiment), anthropological/ artistic ('Two Undiscovered Amerindians') and social (Rideout). As such, they are not immediately analogous. Yet, by exploring these three examples together, I am attempting to reflect on the imbrication of silence, domination and violence in the construction of firstly, cages, which offer a particularly transparent view of the bodies within; and secondly cells, which are generally constructed to occlude visibility. 'The cage' demands the visibility of the caged and closely resembles the parade of animalistic power, strength, or 'freakish Otherness' of anthropological 'world fairs' of the 19th century (Kruger, 2007). By contrast, the cell excludes and

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[20] Chapter 1 describes Goffman's thinking about total institutions – which include asylums, some special hospitals and boarding schools, for example. However, I am particularly focusing on the impacts he notes about involuntary incarceration in institutions. See Chapter 1.

[21] I am aware that the characterisation of prisoners as 'protagonists' is troublesome from a purely theatrical perspective (in which protagonists are always singular and the focus of the dramatic action). Yet, my argument seeks ways of understanding that individual prisoners are of course protagonists in their everyday lives, and that the agency understood by 'protagonists' ought to be restored to prisoners and ex-prisoners so that they are not merely incidental characters in others' grand narratives.

occludes public interaction; but nevertheless functions as a container that renders a differential of power visible.

In the wake of the well known Stanford Experiment (1973), and the world tour of the couple in the cage 'Two Undiscovered Amerindians visit…' by Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Coco Fusco (1992); there have been other simulations of cells and cages which display performances of and about incarceration and colonial violence (Lindfors, 2003; Taylor, 1998).[22] Such contemporary performances are generally mounted in order to extend and expand the awareness of the issues of the constructedness of 'the cage' – as embodied manifestations of racist and (hetero-)sexist domination.[23] The simulations demonstrate the perpetuated inequality of how those within the cage are viewed. Performances become a means of articulating the position of the oppressed bodies within wider discourses of social capital; and yet, too often, are implicated in the narratives they seek to rupture.

The desire of the public to experience and encounter 'the caged' is borne out through endless fascination with the mediated images and stories of crime and punishment through television, film and other media; often affirming cultural assumptions of a stable notion of the prison (McAvinchey, 2011a: 37-38). This desire to locate the workings of justice in a site, and on the bodies of prisoners, serves to mark both the bodies and the prison with a sense of fixity. This limits the potential for both space (cell/cage) and inhabitant of the space (prisoners/ specimens) to disrupt the labels and binary narratives of justice. In the same way as colonial encounters with the savage 'Other' exhibited bodies in specific ways that served to highlight difference, there is the desire within popular culture to display prisoners' moral 'Otherness' in an embodied way. Thus, most mediated images and stories encountered by the public highlight (and perhaps exaggerate) the divide between acceptable and transgressive behaviours; relying on stereotypes that are inevitably inscribed by race, class and

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[22] For example, Brett Bailey's *Exhibit B*, introduced above, was staged in Brussels, Berlin and Amsterdam. The work staged ethnographic museum exhibits that highlighted the colonial legacies of occupations. It has both received widespread critical acclaim for its empowerment of marginalised 'Others' as well as protest against its perceived racism. For more information, see Third World Bunfight (2012).

gender. The public imagination is indubitably conservative when it comes to the ways in which criminal identities are performed (Ferrell & Sanders, 1995). In addition, the institution itself maintains an impenetrable allure (Carrabine, 2012). I begin the following section with an example that was not framed as a public spectacle, and therefore, one that is being co-opted in this argument for its genealogical value.

'Transient Carceral Landscapes'[24]: The Stanford Experiment and the Simulated Prison

> The body believes what it plays at: it weeps if it mimes grief
> (Bourdieu, 1990: 73).

There is an established history of the simulation of the prison environment that has been used to determine the effects of imprisonment on both the imprisoned and those in control. The intention of the so-called Stanford Experiment was to simulate a fully operational prison environment; with all participants fully aware of their own (randomly assigned) roles of prisoner/ officer in an enclosed environment with no external audience and very little contact from the experiment team. In other words, the experiment was intended to be an extended performance of the roles of controller and controlled within a contained environment.

The Stanford Experiment has captured the public imagination since it was publicised in the 1970s, resulting in drastic reviews of research ethics protocols, participant safety and the insistence of the credo to 'do no harm'. The experiment was designed by psychologist Philip Zimbardo and his research team in order to explore the social psychology of prisoner/officer power dynamics and the 'social capital' brought to each role. The intention was to conduct a real time experiment in which research volunteers were randomly ascribed either role, and in doing so, to explore to what extent the 'officers' manifested control and domination as part of their job, and how the 'prisoners'' liberties were eroded in this role. Zimbardo suggests that it was important to have conducted the experiment outside of a 'real' prison setting, since the

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[23] Ultimately, it would be important to ensure that simulations or representations of prisons in contemporary performance do not replicate the explicit dominant narratives of racism and misogyny; and more important still to erase all forms of discrimination that are faced by women in prison.
[24] This term comes from Dominique Moran (2012).

institution (a 'fortress of secrecy' (Haney et al, 1973:3)) is immune to external observation. The experiment was designed in order to replicate the sensations of imprisonment in an embodied way (inasmuch as that was possible with voluntary research participants who had given consent), with rituals and ploys devised in order to encourage de-individualisation, dependence, and emasculation under arbitrary control. 'The combination of realism and symbolism in this experiment had fused to create a vivid illusion of imprisonment […]. It was remarkable how readily we all slipped into our roles' (1973: 6). In the event, the research subjects mounted a rebellion against the control of the officers, staging what Zimbardo calls a 'riot', which was quelled by the 'officers', who developed incentives and privileges for the good 'prisoners', and a system of punishment for those who resisted. As a result, the researchers reported that there was much greater docility and compliance by the 'prisoners' (1973: 6). For the researchers, the experiment highlighted the 'dehumanizing [sic] tendency to respond to other people according to socially determined labels and often arbitrarily assigned roles' (1973: 8). The wider implications of the research questioned to what extent 'we' allow ourselves to become imprisoned by docilely accepting the roles others assign 'us', or, indeed, choose to remain prisoners because being passive and dependent frees us from the need to act and be responsible for our own actions (1973: 9).[25]

In their analysis of the experiment, Haney et al refer to the 'pathological reactions' (1973: 75) of both 'prisoners' and 'officers'. The experiment was terminated after six days rather than continue for a second week, as had been planned, because of the 'intense' affective responses from both subject groups (Haney et al, 1973: 88). Indeed, one of the striking reflections from the researchers is the fact that due to having recruited a fairly homogenous group of young men (all Caucasian and of similar age), that several defining features of imprisonment did not surface as indicative behaviours in the simulated prison (such as rape – what they call 'involuntary homosexuality', racism, physical beatings, etc.). Rather, the power differential of role allocation caused

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[25] I am aware of the problematic use of 'we' in relation to assumed responses, but I am complying with the original formulation of the findings as presented by Haney et al. Despite 'failing' as an experiment since it was abandoned earlier than anticipated, the findings are presented as if they are generalisable.

the 'officers' to seek alternative 'differences' to justify arbitrary punishments. In other words, rather than remaining de-individualised, the mechanism of control and domination becomes more marked as it focuses on specificities. Subsequent critical explorations of the Stanford Experiment have criticised its approach, and the researchers have been implicated in the psychological harm caused by the effects of domination and control. The simulation of the prison is defended as an example of the importance of role, but nevertheless this experiment has been widely castigated for its unethical exploitation of its subjects.

The simulation performs as a model of power and its correlative docility by explicitly connecting power to hyper-masculinity. Its frame as a serious psychological experiment removes it from a public domain, yet its findings have contributed to a wider public sensibility of punishment and incarceration.[26] As a performance trope, the simulation also raises important questions about the responsibilities of observers and audiences witnessing power abuses, psychological degradation, and potential trauma. The example is cited here not only because of its historical value as a formative staging of prison and its effects, but also because of the ways it consciously demonstrated the insidiousness of roles that may otherwise be considered determined by social factors such as morality, education and upbringing.[27]

By considering the example through Bourdieu's field and habitus, it is clear that the insidious strength of the field as socially inscribed by power, inequality and domination leads quickly and inevitably to both 'officers' and 'prisoners' improvising new behaviours and strategies in order to fulfil their functions. In other words, the habitus of both groups are defined and delimited by the expectations and possibilities of the field. The findings of the experiment demonstrate the totalising power of the domain to inform how everyday behaviours are performed. This view recalls Goffman's reading of 'total institution' roles as mutually interdependent; which suggests the need

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[26] The Stanford Experiment inspired books and films such as the acclaimed German film *Das Experiment* (2001), based on the novel *Black Box* by Mario Giordano (1999).

[27] As Wacquant's body of work shows, there is a contemporary concern with over-representation of racial minorities in prisons (in both the US and the UK). The Stanford Experiment's distinct lack of factors relating to race and class means that the experiment was not biased by pre-existing inequalities or power dynamics, and was thus also limited in scope.

to question perceptions of privilege and punishment and the means of the institution to implement them.

By way of exploring the cage trope within performance, and its challenges as an object on stage, I turn now to a renowned performance event that intended to foreground the cage as trope, and invited spectators to question their own reactions to the couple who 'appeared' in the cage. The example operated in a wider frame of post-colonial performance making reference to containment of the subaltern body (Spivak, 1988).[28] While it is not a direct performance of a 'prison cell', the cage is invoked as a metaphor of containment and the spectacle of the 'Other' in a staging that foregrounds the performers' ethnicity and gender as a spectacle as well as a product of the performance. It operates as a crucial example of audience/ performer relationships in which the audience is always already simultaneously powerful and impotent.

The Couple in the Cage: Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Coco Fusco
In 1992, artist/scholars Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gómez-Peña created a touring performance called 'Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit…' in which they remained in a golden cage for three days as specimens of an undiscovered Amerindian tribe from an unknown island. The performance of the 'savages' was staged in galleries, museums and cultural institutions in several locations around the world. Diana Taylor refers to the ways the location of the cage in legitimating institutions served to implicate the 'hosts' in the 'extermination or abuse of aboriginal peoples' (1998: 163). The performance attempted to engage with the role of viewer in perpetuating the fetishisation of the postcolonial body, with references to the many disturbing historical precedents of 'savages' displayed before the colonial gaze. In her own reflexive

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[28] Antonio Gramsci's use of the term 'subaltern' was originally defined in relation to the proletariat in prisons under fascist rule, and his understanding was that an autonomous political subjectivity should be possible (Gramsci, 1971; Hoare & Nowell-Smith, 1971). In this analysis, Spivak's definition of subaltern is considered more apt, since, she argues, 'subaltern' is 'the structured place from which the capacity to predicate is radically obstructed' (Morris, 2010: 7). Spivak's seminal essay 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' sought to rebut the views of theorists such as Foucault and Deleuze, whose thinking presupposed that 'the oppressed, if given the chance… and on the way to solidarity through alliance politics… *can speak and know their conditions*' (1988: 25, emphasis in the original). For Spivak, this line of thinking results in the problem of essentialising experiences with a normative and homogenising tendency. Rather, the 'subaltern' is multiple and varied, and can be understood as those who are denied access to both mimetic and political forms of representation.

account of the performance, Fusco refers to the attempt to create a 'satirical commentary on western concepts of the exotic, primitive other' (2000: 130), remarking that there were two unexpected outcomes from the performance. Namely, audiences seemed to believe that the fictional identities were real, and that intellectuals and the artistic community began to refer to the 'moral implications' of the ways in which the work used 'deception' precisely because the claims for authenticity were questioned. Furthermore, Taylor's (1998) analysis of the event explores the ways in which the performance highlighted audience's maintenance of a postcolonial condition: that is, the audience seemed to want to believe that this was an example of 'authentic' savagery (despite the countless ironic references to popular culture that made such a frame impossible to believe).[29] Fusco considers the legacy of 'the cage'.

> Ethnographic spectacles circulated and reinforced stereotypes, stressing that 'difference' was apparent in the bodies on display. Thus they naturalized fetishized [sic] representations of Otherness, mitigating anxieties generated by the encounter with difference (2000: 132).

Some specific examples are discussed by Fusco, highlighting the ways in which the caged subjects became hyper-sexualised, not merely as disempowered objects of a 'gaze', but rather in a more embodied way. One incident was when a female audience member attempted to feed the savage male a banana in an overtly sexual manner, insisting on wearing latex gloves to do so. This action foregrounds assumptions about gender, in which the infantilising feeding is viewed as emasculating, but is particularly marked by the racial difference between the powerful white woman 'agent' and the subaltern body of the postcolonial male Other. The banana becomes a performative object that can disappear – the phallic symbol devoured by the savage caged subject. In this performance moment, the participating audience member re-animated the sexualised dynamic between colonial 'masters' and the racialised Other, whose potency is always already understood as in relation to the dominant White female, as

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[29] For example, the performers wore hybrid costumes that incorporated 'native' attire as well as boots. They were given laptops and piano keyboards to play with. The hyper-satirical contradiction of capitalist postmodern aesthetics vs. reappropriated traditional ethnic objects and attire has been furthered in the work of La Pocha Nostra. See Fusco, 2000; 2001; Gómez-Peña, 2000; 2005; 2008; Gómez-Peña & Wolford, 2002.

put forward by Frantz Fanon (2008). The cage thus serves to explicate the continuing inequalities, presumptions, essentialising and stereotyped characteristics of the colonial narratives that are perpetuated by neoliberalism.

What is astounding about this performance is the division between the intention of the work as satirical (in its framing as ridiculous, contradictory and ambiguous in its deployment of a mixture of 'native' traditional tropes and artefacts alongside postmodern accoutrements, such as a mini keyboard), and its reception by the majority of spectators as authentic. Taylor goes on to show that the documentation of the event provided a doubleness to the performance as it captured the audience responding to the 'authentic' event. The camera seemed to lend legitimacy to the initial performance that viewers may otherwise have seen through.

> Some viewers clearly wanted to believe in the Guatinauis. They longed for authenticity. One dollar was a small price to pay for an encounter with "real" otherness. The reassuring notion of stable, identifiable, "real" otherness legitimated fantasies of a real, knowable "self" (1998: 167).

Taylor positions the performance in the simulated ethnographic cage as a postmodern test of the public's enduring desire to encounter authentic Others.

> They, like many others including myself, really are from nowhereland, really are Guatinauis of sorts, though not in the way their spectators were being asked to believe. For some viewers, the bars actually protected against that realization, [sic] marking the radical boundary between the "here" and the "there," the "us" and the "them," allowing for no inter-, no cross-, no trans-cultural-nada. Precolonial subjects, frozen in static essence, didn't experience today's hybrid ethnic and racial identities. The native body was believable, then, not because it was "real" but precisely because it wasn't (1998: 168).

She asks readers to consider that the 'real' project was the intent to focus on the audience's reactions – such that the audience's performance is the performance we should attend to in analysing the event. This leads to a multiply-sited view in both time and space: of the original cage; its historical precedents; and of the archival documentation of the event alongside the researcher's empirical observations. Taylor's analysis engages with an important concern of performance - its mimetic

function. In her evocative description of the exotic fantasy of the couple in the cage, she is concerned with the ways the rhetoric of authenticity helps reinforce pre-existing prejudices by physically and aesthetically staging the boundaries between 'us' and 'them'.[30]

The final example provided here analyses a more recent performance of prison that was staged in the UK in a range of high profile arts institutions in recent years. This example reflects the issues raised in the prior two examples; namely, the insidious applications of roles and the importance placed on the encounter alongside considerations of authenticity. As the only example I have witnessed live, it incorporates ethnographic fieldnotes as documentation of my experience. It thus also offers a different model of analysis that propels the argument in the remaining chapters in relation to my own experiences of prison's performance through carceral landscapes.

Ethnographic Witnessing: The 'gotojail' Project at the Southbank Centre
In 2010, the organisation Rideout, a pioneering company in arts in criminal justice, renowned for their technological gloss on arts participation in prisons, developed a touring project called 'gotojail'. The project situated a simulated prison cell in public places in order to demonstrate the conditions of prison to the wider public. In addition to the replica cell being placed in high-traffic areas, Rideout hired two 'prisoners' to inhabit the cell in order for members of the public to interact with them. After their cell visit, audiences were invited to take part in a survey that explores their attitudes to incarceration, and to deliberate on the 'fate' or sentences of the two prisoners. In other words, based on the audience's experience in the cell, they could recommend a longer or shorter sentence; or choose to remove or reinstate various privileges. Obviously, such a 'recommendation' does not have any real time consequences for the 'prisoners', since, after all, they go home each night, having served their term in the cell each day. The invitation for the audience to participate in the 'punishment' of the 'prisoners' is reminiscent of the role of the officers in Zimbardo's experiment in terms

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[30] Such stark divisions recall the argument made by Raymond Williams who writes of 'continuity' (2006: 37).

of the ways audience members ended up being able to 'decide' the fate of these 'prisoners' – albeit in a safe vacuum, free form any real consequences.

The audience is well aware that the 'prisoner'-performers are able to leave the cell at 7pm, when it is locked up. Their decisions are thus enacted in a space of limited ethics; in which their (perhaps very real) opinions on punishment and consequence are not directly performed on the bodies of the two 'prisoners'. Rather, the audience is led to feel their opinions are valued, but they do not have to carry the ethical burden of the consequences of their decisions, unlike the burden we might expect 'real' prison officers, magistrates and the multiple other purveyors of 'justice' to carry. This, then, is in contrast to the audience experience of 'Two Amerindians visit…' in which the actions and reactions of spectators did have real consequences. Perhaps this contrast is due to the framing of the performances: Fusco and Gómez-Peña insisted on implicating their audience with a durational, embodied existence in the cage, and the resultant instability of the authenticity claim of the 'savages', the 'gotojail' prisoners were clearly not 'banged up'.[31] The replica cell was staged in a manner that exposed the agenda of the event explicitly through its programme notes and the pushy attendant (aka 'The Governor'). Moreover, there was a sense of pretence that was patronising – both to the 'prisoner'-performers and to the audience. These two examples raise questions about representation, authenticity and spectatorship.

> ***Performing Prisoners***
> *The replica cell is not just intended to show the living conditions of prison, but to be a simulation of prison life. Two 'prisoners' are in the cell for long stretches of time reading, playing draughts, and drinking orange squash. Every move is recorded by CCTV cameras and streamed live on a dedicated website.*
>
> *By the time I stepped in the cell, there were already two conversations happening: the first between Paddy and an older gentleman, and the second between Wayne and two women.*
>
> *I immediately noticed that there was an interesting dynamic in the discussions. The older man was checking the conditions of the cell, evidently surprised at the neat surroundings. He conducted a lively*

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[31] Prison slang that means being locked behind doors/ bars.

conversation with Paddy on the similarities of the 2-man cell and his air force barracks. He was also concerned to find out that Paddy could not read, and wanted to know whether Wayne read to him. By contrast, the women immediately asked Wayne what his sentence was, and what he had done to get in to prison. They seemed to commiserate with the length of his sentence, leaning forward, trying to work out what to believe. (Fieldnotes: 17/10/11 'gotojail' Project: The Cell. Southbank Centre Time: 12 noon – 4pm).[32]

The performance is staged on several levels; firstly, the situating of the cell in public is itself a kind of intervention in awareness raising about prison conditions, both physical and emotional. Secondly, the intimacy of engaging with 'real' prisoners is a performative encounter of authenticity. Finally, the audience interaction with the narratives of punishment and reward is a performance, since it engages in changing the sentences for the 'actors'. But there is another level of performance, in which the organisation, Rideout, is representing a counter-hegemonic view about punishment designed to engage and change public perceptions. These three levels are further explored below by invoking a related incident that demonstrates wider implications for analysing how justice and performance are intertwined.

The cell was situated within the bustling Southbank Centre as part of the Koestler Trust's 50th annual Arts by Offenders programme. It is encouraging that an influential arts institution had chosen to support arts in criminal justice for the previous 4 years, lending credibility and cultural capital to the ongoing debate about the value of arts within criminal justice. Yet, there have also been several instances where narratives of 'public acceptability' and the status of the organisation have masked, or even obliterated some of the valuable ground covered by this sector. One instance was when an artwork that had been bought by the Southbank Centre to display in its foyer was subsequently publicised in tabloid newspapers as having been created by a high-profile criminal, alongside lurid details of his crimes. Rather than maintain its support for the value of arts in exploring debates about crime and punishment, the institution chose to remove the artwork. This 'removal' resulted in much discussion amongst arts

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[32] I am using the character names provided in the programme note rather than choosing to anonymise them, since this was a public 'performance'.

in criminal justice practitioners and researchers engaged in observing and evaluating projects (Arts Alliance, 2011; Rideout 2011).

Alongside the comedy school's removal from HMP Dartmoor[33], analysts have suggested that the Prison Service Order 50 (PSO 50) which implemented a 'public acceptability test' in order for prison governors to judge how 'the public' would respond to publicity about arts in prisons. The implication was that media coverage of arts would be detrimental and harmful to further opportunities to conduct work, and that such sentiment would be de facto negative. As a result, there was an enormous negative impact on arts in prisons, with prison governors clamping down on perceived 'luxuries'. From this example, it is clear that legitimacy is contingent; and that public sentiment leads the decision making about what is visible, and what must remain hidden. The complex machinations of legitimacy in programming of arts venues must also be considered, since the economics of arts audiences are driven by specific sentiments, which in turn are influenced by local and specific policies, microeconomics and funding agendas.

In the 'gotojail' project, Rideout's accompanying information sheet explained the installation of the cell was a 'public consultation exercise', providing data about the costs of imprisonment to British society, but it was not clear what the consultation is meant to be about. The intention, it seems, was to ensure that the public is exposed to conditions and stories in order to experience incarceration phenomenologically. Yet, as one audience member reflected, 'I would have preferred to have the door closed, so I could feel the claustrophobia. As it was, I felt I could just leave at any moment, and so could these men' (Personal interview, Peter Heyman, 2011). If the intention of the performance was to provide an embodied experience of imprisonment, then the framing of the performance could have engaged with the rituals of locking up audience members, getting orders from officers, or demonstrated a wider sense of affective responses to incarceration that boredom and docility, according to this interviewee. As it was, the site and subject matter itself was made to claim more than the actual experience. My critique of the simulated cell is that its performance halts at the level

[33] See Thompson's introduction in McAvinchey, 2011b.

of semiotics, and does not attempt to foreground the phenomenological potential of carceral subjectivities for participating audience members. Perhaps, in light of the resulting riot during the Stanford experiment, the organisers chose to 'play safe' by limiting duration. Furthermore, the risks of overtly political radicalism were averted by avoiding the dynamic of prisoners and officers. For me, the installation highlighted the chasm between 'applied theatre' approaches and other modes of performance, where the benevolent intention of the work obscures or justifies the outcome.[34]

The second level I suggest above is the authenticity of the encounter, which was in constant flux, as guests to the cell encountered prisoner/actors and used questions to find out just how authentic they were. It seemed to me to be a strange and interesting line between 'performance' and 'reality'. Were these men drawing on 'real' prison sentences? How much of this performance was authentic? I found most of the talk rather trite – as if the men had been given several factors to mention – like student actors in improvisation; and who were duly fitting in multiple 'facts' about prison (low literacy, unfair sentences, harsh punishments) in order to ensure the audience understood. Yet, these factors are also a matter of perspective: what is a 'fair sentence'? Who decides? And why would we trust a prisoner to tell 'the truth' about prisons? In relation to the problem of authenticity, I further wondered whether these character histories were drawn from the 'performers' themselves, or whether they were fictional. It struck me that if the actors were representing their own stories, it would be necessary to re-frame their participation in relation to audience reactions that may fall outside a liberal paradigm. Prison narratives are so often perpetuated through re-telling petty injustices that seem of major importance to the prisoners concerned, but which take on a different hue when interrogated by the wider public who may feel outraged at the thought that prison in the UK is like a 'holiday camp' (see Carrabine, 2012; Jewkes, 2007), with access to comforts such as toasters, kettles, televisions and play-stations. Further, the simulated cell raises questions about victims of crime, although these narratives were largely invisible in the staging.

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[34] Further discussion about differing approaches of applied theatre and other performance strategies are discussed in the introduction, and explicated further in Chapter 4.

Towards the end of this first 'visit', another couple entered the cell and started trying to ask many questions about the fairness of the sentence. There was a sense they were 'testing' the prisoners to see whether their responses confirmed the moral position of the questioner. Yet this paradox seemed to me to be at the heart of the project: confirming a pre-existing moral position that punishment is harsh but crime is wrong. However, the project was not asking questions about who decides what crime is, which is a particularly key tenet of feminist criminology.[35]

Banality and Doing Time

I met Paddy on the threshold of the cell. Finally, an authentic encounter. He remembered my name. He was not captured by the CCTV camera, and felt able to speak frankly/ slipping between the 'performance' and his current reality post-release. We spoke of his 8-year involvement with Synergy Theatre Company.

When the 'governor' came back after some time, she was carrying take away teas. She gave an insight into the project, and there was a comic interplay with the tea and the power dynamic of the 'governor' serving the 'prisoners' their tea.

*I started to feel as if the 5 hours a day is still quite a 'sentence': having to repeat and repeat the banal 'truths' of prison mixed in with semi-autobiographical 'facts' and some fictions is a tough gig for any actor; but for ex-prisoners, there must be more machinations than are immediately visible as they do time in the simulated cell. (*Fieldnotes: 20/10/11 Gotojail project: The Cell. Southbank Centre Time: 5pm – 7pm).

The final level of analysing how audiences engaged in punishment and reward trickles through the fieldnotes. The accounts of my 'visit' to the cell in the Southbank Centre provoke questions about the ways in which institutions perform within a wider discourse of governmentality (Foucault, 1977); and may be seen within the general performance trend of exploring the dramaturgies of the real.[36] The first example in my analysis is a well-known psychology experiment that confirms the cultural expectations that the cell itself performs a function in rendering human natures extreme, violent, and oppositional (authority vs. subject). In other words, prison cells reinforce their

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[35] See McAvinchey, 2011b.
[36] See Jeffers, 2009; Megson & Forsythe, 2009.

projected meaning by both reinforcing and furthering the performances of prisoners and officers. By working through the three examples, shifting from the decidedly non-public psychology experiment that has nevertheless gained public visibility; through to the ironic post-colonial cage and thence to a public awareness campaign that stages a cell I evoke the repetitious force of the 'cage' as analogous to the cell, in which spectres of slavery, ownership, the spectacle of bodies at labour and the construction of simulation renders the prison cell a cage. The accounts above reflect a concern with the ways in which transient carceral landscapes hold a powerful iconographic position in the Western cultural imagination. Seen together, the three performance moments open space for arguments about the spectacle of punishment and the ambiguously reassuring comfort (or catharsis) that 'Othering' can offer. In each of the examples, the insidious distinctions of those with agency to view the Others are performed by staging differences between 'public', 'officer' and 'prisoner'; between the bodies of those inside and those outside the cage. The performances highlight the implicit and explicit powers granted to those that view and those that are viewed.[37] This reading of the simulations as performance offers a sense then of what is afforded by the labour of the cell or the cage in public.

In a rather generous view, Moran suggests that prison cell simulations, or 'transient carceral landscapes' can help to

> stimulate debate about prison conditions, and the purpose of incarceration, and also about the agency of prisoners in these spaces, and the unexpected and ingenious ways in which they engage with and beyond them (Moran, 2012: online).

While I do not doubt that opening debates about these concerns through performance replicas is legitimate, my own argument seeks to position the aesthetic framing of the simulated cells as important. In this section, I propose that the cell performs a cultural function in its context (in the art gallery, or in public space). By inviting the public to constitute an audience to 'prison', and in particular, in the ways in which the bodies of

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[37] A further example of a simulated prison cell was created by artist Jai Redman, in *This is Camp X-Ray* (Manchester, 2003). The site based work (simulated cells transposed into a field in Manchester) aimed to get spectators and participants to contemplate conditions in Guantanamo Bay. (See Shaughnessy, 2012; Nevitt, 2013: 66-68; as well as Thompson, Hughes & Balfour, 2009: 298-301). This simulation was explicitly political, and anti-war in intention.

the incarcerated are displayed, the simulated cell enacts a performance function that we might see as cathartic. Such catharsis is inevitably related to conservative public sentiment, and does not provoke radical or revisionist responses.

The Aristotelian notion that catharsis restores emotions to their 'correct' place is performed in tragedies with the 'removal' of the protagonist from the stage, allowing the audience to come to some privileged knowledge of the ways the protagonist's hubris has led, inexorably, to his/ her downfall. The tragic form historically aimed to indicate what behaviours were acceptable and which were not; what people counted as human (*anthropos*), and who did not. In other words, the convention of tragedy sets up clear distinctions between inside and outside, right and wrong.[38] I suggest that simulations of prison cells position the public/ audience as a homogenous series of witnesses; that such simulations are more about the audience than they are about the 'caged subjects'. Indeed, it is not merely the passive omniscient spectatorship posited by the panopticon that is underway in these simulations, but the very participation in the caging, questioning, observing, and sometimes taking on roles as officers or prisoners that is valuable in transient carceral landscapes. This suggests that, rather than submit to the critical view I have already posited above, simulated cells allow for valuable representations of how publics engage ethically and aesthetically with the site and the bodies of the incarcerated subjects. The powerful cultural tropes of prison *as* performance have been explored as a means of setting the ground for arguing how and why cultural and aesthetic representations of prison must be attended to.

Concluding Remarks

In the subsequent chapters, I explore the ways in which prison as a cultural construction has been furthered through different models of performance. My approach generates a frame through which I will later explore the specific performance of engendered habitus in HMP Drake Hall. The three examples of prison simulations as performance analysed in this chapter (Stanford Experiment, 'Two Undiscovered Amerindians visit…' and Rideout's 'gotojail' project) are considered in

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[38] This deliberately echoes Agamben's formulation on bare life (1998a), along with Butler's discussions on whose life counts as grievable (2009).

relation to Foucault's theoretical model of power and visibility. This is achieved by examining the ways in which the cell, and the ways in which inside/ outside; viewer/ viewed are positioned serve to uphold or challenge the power of the simulated cell as a cultural trope. In turn, the argument seeks to propose alternative, critical and reflexive performance methodologies that consciously unpick such issues in a departure from the examples of always already co-opted applied theatre practices, which are problematised in chapter 4. Transient carceral landscapes provide audiences specific political encounters with the implications of incarceration. The means by which ethics are staged are framed by the aesthetic choices of the artists, and, I propose, are foregrounded when the radical injustices of racialised and gendered discrimination are acknowledged. The examples I analyse offer valuable critical texture for later chapters, whereby the thresholds between viewing, being and knowing about prison spaces are translated into and through performance.

This chapter explicitly attended to two of Conquergood's framing questions, namely, to what extent this research project attends to the relationship between power and performance, and how is it productive in this research to think of culture 'as a verb instead of a noun, process instead of product?' (1991: 190). Furthermore, the chapter proposes a rethinking of prison spaces as producing specific subjectivities, both resulting from architectural operations of power through visibility (vide Foucault), and the everyday performances of officers and prisoners. The chapter attends to three specific examples that can be seen as genealogical. Simulated prison cells perform a specific cultural function – producing a public awareness of prison conditions (vide Moran), but also, I argue, reinforce limiting dynamics of 'the public' audience as outside/ guest to the cell. The prisoner as subject of the gaze is rendered marginalised. In this chapter then, I set the ground for more radical interventions, in which prisoners' agency is actively staged in performances in prison spaces. What is consistent in this investigation is the critical lens on the interplay of power and agency. Its intention is to articulate the consequences of looking at prison as performance. I offer a new perspective that shifts the thinking of prison/ theatre as reflecting performance qualities but actually engaging with moral/ spatial/ juridical and agential performances brought to bear by the prison. Most specifically, this reading relies on the crossing of

interdisciplinary boundaries as I have foregrounded the concerns raised by feminist criminology. It is precisely the critical interest in the production of the subject that is common in both criminology and performance studies.

By thinking through prison *as* performance, we can move beyond reflecting on institutional values as a result of a stimulating theatre production, or performance/ simulation. Yet, McAvinchey (2011a) has laid out some valuable critical questions relating to the ways we should approach the subject of the institution through performance. She stresses that while theatre about prison has historically encouraged new ways of thinking about incarceration, there are several concerns that arise. She says:

> Thinking about theatre and prison provokes an inquiry into the relationship between the individual and the state, forcing us to consider how prisons perform within the economy of punishment, and compelling us to question narratives of crime, punishment and justice that are believed to be true and effective (2011a: 3).

Replicating the conditions, duration and risks of incarceration via simulation provides experiences of the values and economies of punishment, rather than its thematic treatment in contemporary performance. Thus, having analysed prison *as* performance, the remainder of the argument engages with specific practices of performance *in* and *of* prisons. This is done in order to identify existing power structures so that we might ask of performance whether it reinforces, obscures or challenges the 'distribution of power and how it is used in contexts beyond the performance' (Nevitt, 2013: 39).

Nevertheless, these questions about how social or public attitudes to crime and punishment are culturally constructed have been well trodden in relation to (mainly film and television) media.[39] In particular, Jewkes (2007) raises concerns about how fictional representations of institutions reinforce the construction of prisoners as mediated 'others', and beyond our compassion, by showing which techniques are used

to 'make some of the most punitive actions seem both ordinary and acceptable' (cited in Carrabine, 2012: 69). Themes of crime and punishment have forged a vast body of genres, most of which perpetuate the imaginary of prisons as a moral vacuum, prisoners as deservedly tormented, or surprisingly triumphant in their resistance against the penal 'machine' (Carrabine, 2012: 65). By contrast, theatre practitioners who work within prisons tend towards two positions; the first position is a radical one that seeks to 'apply' the arts as a means of 'empowering' (Digard & Liebling, 2012); or 'giving voice' to an excluded and socially marginal group (Caulfield, 2010, 2011). The importance of applied work thus lies in the possibilities it opens up for 'witnessing' and the notion of witnessing transformation or even 'reformation' (McAvinchey, 2011a: 3). The second position replicates the inscriptions of domination of the institution by targeting the change to the concomitant institutional values. Yet, all too often, the power inferred in notions of transformation are left under-examined by applied theatre practitioners, not least because, in the most part, practices are disseminated through project reports. This means that there is an underlying agenda in such sources to gain further access, to acquire more funding and to prove effectiveness.[40] Chapter 4 proceeds to investigate models of performance in prison by troubling some of the assumptions that performance in the site of prison can be practiced outside of its informing dynamics of control and punishment.

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[39] For an excellent overview of the spectacle of punishment and the criminological imagination in contemporary cultural forms, see Carrabine, 2012. For other views, see Carlen, 2002; Cheliotis, 2012a; Chesney-Lind, 1999; Valier 2004.

[40] McAvinchey writes that the professionalisation of the arts over the past two decades has led to arts contracts which are intended to service 'specific programmes of work which delivered pre-identified aims and objectives aligned to those of the prison service and wider government concerns' (2011a: 77).

CHAPTER FOUR: TRAUMA, STRATEGIES AND TACTICS: PROBLEMS OF PERFORMANCE *IN* PRISON

Introduction

Prison can be understood as performance, as I argue in Chapter 3, since it stages the separation and reformation of characters judged to have offended the public. Its presence in the public imaginary reinforces the social need for order, security and the restoration of 'good' over 'bad'. Yet, as I argue, such plot points are overly simplistic, rendering social and political inequalities as backstories rather than structural informants of plot, characterisation and the aesthetics of performance praxis. This research develops from the understanding that there is an epistemological potential in analysing performance *in* and *of* prison. In this chapter my analysis of performance in prison considers the operations of ethical and aesthetic framing of the prison, prisoners' agency, and the socio-economic context in which arts in prisons are conducted. The chapter provides an account of performance processes in prisons by making the link between hidden experiences of aesthetic process and wider political conditions. I attempt to further the paradigm of research by offering a new epistemological entry point to performance in prison. I do this by developing the theoretical concerns evoked in my reading of two examples of applied theatre practice. This departs from the status quo in that I do not attempt to explain or justify the relevance of a particular methodology, but rather, to construct a critical argument that is rooted in a feminist criminological approach. That is, by repositioning the women participants as the focus of investigation, rather than as explanatory reference points about a practice or intervention.

Janelle Reinelt says that theatres might be considered spaces that are

> patronized [sic] by a consensual community of citizen-spectators who come together at stagings of the social imaginary in order to consider and experience affirmation, contestation, and reworking of various material and discursive practices pertinent to the constitution of a democratic society (1998: 286).

In the case of performance processes in prisons, such 're-workings' of the various practices relating to the development of a functioning society happen within a tightly controlled environment, in which the material and discursive practices are always already marked out by prevailing logics of 'good behaviour' and 'readiness for the community'. While Reinelt's point is about the role of formal theatre in constituting part of the public sphere (a point also made by Balme, 2012), the applied theatre examples discussed here are nevertheless contested practices.[1] This is due to their uneasy 'siting' between discourses of 'healing', 'transformation' and 'catharsis' that tend to fit alongside whatever funding agenda gains prominence in shifting cultural and economic landscapes (see Thompson, 2011a; 2011b). Yet, there is nevertheless an important consideration of performance processes as a production of social imaginary, in which, as Reinelt has asserted, the relevance of performance is as a site 'of democratic struggle where antagonisms are aired and considered, and where the voluntary citizenry, the audience, deliberates on matters of state in an aesthetic mode' (1998: 289).

Thus far, I have argued that prisons perform their functions in relation to society, under the remit of interpretations of the law. Incarcerated women, I have shown, may well be guilty of crimes, but they are also disproportionately punished for transgressing norms of appropriate feminine behaviours.[2] Prisons in the UK attempt to address this inequality by (at least in principle) creating gender-sensitive programmes in order to 'succeed' in reducing reoffending. This chapter turns from the wider context in which we understand prisons *as* performance, to consider some of the arts-based programming that, I suggest, contributes to the institutional agenda. As such, theatre practices are considered from a critical perspective, while recognising that their impacts and benefits may well be meaningful for women participants during and immediately after the sessions. However, my critique is largely predicated on the unstable and un-sustainable practices that characterise performance in prisons.

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[1] Applied theatre is more fully defined in the introductory chapter – it is used here as a 'hold-all' term, not necessarily as the term used by the practitioners themselves.
[2] Chapter 2 explicitly engages with feminist criminological perspectives that critique why women are criminalised, how they are treated in prisons. Chapter 7 deals with the impacts of incarceration on women.

The chapter outlines the wide range of arts practices within prisons in the UK, focussing on two main examples, namely Geese Theatre's *Journey Woman* (2009), and Clean Break's *There are Mountains* (2012). These two examples are chosen as a means of illustrating the major problems I identify in the practice of performance work in the context of the institution. These are the problem of giving voice, the problems of testimony and of witnessing and the problem of evidence. These four interrelated problems form the structure of the chapter; and I engage with some of the key concepts of trauma theory in order to respond to these concerns. Yet, while trauma theory provides valuable terminologies for interrogating these problems; I engage them critically, as Thompson (2011a) does. This is necessary in the field of a penal institution, because the therapeutic or rehabilitative aim of catharsis through testimony is not unproblematic.

By means of placing performance practices into conversation with theoretical concerns outlined in chapter 2, the bulk of the chapter examines applied theatre practices in relation to the model 'victim-survivor-hero'. I employ the cycle of 'tragic containment' in order to demonstrate the spatial and temporal cycles of narratives of 'offending' in relation to tragedy. Finally, running through the chapter is the insistence that a Bourdieusian concern with habitus and field proves productive in working through how performance practices operate in prison. The notion of 'durable dispositions' that are nevertheless malleable corresponds with the sense that theatre processes in prisons are often used in the service of what Hughes (simplistically) defines as a number of benefits. These range from 'increased self-confidence to transferable skills – which can help divert people away from pathways to crime or break the cycle of re-offending' (2005a: 8). Prior to analysing the measures that are considered integral to performance practices in prisons, it is necessary to unpack some of the troubling elements of 'measurement' in relation to criminality.

Resisting 'Measures': Refusing Legibility
Cesare Lombroso's nineteenth century anthropometric investigation into what constitutes 'female offenders' serves as an opening trope to this chapter in order to

assert the trouble of research in prisons. Lombroso's scientific research aimed to construct a taxonomy of criminal bodies by learning how to read the 'living documents' contained in prisons as what he called 'palimpsest in reverse' (cited in Horn, 1995: 113). His claim, according to Horn, was that if 'read correctly' the body-as-text 'yielded up its submerged truths: the signs of degeneration and atavism' (1995: 113). His methodology, underpinned by biological determinism, included pictorial representations of criminals' characteristics as well as detailed measurements of facio-cranial details. The study of female criminals was constructed against imagery of 'normal women' (with no such counterpart in his taxonomy of male criminality), in order that the 'female offender might become distinct, visible, and legible' (1995: 115). Horn's insight into Lombroso demonstrates the 'difficulty, if not impossibility, of any reliable readings of the deceptive female body' (1995: 120).

Lombroso and Ferrero write 'the child-like defects of the semi-criminal are neutralised by piety, maternity, want of passion, sexual coldness, weakness and undeveloped intelligence' (1895: 151). Seen together, their images of deviant women do not form a coherent story about what constitutes a female criminal, instead suggesting that *all* women demonstrate some of the characteristics they identify in the deviant bodies. Horn shows that Lombroso merely pathologises women in general, remarking that 'the normal (sic) woman […] embodied potential criminality [… and was] constructed as both normal in her pathology and pathological in her normality' (1995: 121). Horn continues to suggest that such a construction reinforced women as suitable objects for continued surveillance and 'corrective interventions that, in an effort to restrict 'opportunities' for criminality, blurred the lines between penal practices and social work' (1995: 121). While criminology has certainly moved away from biological determinism, its legacies can be felt in the enduring arguments that seem to hold that certain women commit certain types of crimes (Kruttschnitt & Gartner, 2008; Richie, 2004).[3] Furthermore, the remnants of the measures of control are still evident in the UK's current system and pervade both practices and research in prisons. This rather condensed overview of the historical study of women in prison is positioned at this

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[3] These are still described in relation to class and race primarily. However, what emerges strongly in the literature is that crime and criminalisation results in a spatialised mapping of risk not dissimilar to the Booth maps outlined in Chapter 3.

point in the chapter in order to raise a warning against the tendencies in research studies to attempt to develop neat taxonomies: lists of characteristics that define and delineate 'offenders'' characteristics. This same tendency arises in several of the documents of theatre practices in prison – a danger that it seems to me relates to the desire for arts practices to assert their legitimacy in the space of the institution (Balfour, 2003; Kanter, 2007a). I return to Lombroso's investigation later in the chapter in order to trouble the dominant research practices in the field of applied arts in criminal justice settings.

Mapping the Problems of Applied Arts in Prisons[4]

There has been a turn, in criminology, to an assessment of 'what works', in recent years, and, under the current government, a programme of 'payment by results' (Arts Alliance, 2011; McNeill et al, 2010). While the question 'what works?' makes sense in relation to overcrowding and the rates of recidivism[5], it nevertheless means that institutions are compelled to engage in more stringent measuring and accounting of every programme. This means that the wide range of projects that had proliferated under the Labour government's 'social inclusion' (Matarasso, 2007) policies now need to justify themselves in order to maintain resources. In lieu of a widespread acceptance of the arts, then, arts interventions in criminal justice contexts are analysed as one strategy that 'works'. Arts programmes are seen to offer a

> non-traditional, non-institutional, social and emotional environment; a non-judgmental and un- authoritarian model of engagement; and an opportunity to participate in a creative process that involves both structure and freedom (Peaker & Vincent, 1990, cited in Bamford & Skipper, 2007: 14).

Furthermore, McNeill et al state that engagement in the arts can help to develop new relationships (with peers, and with the prison regime). On a wider level, they suggest that the arts often provide the means of imagining different future pathways in which (ex-) prisoners form different social identifications and rehearse different lifestyles. However, they point out that arts interventions are not likely to deliver concrete and

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[4] The opening part of this section has been adapted and disseminated in report form for Ovalhouse's Future Stages network entitled *Creating Change, Imagining Futures: Participatory Arts and Young People 'At Risk'* (Walsh, 2013b).

[5] Recidivism refers to the rate of return to incarceration, or in other words, the percentage of prisoners who return to criminal activities *and get caught*. It is a word that engages with institutional 'effect' by measuring to what extent prison 'works'. The concept is slightly different from desistance in criminological literature, which engages with affect, in the sense that it is ex-prisoners' agency that is under investigation. See McNeill et al, 2010.

realisable sentence plans in light of the complexities of resettlement needs, but that they 'may help foster and reinforce motivation for and commitment to the change processes that these formal interventions and processes exist to support' (2010: 10). Both sets of claims hint towards the difficulties of the 'place' of the creative arts in institutions. The romanticised terms 'imagination', 'creativity' and 'freedom' rub uncomfortably against 'concrete' and the restrictions of the prison environment. The artistic dimensions of the work, although central, serve as tensions instead. Balfour suggests that the debate on applied performance turns on a telling point:

> not that the tension between the aesthetic dimension and the utilitarian is not experienced by most practitioners, but that the articulation of that practice often eschews a discussion about the value of aesthetics. Caught in the habit of writing too many field and evaluation reports, the concentration is on proving the social efficacy of the work, rather than analysing the affect of aesthetics. The artistic dimension therefore is often relegated to the second division, a footnote to the value or purpose of the project (2009: 356).

In the same vein, James Thompson's volume *Performance Affects: Applied Theatre and the End of Effect* (2011a) argues for a critique of languages of impact and 'effect' and 'proposes new models of theoretical engagement which reframe the political and aesthetic possibilities of affect' (McAvinchey, 2011b: 233). He urges those involved in the commissioning or development of programmes to consider how this work is influenced by trauma studies, particularly ideas about the healing possibilities of narrative recall, and how these may support 'an aesthetics of injury' (p. 9), an idea which draws on Julie Salverson's (2001) writings on the 'erotics of injury' in testimonial-based performance. His exploration of several examples of performance practice in sites of extreme conflict outlines a critique of the ways most work is influenced and framed by trauma studies. In particular, he argues against the assumptions that narrative recall, testimony and witnessing presuppose a result of 'healing' that fits neatly into the agendas of commissioners, or funding agencies (Thompson, 2011a: 33-35). Rather, Thompson 'calls for an ethnographic approach that acknowledges culturally specific performance practices and how they support a negotiation with or resistance to crises' (McAvinchey, 2011b: 234). *Performance Affects* argues that clear articulations of purpose are required in order to make explicit

the tensions that may arise in oppositional contexts 'because the private never remains completely private, we must be fully engaged with how the work is refigured, co-opted or put in service of diverse public discourses' (2011a: 34).

The concerns raised by Thompson reflect Fassin & Rechtman's (2007) critique of the over-medicalised industry of trauma, in which they argue that trauma is rendered banal in its ubiquity. In other words, while sites of conflict (including prisons) undoubtedly contain narratives of trauma, and concomitant spillages of uncontainable memories, repetitions and seepages, we must attend to the ways in which 'traumas' are taken for granted, and to what extent the narratives of 'healing', 'catharsis' and 'transformation' are operationalised by institutions. This is crucial because institutions are not exempt from also perpetuating traumas through their own performance of surveillance, discipline and punishment.[6]

Trauma is thus seen as a transferable framework - a justification that Feldman refers to as 'the facile fusion of trauma-aesthetics and testimonial display' (2004: 186). Thompson goes on to demonstrate that theatre makers have employed the terms of trauma studies 'because they already use quasi-theatrical terminology that emphasises the repeat and the staging of that repeat: because they emphasise the importance of telling a story in front of an audience' (2011a: 61). He demonstrates that such a model is simplistic, since it denies the potential that traumata are mediated, are experienced by individuals and are contextualised in very specific ways. He continues: 'an understanding of the relation between a performance by a person or community in crisis needs to be reconfigured beyond this medical contagion model' (Thompson, 2011a: 61). As such, the examples of practice explored in this chapter aim to consider how, and to what extent, performance processes in prisons rely on articulations borrowed from trauma studies; and to what extent these methods then reinforce and maintain practices that are un-productive.

'A prison is a world where survival is tested at its limits. Performance is […] that which does not survive' (Heritage, 2002: 169). Heritage frames his concern with performance

and prison by drawing attention to the ways in which staging theatre within prisons engages 'in a bizarre act of negation: denying something essential in both the institution of prison and the activity of theatre. The survival of performance in prisons has for me become a form of resistance and negation of the system itself' (2004: 200). There is a complex relationship between the discourses of arts (as border crossing, boundary breaking and liberating) and prisons (as containing, punitive and limiting). Yet, this relationship can be obscured by the ways in which arts projects are framed, without necessarily exposing the complicity of organisations choosing to site work within prisons as engaging on the terms of the institution. McAvinchey, drawing on Kershaw, points out that the site itself does not make the practice of theatre within its limits radical, but rather the methodologies of such practice do (2011a: 59).[7] In chapter 2 and 3, I argued for the importance of radical practices in prisons as a means of disrupting the surveillance and discipline of the institution, and the following section suggests how de Certeau's concepts of 'strategy' and 'tactic' can be employed in this regard.

Prison Repertoires: De Certeau's Strategies and Tactics

De Certeau's influential exegesis on the practice of everyday life conceives of strategies as canonical, institutionalised and 'objective', while tactics are miniscule, reactionary, and determined by informing strategic principles (1984: 35-37). In this view, criminal justice institutions, for example, is governed by the claim of objectivity through the law. They enact certain strategies in order to maintain order, prove the efficacy of the law, and generate a wider sense of security – that is, encourage a sense of management of threats to stability. Strategy, for de Certeau, is always a means of managing a 'Cartesian' attitude that delimits its own place from an exterior threat (1984: 36). By contrast, tactics are 'calculated actions' that emerge within the discursive and practical field of the given power. A tactic, in de Certeau's view, 'is an art of the weak' (1984: 37). The notion that tactics form obstacles to the

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[6] This is more explicitly explored in the previous chapter.
[7] This point has also been made by Balfour (2003) and Kershaw (1999, 2004). Paul Heritage (1998) writes of a rebellion in a Brazilian prison that was blamed on a high profile theatre performance, positing that, while theatre can and has encouraged and facilitated 'change' in small and large ways, for example in his ambitious Staging Human Rights Project (2000 – 2005); the 'revolutionary' (1998: 231)

rationalisation of institutional power has been widely adopted by performance practitioners and scholars, who have tended to take up de Certeau's (1984) formulation as a means of describing arts processes as 'resistant' tactics that interrupt the smooth operations of the strategic field.[8]

Performance processes in prison claim to create 'spaces' for creativity and (an often uncritically assumed) concomitant liberation from institutional norms of the field of the institution. Susanna Poole asserts that precarity 'is always an issue in the ephemeral space of the prison' (2007: 142). She describes how prison life turns around uncertainty and the deprivation 'of key fundamental civil and political rights, but [prisoners] also lose control over their time and space' (2007: 142). Yet, as Nancy Duncan (1996) has suggested, temporality also needs to be reawakened in the understanding of practices. However, she asserts that thinking of strategies as space or established power and tactics as temporal

> is based on a false opposition, between space and time, and the consequent misleading characterisation of space as the immobile realm of established power. All this from understanding representation as spatialisation […] Indeed, the very equation of representation with spatialisation might be questioned. What is at issue in representation is not in fact the spatialisation of time but the representation of time-space (1996: 135- 136).

Duncan's formulation suggests that it is the mutual imbrication of both space and time, or the established powers and the resistant tactics that are worth investigating. In light of applied performance, then, we can consider her approach as insisting on the awareness of how both concerns need to be viewed together. Initially, however, it is important to consider how the understanding of strategies and tactics points towards a wider concern between public and private spheres. Furthermore, Doreen Massey considers the domains of public as being defined by transcendence – the realm of production; and private as defined by immanence – or the static realm of reproduction (1994). Such a conceptualisation turns around her understanding of spaces as gendered (1994); but also offers productive terms for performance itself. In the

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impulse that drives many practitioners to make and present work in prisons is necessarily translated in - and determined by - the context.
[8] See de Certeau (1984: 35-38) and Thompson (2011a: 1-42).

context of prison, it is tempting to see the spheres as distinct, in which the temporal present 'here' is considered separately from a potential future 'there'. Using Massey's formulation in relation to the space/time of prison, the notion of stability of inside/outside is contingent upon the ways space-identities are understood through the assertion of boundaries. 'The identity of a place does not derive from some internalised history. It derives, in large part, precisely from the specificity of its interactions with 'the outside'' (1994: 169). In relation to prison, then, the immanence of the private is somehow eclipsed by the 'transcendence' of the public.

Taking Massey's argument about space and time in relation to performance practices is instructive. Thompson (2011a: 15-41) highlights this oppositionality in performance in places of conflict that trouble the distinctions of immanence/transcendence, here/there, now/then. Practices that seek to disrupt or at least question these dualisms by asserting the relevance of both time and space to identities have the potential to unravel the sense that 'past' actions are foreclosed, for example, by having served a prison sentence. In performance in prison, the narratives of both immanence through detention and transcendence through 'rehabilitation' or 'correction' are prevalent. This results in neat and generalised practices that do not make allowance for the messy contingency of the social context in which performances of 'corrections', rehabilitation and recidivism occur. In the examples of practice in this chapter, then, it is my intention to demonstrate how these binaries collapse and become troubled by the process of performance tactics.[9]

From Private to Public: What Happens when Performance is Staged Inside Prison? Clean Break's *There Are Mountains*

There Are Mountains by Chlöe Moss (2012) at HMP/YOI Askham Grange was the first production by Clean Break to present, to the public, a work with a 'mixed cast' with one professional performer and seven serving prisoners.[10] The play was written by

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[9] In Chapters 5 and 6, I further this conception of strategies and tactics in order to analyse women's performances of and about prison. I aim to offer an argument that performance tactics are not merely aesthetic moments provided in the safe spaces of a workshop facilitated by an arts practitioner, but may be personal, private attempts to resist discursive, logistical and legal prisons.

[10] Clean Break's programme of workshops and residencies in prisons cast a professional actor working alongside serving women prisoners. This production staged the 'mixed cast' to a paying public on prison premises. Other companies that regularly present professional/ prisoner productions in prisons in the UK include Pimlico Opera's project that has been running since 1991. See Pimlico Opera, 2013.

Moss after a series of residential workshops with women at Askham Grange (an open prison near York, UK)[11], and was directed by Imogen Ashby.[12] The play demonstrates some of the complexities of the journey of women in prison from incarceration to release. The script explores women's anxieties about the potential pathways they face leading up to release. My critical analysis of the play offers a reading of the ways the institution's values are strategically articulated through its public performance. The model of practice is a rare example of performance work that occurs in and through a prison residential process and then is staged for the public on the prison grounds. The performance invites a reading in which I position myself as a member of the audience. Thus, where I use the term 'we' I am not claiming a homogeneous audience reaction to the performance, but asserting a particular experience invited by its dramaturgical framing. I attempt to avoid totalising assumptions about audience responses as argued in Elin Diamond's critique of the violence of 'we' (1991).

Most literary and performance narratives about prison maintain an idealistic distinction between inside/outside, then/now. In this play, however, Moss crafts an ensemble work that deliberates on the tenuous threads between these dichotomies. The characters (5 prisoners, a mother and daughter and one officer)[13] present a series of prison dorm scenarios leading up to a home visit for two of the characters. The other women in the dorm present a range of emotional counterpoints to the anxiety of the 'release'. The protagonist, Brenda, struggles to gain access to her daughter, and when she does, she brings the teenage girl a 'Hello Kitty' gift perhaps more appropriate for the little girl she had been when her mother went to prison. Another character struggles to articulate her fear at being out of touch with the world, and, rather than maintain her hard-as-nails 'mask' from the prison dorm, her confidence is shattered as she feels exposed, vulnerable and uncertain on her town visit. When she returns to the dorm, she is able to trade on the 'capital' she has gained inside.

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[11] Open Prisons (D-category) are institutions that focus on the resettlement needs of prisoners as they progress towards the final stages of their sentences. Open prisons include training programmes and often involve community based voluntary work placements as well as 'town visits' in order to prepare prisoners for interacting with wider communities upon release.

[12] The Economist, 2012.

[13] The casting choices were instructive: the prison officer was played by one of the women still serving a sentence, while the professional actor played a woman prisoner.

The performance I saw was staged in the large hall of the converted manor house, with a full lighting rig and a professional set showing a cramped five-bed dormitory, a family kitchen and a run down diner. The majority of the action occurs in the dorm, with the women negotiating their various concerns about impending release in the insistently communal environment. Brenda faces disciplinary action after her daughter rejects her and she trashes the dorm by throwing the all-important television set to the floor. However, the story concludes with a reconciliation that seems trite in light of the years of separation. The other four prisoners, the audience is left to assume, continue to struggle with their impending 'release'.

In the post-show discussion, I noted that the audience was a supportive one comprising of families, friends, and some local dignitaries looking rather out of place with mayoral chains. I realised that there was no opportunity to concentrate on some of the more difficult concerns the performance raised, as the forum suggested a celebratory, if superficial congratulation to the participants for their hard work. One audience member asked the women about the theme of release, and the answer revealed that most of the performers had no experience of release. They were merely reflecting the *potential* for hopefulness despite the fear raised by the play. Their position was from 'inside', reflecting on their imminent release to 'outside', as yet contingent on their successful performance of their sentence. It struck me that the performance reinforced a distinction between inside/outside and private/public that, for me, was eroded by the institution as field. The play positions the characters as unable to transgress the institutional habitus they have internalised during their sentences, and indeed, as needing to develop new dispositions in order to cope (or survive) in the outside community. These new dispositions are as yet unarticulated, but revolve around the hardships of maintaining loving supportive relationships, feeling bonded to a community, and the ability to navigate expectations as well as cope with practical real-world demands of getting jobs and keeping appointments. By contrast, the performers were presented as having developed new skills in relation to their participation, as reflected in an article by staff writers in *The Economist*.

> Helen Cadbury, the creative-writing tutor at the prison, thinks that the production offered real industry experience, involving work with professionals and deadlines. Women's institutions often find it hard to recreate the sort of workplace environment—car-maintenance workshops and the like—that Chris Grayling, the justice secretary, wants prisons to offer, both to improve discipline and to help inmates find work when they leave. Two of those involved in *There are Mountains* say they may try for a theatrical career. Another is keen on events management (The Economist, 2012: online).

However, practitioners need to be cogniscent of the bias reflected in the 'public' that has entered a prison in order to support a performance presented by prisoners. There is no doubt that, as Reinelt asserts, a 'consensual community' is created, but this could erase some of the value of having a stage that 'consider[s] and experience[s] affirmation, contestation, and reworking' of the issues (1998: 286). Part of the danger of applied theatre programmes is the hearty gloss of benevolence, 'success' and self-perpetuating presence in the sites of conflict (Thompson, 2011a).

It is not my intention here to offer a critique of the aesthetic value of the performance, despite the fact that it was framed by theatrical trappings. Perhaps, in light of the 'success' of the performance, it is more important to reflect on the ethics of such performance. Firstly, *vide* trauma theory; it is valuable to present stories for 'outsiders' to witness, as prisoners' stories of struggle do not become erased when they leave prison. As such, the 'private' journeys of women's incarceration need to be witnessed by a wider public. Yet, the question raised for this research is how the framing of performance processes (applied theatre) in semi-professional or public performance alters the ways such witnessing is attended to. Secondly, intentions of process-based projects tend to have different claims to those that have a public 'face'. The ethical encounter of a public with the result of prisoners' labour requires a sense of the framing of such labour. In the case of this performance, the site was framed as progressive, supportive and beneficent. The prison staff members were praised for their support of the project, and the institution was 'cast' as a rehabilitative haven in which freedom of expression is prized. However, the moment of 'liberation' offered by the performance is transient while the disciplinary functions of the prison are permanent (even though they are applied randomly, as Goffman (1990) has shown).

By contrast, Grant & Crossan (2012) write a moving account of a performance project in a Northern Ireland prison that never happened. Unlike most accounts of prison practice that tend to focus on 'success', their framing of 'failure' to perform is under investigation. Their reflection outlines a process that was due to lead to a public performance in a nearby Young Offenders' Institute; but which was inexplicably cancelled when one of the performers was refused clearance for, the prison service claimed, security reasons. Such 'random' decision-making, following prior 'successful' performances to the wider prison community highlights for the authors, 'the inconsistency between the prison system's ostensible commitment to the effective resettlement of released prisoners and the way in which enforced conformity with the prison regime suppressed the very autonomy on which successful reintegration into society depends' (2012: 98).[14] Borrowing heavily from Goffman's research into 'total institutions' (2007), they claim that 'success in adapting to prison life is therefore often the equivalent of a failure to retain a necessary sense of self' (2012: 98). As a result, the entire group decided to pursue a tactic of solidarity with their ensemble member and also refused to perform. Such a tactic was a means of asserting self/ group in relation to the institution. For these men, refusal to 'perform' became their means of resisting the institutional field. I would add, too, that such refusal is also gendered in relation to the power of masculine refusal or non-compliance.[15]

We might see this contrasting example as a counterpoint to the gloss of public 'success' offered by the public performance at HMP/YOI Askham Grange. By staging the prison as 'successful' at creating women who appear to be ready to reintegrate into society, the prison, is operating at a strategic level, in which public support in the wake of politically motivated cuts has become important.[16] The performance provided a stage for the institution to present its supportive and rehabilitative 'face' to the

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[14] It is worth reflecting that one of the authors is a serving prisoner; and there is thus a claim for representing the responses of the performance participants.

[15] See Ashe, 2007, on the politics of refusal in relation to masculinity.

[16] This point was made in conversation with a staff member who was responsible for placing women in community workplaces. She suggested that the work placements are only possible if the local business owners feel able to understand and contribute towards the reintegration processes. (Anonymous prison officer, personal interview 30 Nov 2012).

public. This was particularly evident in the jolly uniformed women who operated the registration desk, ushered us to our seats, and served snacks in the reception.

In light of these concerns, I return to the model victim-survivor-hero in order to offer an analytic perspective on the practices discussed above. In HMP/YOI Askham Grange, the women's performance is analysed as a means of perpetuating the institutional narrative of 'good order and discipline'.[17] *There are Mountains* demonstrates that the women's ability to successfully perform their sentence plans is about firstly, learning the 'correct' language, and secondly, adopting a prescribed 'habitus' that indicates whether they can be judged 'fit' for release into the community.

In the play, Brenda is patronised by a member of staff for failing to understand why her daughter rejects her; suggesting that her release date is dependant on having close relations with support networks. As audience, our experience of Brenda's excitement at the reunion with her family, and her enthusiastic consideration of which gifts to buy her teenage daughter, can lead to a sense of her as a victim when her mother and child appear to reject her. Her ability to cope with her prison sentence is paraded as a virtue; but is undermined when she smashes the television set. We may realise that her confidence of upcoming release is a 'front', and what prevails is the erosion of sense of the capital she has in the prison. This is further reinforced when she is disciplined and removed from the dormitory. In these sequences, we feel Brenda is a victim of the faceless institution. If we can understand her devastation at the rejection, why can the prison staff not do so? The play offers no through-line for how Brenda makes the steps from being 'sanctioned'[18] to being released in a later scene. However, we are meant to accept that she has 'learned her lesson', and discovered the performance needed in order to convince the parole boards that she is fit for release. In other words, she has needed to develop a habitus that is deemed by the prison

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[17] GOAD: good order and discipline is one of the underlying principles of the prison service (Loucks, 2000). It is a concept that is not clearly articulated, and as such becomes a 'trope' employed by prison staff in order to maintain a subjective set of practices within the institution. This can be seen in relation to the many instances where staff actions in support of 'GOAD' were deemed unacceptable by the Chief Inspectorate of Prisons. See BBC, 2012.

service to be acceptable for coping in the 'field' beyond the institution. Yet, this new set of dispositions has been inscribed by prison rules and enforced by its regulations, and does not guarantee how such a habitus might transfer from inside to outside.

The value of this example is that the performance models the complex interplay of the model victim-survivor-hero I propose. The performers (serving prisoners) and their characters (facing release) shift between subjective positions on the basis of institutional whims, as a result of violent arguments, or medication levels, or even on the basis of status games played by the women in the dorm. In the performance I watched, I sat next to a member of the Independent Monitoring Board, who was quick to introduce himself, claiming that the 'difficult one' was perfectly pitched, and that the prison was full of women who are both hurtful and hurting. He wanted to assert the 'truthfulness' of the performance in creating a taxonomy of 'types' (*vide* Lombroso). His words suggested what much of the current literature confirms, that many women in prison are survivors of multiple forms of abuse (by others, by drugs and alcohol, and themselves).[19] Yet, there was no hint within the play that the strategic performative operations of surveillance, power, and control exerted by the officers were also agents of victimisation. Rather, the play suggested that women themselves perpetuate performances of 'victim' of the system.

There are Mountains aimed to present the issues relating to release for the wide range of women sharing living and working space in prison. The reception of the performance highlighted the willingness to cast participants as 'heroic' for gaining the confidence to perform in front of strangers; they were praised for finishing something. In some cases, working together was posited as heroism. The tone of the work, and its public staging suggested that its performance was an advocacy tool; presenting the pathways of women as a struggle for survival; but more so, as a complex narrative of obstacles – both institutional and 'real-world'. What was perhaps missing in the work

[18] The play does not indicate what the sanction is, but we are led to assume that Brenda is placed on 'the block' (otherwise known as solitary confinement) as a means of punishing her for her destructive behaviour.
[19] I have explored this in Chapters 2 and 5. Ahrens (2008) presents the statistics through representations in graphic comic strips. Other sources on victimisation and offending are Dehart & Lynch (2013), with the Corston reports (2007, 2011) the most indicative policy-related sources.

was the sense that recidivism is a problem, and thus the cyclical sense of women as 'performing' but failing to convince a wider societal 'audience' that they are fit to belong to their community. Yet, to return to Thompson's entreaty that we must acknowledge the ways public and private are folded together in the staging of applied performance work, it was evident that the performers in this work too, alongside the prison staff and supporters of this work, had all staged a 'publicly acceptable' model of women's rehabilitation. The successful staging of the play was only one level of the performance at operation. It was supported by the welcoming hosts at the conference centre who signed us in; and in the cheerful 'residents' who greeted people without any (apparent) anxiety, shame, or shyness. This contrasts with the reversal of the performance of outsiders entering the prison, facing disciplinary surveillance alongside the knowledge of being spectated by prisoners and officers.

Yet, there is also a more complex view of what performance studies can offer to the example of women in prison, through employing the frame of habitus.

> Just as habitus informs practice from within, a field structures action and representation from without: it offers the individual a gamut of possible stances and moves that she can adopt, each with its associated profits, costs, and subsequent potentialities (Wacquant, 2008: 8).

Wacquant's characterisation of habitus and field here might be seen in both relation to prisoners preparing for release and the practices of making performance in prison. That is, women's individual habitus determines the 'affect' of the day-to-day operations of the prison; while the institution shapes and determines the possibilities open to women upon release through its structuration of their 'pathways'. In similar ways, the structure of feeling offered by (inevitably short-term) performance processes is structured and delimited by the institutional norms and values. Both are evident in the example of *There are Mountains*, with a suggestion that the performance was in fact a preparation for something else - in which time and the potential result of the action is deferred.

In this example then, the performers metonymically refer to all other prisoners, and their playing through or working out of the issues they might face upon release alludes

to the potential for performance to prepare for 'the real'. In other words, the process bears a mimetic relationship to their potential futures. Lynda Hart, drawing on Diamond's formulation of 'mimesis-mimicry' (1989: 49), asserts that mimicry 'repeats rather than represents; it is a repetition that is non-reproductive. Mimesis operates in the order of model/ copy. Mimicry performs its operation in the realm of simulacra' (1996: 64). Furthermore, she deploys Bhabha's understanding of colonial mimicry which is expressed as a 'desire for a reformed, recognizable [sic] Other as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite' (1984: 318). The characterisation of women's performance of readiness for release as mimetic is also understood as one that measures the believability that the prisoners are indeed ready. In other words, once the women are 'read' as reformed, they are judged ready for reintegration into the 'real' world. Yet, as Bhabha's quote suggests, this desire maintains a distance between a 'real' performance of well-adapted citizenship, and a satisfactorily mimetic performance.

It is precisely this awareness that the women's multiple mimetic realms are complex to decode that has given texture to this study. It would be hubris to choose any singular intervention to 'read' success or failure in a woman's pathway through the criminal justice system. The arts in prisons have thus taken on too large a burden with the need to prove efficacy. Rather, I propose that performance, in the example of *There Are Mountains* has been analysed as a form of mimetic rehearsal. This rendering of applied theatre performance positions the women participants as rehearsing their future release and the audience as working through the possibilities offered by this performance in the realisation of that rehearsal. Such a view chimes with Duggan's conception of 'mimetic shimmering' that emerges in the spectatorial state of not quite 'deciding on the images as reality or mimesis' (2012: 73).

Performance studies provides tools to critique the forms of cultural manifestations precisely because public events are predicated on specific relationships between theme, spectator and performer. [20] This positions the themes and subjects of performances as processual, and under construction during the performance event

(and sometimes afterwards).[21] Performance – whether it is seen as a specific theatre event or a social performance event such as a protest – has a set of aesthetic and logistical frames of investigation – it occurs in a specific place and time, is framed by a particular aesthetic, and the material conditions of the event, spectacle or action. When dealing with performance processes (such as actor training, devising and applied theatre) it is necessary to consider how researchers gain access to the work. This forms one of the primary challenges of applied theatre as sub-genre in performance studies because projects do not always have public outcomes, nor do they all have the resources to develop extensive documentation.[22] While many projects produce reports and evaluations of their work, there is generally an imperative to 'proving effectiveness', rather than disclosing challenges too candidly. Nevertheless, applied theatre projects can indeed offer insightful documentation and critically relevant reports that can prove productive in the issues they raise.

The methodological consideration above is foregrounded here because the second indicative example of applied processes with women in prisons has been accessed through secondary sources. Nevertheless, it provides an important counterpoint to the experience of viewing *There Are Mountains*. In particular, I analyse this example of performance in prison by Geese Theatre in light of its stated concern with authenticity and 'giving voice' through mimetic reflection. It forms a brief counterpoint with the prior example in order to demonstrate a range of performance practices in prisons in the UK.

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[20] See Freshwater, 2009; White, 2013.

[21] This is explicitly staged in performances that are predicated on a degree of audience participation or autonomy in the unfolding story. Examples of companies that purport to do this are Blast Theory and Punchdrunk for example. This unfolding, agential relationship to meaning through participation is discussed by White, 2013.

[22] It is also worth noting that documentation can provoke ethical questions, as safety of participants is paramount. In the case of prisons, security and discipline are considered important, and identifying information, reference to crimes, mention of harms to self or others and glorification of crime is considered a security breach. Any documentation must therefore be considered in light of the potential impact on victims as well as the maintenance of security to the institution. Prisons are thus extremely unlikely to provide access to video documentation or photographs. See McAvinchey (2006b) for detailed discussion on documentation procedures in prison theatre research.

Trauma, Masks and Mimesis: Geese Theatre's *Journey Woman*

Stephen Bottoms' account of *Journey Woman* (2010) provides an important insight into the performance practices of this well-established company, which began in the late 1980s in the USA. Practitioners in the UK developed the methodology over the last 26 years.[23] Geese Theatre's method generally involves a structured improvisation style performance, in which actors wear half masks, in which the stock characters such as 'The Wall', 'The Joker', and 'Mr. Cool', are presented in scenarios the participants (in this example, female prisoner) may have experienced (Bottoms, 2010: 484 - 46). The company facilitates participation by asking audiences to give suggestions for how the characters might 'lift the mask'[24] in order to reveal the thought processes and possibilities for alternative choices that might lie 'behind the masks'. Michael Balfour demonstrates that the company 'began as radical practitioners working with the marginalised in prisons in the USA, to become a company specialising in the use of theatre to focus on an individual's responsibility for their offending behavior' (2009: 349). Balfour sees this shift as firmly rooted in the prevailing socio-economic discourses that define the funding agendas that support (or reject) this kind of arts-based intervention.

Journey Woman is the first work by Geese Theatre created specifically for a female audience. Bottoms reveals the shifts in methodology needed in order to ensure the work held relevance for the participating audience; which is achieved through using full mask.[25] The performance is constructed as flexible and open enough for a wide range of audience to connect with the protagonist, Ellie; which is then worked through in what they term 'groupwork' sessions after the performance. Louise Heywood, one of the longstanding Geese Theatre facilitators is cited at length:

> [...] our experience has told us that if you do too much pushing and challenging with women, they'll back off. Also what happens with the women is they're more ready to 'lift their mask' from the start, anyway.

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[23] See Baim, Brooks and Mountford, 2002.
[24] For more on Geese Theatre's methodology, see Baim, Brooks & Mountford (2002) and Watson, A. (2008).
[25] It is important to state here that my awareness of the performance comes through Bottoms' publication, as well as from personal conversations with Louise Heywood from Geese Theatre (Heywood, 2012); and as such, it is mediated by the documentation choices made by these individuals (which is McAvinchey's concern, 2006a). This is because their work within prison settings is always, emphatically, framed as 'private' and therefore not open to public scrutiny. This raises questions about how and why Bottoms' presence as researcher was admissible, for example. The opening of the sub-section on Geese Theatre addresses this concern more fully.

> They tend to go to the heavy, internal stuff fairly quickly, so you can't just go in and say, 'right, we'll keep this surface level, talk about acquiring skills and what you need to do when you get out'. Whatever you do has to have an element of allowing them to go to the internal stuff, and to find a safe way of doing that. If you don't go there, it just sits on the sideline like a little ghost in the room (in Bottoms, 2010: 490).

Heywood's remarks point towards an interesting difference in Geese Theatre's approach between working with male and female prisoners.[26] Her claims that affect is more evident in women's prisons is well rehearsed in criminological literature[27] but also reveal the instrumental turn in theatre practice needing to answer to skills acquisition, and practicalities of resettlement.

Rather than rely on re-telling the narrative of *Journey Woman* as related by Bottoms, I have elected to engage with the theoretical problems raised by these practices before returning to the examples. The following section thus shifts from the close reading of the examples to posit an analytic frame that will engage these examples in service of the wider argument of this research, namely, whether and to what extent performance tactics can be seen to challenge, subvert or support the strategies of penal institutions.

The examples have raised several pertinent points that will be analysed in relation to one of the theoretical strands running through the thesis, since, I argue, the terms and 'symptoms' (cf. Duggan, 2012) of trauma theory relate to performance practice in their spatial and temporal appearance within the context of the prison. This is necessary since the site as 'process' of rehabilitation or corrections suggests a 'working through' of past events and the creation of new or future potential identity narratives. Trauma theory has been briefly introduced in chapter 2, and in this section, I return to several of the concerns that relate explicitly to the problems raised by the examples of applied

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[26] However, further exploration of the differences in approach between methodologies that 'work' with male and female prisoners is beyond the scope of this study precisely because I argue against the possibility of definitive claims that arts projects within the frame of penal institutions can be said to 'work' after release. This is not because I do not believe they could or do have real impacts, but because access to longitudinal research data (on reoffending rates, for example) is not accessible (Hughes, 2005a); and most evaluations do not include follow up data on participants. In other words, the bureaucracy of prison and the secrecy of records make lofty claims difficult to prove.

theatre practice above.[28] Trauma theory provides a framework through which we might thread some of the practices of applied performance in prison. In the following section, then, I address some of the common practices of performance making in prisons in relation to four core performance modes mapped across concerns from trauma theory.

Applied theatre practice is often informed by the notion of 'salve', as Thompson (2011a) suggests. It follows that a 'wound' has been identified, to which performance processes have been identified as a potentially ameliorating tactic.[29] This wound might be understood as a primary trauma (such as a war, a refugee's flight) or a feature of the consequences of the primary event (such as the trauma of being detained, or the refugee's dis/appearance at the border). Participating in theatre workshops (and performances) becomes the means by which participants are given the conscious space and creative tools with which to 'work through' these wounds. Of course, Thompson (2011b) demonstrates that there are power dynamics inherent in the definitions of sites, events or personal histories as 'wounds'; and also in the choice of theatre or performance as the mechanism that claims to 'heal'. Yet, as Duggan has shown, there is a complex interplay between trauma event and repetition that is central to trauma theory (2012: 24). Given that trauma's performativity constructs certain relationships between event, memory, narrative and witness, these structures also need to be investigated in the ways they in turn perpetuate and co-construct their very understanding of 'wounds' and 'salves'.

By means of reaching towards how these two performance examples raise the need for more critical practices that challenge representations even as they rely on them, I turn to Julie Salverson's compelling work on the 'erotics of injury' (2001: 123). In this work, cited at length, she demands thinking through the ways mimesis operates in

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[27] See Gelsthorpe, 2010; Heidenshohn, 1996; Smart, 1977; Ramsbotham, 2003. In this work, see p. 116.
[28] In particular, see Caruth, 2006; Duggan and Wallis, 2011; Duggan, 2012; Stuart-Fisher, 2011.
[29] There are numerous examples to cite in relation to the characterisation of a 'wound' and its relief through arts processes. This is distinct from the arts therapy bibliography but some of the vocabularies overlap. See Hazou, 2008; Jeffers, 2009; Salverson, 2001; Thompson, Hughes & Balfour, 2009; Thompson, 2011a; Wake, 2009b; 2013.

relation to the 'authentic voice' that is central to applied theatre practices in general, and the examples in this chapter in particular.

> How do the participant/performer, the audience member, or the form of the play itself engage the violation that is the event being testified to? What is the range of possibilities for what is known, imagined, or responded to in this engagement with the event? Critical here are possibilities within performance itself, which address distinctions among several notions of mimesis that operate by either "upholding a model (representation) or improvising a variation (representing)." The latter approach considers mimesis to be a faculty that demands of its audience an active engagement with the story through a kind of "interpretive labor" [sic] (2001: 123).

She is specifically concerned with the ways a model that relies on the 'traumatic event' seems to privilege an aesthetic of injury (2001). Thompson (2011a, relying on Scarry, 1985) has further proposed that while ethics are at the cornerstone of performance making in conflict zones, such projects can and should incorporate beauty.

Geese Theatre's *Journey Woman* provides an example upon which we can consider the role of both silence as resistance (cf. Thompson, 2011a), and beauty that provide spaces for mimetic reflection. The performance method and workshop create a framework for projection of participants' stories onto the protagonists', by, as Bottoms (2010) suggests, engaging with a more neutral mask (than the masks introduced previously) and an open storyline. [30] The performance encourages the women participants to make their own connections with the wider narrative, which they do by offering explanations of what 'happens next' in certain scenes. This is a well-rehearsed technique used in applied theatre workshops, in order to encourage cycles of action-reflection-transformation (Taylor, 1996a). The scene deliberately halts at certain key moments, in order to allude to multiple possible outcomes, such as when Ellie seems to be threatened by her large burly partner. The dramaturgical structure inserts

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[30] Bottoms reflects on his observation of the groupwork session, in which an older woman, who was serving a life sentence, had made some important connections with the story, despite acknowledging differences in Ellie's narrative and her own as she discussed the ways in which life circumstances can conspire to lead one into trouble. 'She seemed to be speaking as someone who had now been reflecting critically on her own past for a long time, and for whom the play offered further confirmation of lessons learned' (Bottoms: 2010, 487). In other words, the participant in the workshop recognised a mimetic representation of herself in the character of Ellie.

openings and pauses for participants to engage through reflecting on their own experiences. It becomes important for Geese Theatre (as highlighted by Heywood's (2012) comment on the affect that is close to the surface when working with women in prison) to be able to frame affects as symbolic and meaningful, and not merely as risky and dangerous. Performance can be one set of practices that provides articulations of a range of affects in a structured and defined context that is 'safe' both psychologically, as it is located in the realm of the symbolic or aesthetic, and physically, through its careful negotiation within the institutional norms and values.

The following section shifts to a critical analysis of the applied theatre tactics that have been outlined above. The intention is to make explicit the functions of performance in the site of the prison in order to better understand the cultural work these hidden processes do.

There is an alliance between the curative function of 'telling' and the discourses of 'survival' that is peculiar to the West as argued by Thompson (2011a: 45). He suggests that the imperative to 'tell your stories' as individuals can erase other possibilities to be found in performance.[31] His argument is that there are a wide range of performance strategies that move beyond simple frames of testimonial theatre; and include resistant strategies of 'not speaking'; or indeed, culturally specific modes of performance that resist 'revelation'. I return to the possibilities found in 'silence' in the subsequent section on representation. It is problematic to assume that performances in prison would or should take the form of testimonial theatre, since, as I demonstrate below, there is an interplay between the psychological personal narrative of the prisoner and the wider social narratives that include issues of crime and justice. The imperative to tell one's story as a prisoner suggests that the narrative will include details of crimes, and the processes of justice. Often, in literary projects with women, such healing narratives return to 'originating' traumatic moments that might be seen

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[31] Thompson is explicating the need for culturally specific practices that might be different to individual transformations. His work refers to collective or communal modes of aestheticising change that are influenced by social contexts that privilege collective meaning making (2011a).

to have 'wounded' the women in some way.[32] In these examples, the 'story' of the original trauma can be seen in several ways. Firstly, the ability to tell a story reveals the acknowledgement of a traumatic event through articulation. However, the 'wounds' of the trauma are not merely described as symptoms, but causes of further destructive behaviours (such as drug abuse, or a history of violent relationships). Further, the story of the wound can be employed as an 'excuse' for criminal activities. This critique, however, is not intended to diminish the continued presence of trauma symptoms in the lives of those who have suffered personal traumatic events.

However, in the practices of applied performance, the tendency to victimise participants by insisting on revelations of trauma might in fact fetishise the traumatic. Rhodessa Jones' US based company The Medea Project routinely creates public performances developed through prison based processes that engage with 'testimony' and 'witnessing' of supposedly 'authentic' stories. By contrast, Clean Break's public performances tend to gloss over such 'relief', preferring instead to expose concerns related to criminal justice more broadly. This aesthetic choice might be considered in relation to the intentions of the work to straddle public/private discourses. While individual healing from trauma is both laudable and important in private processes, it does not necessarily share the aesthetic form that will result in social change.[33] Bottoms states, referring to *Journey Woman*:

> The play's spectators are encouraged - through its minimising of the kind of individuating information provided by faces or dialogue - to see Ellie as being in some way a reflection of themselves rather than as a fully fleshed-out character (an other). And yet, conversely, if a spectator sees something of her own past experiences in Ellie's journey, she is also able to view these experiences from a spectatorial distance - as a narrative that is in some way occurring to an 'other' (2010: 492).

To witness, or to bear witness to a testimony of suffering, places the spectator in a position of responsibility for what has been seen, heard and felt (see Duggan, 2012:

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[32] See Davis, 2004; Graney, 2003, 2004, 2006; Lamb et al, 2003; Lamb, 2007; Rymhs, 2012; Williams, 2003.

[33] I am distinguishing here between two forms of practice because I argue that Clean Break's 'public' facing performance work 'performs' in a different way to its education work. The distinction is not productive for the company, but highlights a divide in the efficacy of 'advocacy' focused outcomes and personal development outcomes and how both intentions interrelate with aesthetic considerations.

89). While some theorists consider the degree of responsibility merely about 'being alongside', others place special emphasis on the embodied experience of the moment of testimony (Stuart Fisher, 2011). Geese Theatre's performance described by Bottoms, positions the prisoners as witness to a story bearing mimetic resemblance to their own. Their groupwork processes reinforce and rehearse different ways of working through the responsibility of seeing, and recognising ones' self in the other. Duggan's formulation of allowing the traumatic 'without intervening towards cure' (2012: 89) operates as a model of analysis for contemporary performance, but in the context of prison, where 'curative' solutions are prioritised, we should rather seek to understand how and to what extent performance processes can predicate on witnessing as a transaction in order to effect desired responses. Next, the argument departs from the framework of trauma theory, but is related to the concerns raised above, in the sense that criminal justice is predicated upon a sense of the relation between private and public. The cycles of incarceration, explored below, as well as the ways theatre in prisons grapples with public and private concerns by staging them, are of concern.

A recent report 'Unlocking Value: The Economic Benefit of the Arts in Criminal Justice' (New Philanthropy Capital, 2011) was commissioned to explore the 'value' of arts based programmes in the lives of ex-prisoners.[34] It considers the effectiveness of theatre participation in relation to reducing reoffending, and potential for future employment with the aim of demonstrating that the theatre 'intervention' saves the government over five times what it would otherwise cost to incarcerate recidivists annually. The report states a fundamental disconnect between the job arts organisations can do within criminal justice and the system itself:

> While government targets are built around an end- offending- arts organisations tend to focus on the means- personal, social and emotional skills. What is often lacking is a clear theory of change and evidence that links one to the other (2011: 10).

Yet, the report raises some concerns about how the arts are put in service of the economic savings to the prison service, and what such an intention means for the

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[34] It was developed by New Philanthropy Capital and commissioned by the Arts Alliance.

ethical framing of the arts. In other words, the labour demanded of the arts is always already determined by the institution. In de Certeau's terms then, arts tactics are in service of the strategic aims of the institution. This explicit discursive attempt to align practices with the wider function of the system presents a worrying dilemma for the analysis of performance in prison. Furthermore, the report attempts to consider theatre's cost-benefit analysis in discrete categories (ignoring affect and 'soft outcomes'). There is the need for charities and third sector organisations to compete in terms of funding for the sustainability of their work, but it is surely not value free. This issue is central to much contemporary work that straddles disciplinary borders between arts and social change interventions. This report highlights an ongoing struggle in the arts – having to justify their terms in the language, and with the values of other paradigms. Although the results may compel future funding of such work, the consideration of return on investment seems to occlude the other, more nebulous values that pervade theatre programmes. This critique is relevant here because it presents the conditions within which performance practices occur in prisons in the UK – that is, precarious, under suspicion, and necessarily ephemeral in nature. The economic and social pressures I highlight here are important contexts for recognising the value(s) of the practices.[35]

The examples of a recent Clean Break performance, and a play/workshop in the repertoire of Geese Theatre are counter-poised by this vignette from my archival experience working as facilitator with Clean Break several years ago. The narrative highlights the tension between the intentions of the work, and its apparent 'success' on a range of levels, and the small rupture offered by an improvised moment of resistance. The account asserts some of the ambiguities and complexities of applied theatre practices in prisons.

Keep the Change
I am on tour with Clean Break – this time with a company of ex-students who have been cast in a 1-act play by Mary Cooper about the family concerns of a serving prisoner, Lisa. She is a young mother who has

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[35] I suggest these values are considered in relation to cost benefit as above, or to prove public acceptability, as in Chapter 3 where I discuss PSO 50 and the 'public acceptability test'.

realised her daughter may face going into care, and she comes to her mother's house in order to ask for help. For most of the play, the audience do not realise that the main character has absconded from her 'open prison' in order to see her mother and child. The performance is staged to about 30 women in the morning, and in the afternoon, I facilitate a theatre-based workshop with cast and prisoners about the themes in the play.

We develop scenes about making alternative choices at various moments in the story. Most of the women are particularly clear about Lisa having respect for the mother character, and not flying into a rage. They criticise her for stealing £20 from her mum's kitchen. They seem to have internalised all kinds of tactics for solving conflicts. The Clean Break team seem pretty smug when we are told that one of the women who engaged brilliantly in a scene with the daughter character is extremely 'hard-to-reach' with severe mental health problems.

After we have done a congratulatory ceremony with participation certificates, the women go back to their dorms, and the company prepares to dismantle the enormous set and get back on the road. As we are ticking off every bolt on our inventory, I realise that the (fake) £20 note has gone. One of our participants had decided to take it back to the dorm, even though hard currency has no purchasing power in prison. I am obliged to report it as a breach of security. (Archive: Clean Break Tour Missing Out HMP Foston Hall, 2008).

The archival memory of this 'failure' in the workshop offers a way of understanding the insidious relationship with power concomitant with gaining access to an institution. On the one hand, the 'theft' of fake currency is hardly significant in the ways other more horrifying consequences of performance have been.[36] On another, the rupture, or refusal of complicity that is offered by the 'theft' is another means of improvising.[37] In any other context, the woman's 'creativity' and 'cunning' would be appreciated; but in prison (as in wider society) these qualities can only be praiseworthy within the rather tightly defined bounds of 'acceptable' behaviour. This point returns me to the well-rehearsed description of 'restored behaviour' or 'twice-behaved behaviour' that Schechner (2006) outlines as a defining feature of

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[36] For example, Thompson talks about a massacre of 27 boys and young men at Bindunuwewa rehabilitation centre in Sri Lanka in 2000 as having direct links to a performance based intervention (2011a: 15 - 42).

[37] I do not frame 'improvisation' as de facto positive. Rather, I intend to harness performance vocabularies to refer to as one performative tactic amongst several, including 'docility', silence or refusal to cooperate with authority.

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performance. However, in the context of institutions and their strategic aims, where transgressive 'behaviour' is under contestation, it is important to reflect on how performance practices model and reinforce normativity in the arsenal of behaviours/ habitus on offer.

Perhaps at this juncture it is important to consider what, in the framing of applied theatre processes, is emphasised as 'the performance'.[38] In Geese Theatre's example, Bottoms focuses on both the company's performance of a scene, and the performance of women in a workshop designed to process the themes. The women in those sessions were thus asked to use performative tactics in order to rehearse for future performances of self in which wider repertoires of agency might be possible. I have offered a reading of the institutional discourse as framing the practices through a normative understanding of 'behaviour'. However, the practice has remained 'private' insofar as it did not have any public presentation of outcomes, aside from Bottoms' mediation of the sessions.

In the example of *There are Mountains*, Clean Break positions a semi-professional product as the 'performance', while alluding to the performative labour that has gone into the creation of the play. Yet, to a greater extent than the prior example, this public staging of the women's cycles of 'tragic containment' reinforces and supports the site itself. It does so through repetitions of familiar tropes of helpless females who are unable to define their own terms of 'success' or 'failure', and who must revert to a hegemonic set of practices in order to fulfil their narrative potential (to return to de Lauretis' (1987) view of woman as *topos*). While the ambition to stage such performance asserts the importance of the (mostly) private struggle of reintegration to a wider public sphere, there remains a sense that the 'making public' *is* the performance, intended to have a wider, more politically resonant impact. I contend that this upstages whatever more personal effects/affects women may have experienced in the process of participation.

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[38] What counts as 'the performance' in applied theatre projects is dealt with in a chapter by McAvinchey (2009) called "Is This the Play?": Applied Performance in Pupil Referral Units.

By considering these examples, I do not intend to create a taxonomy of counter-practices, but rather to gesture towards the ways in which both effects and affects of performance practices in prison are the currency by which they should be considered. Thus, to return to the theoretical challenges posed in the beginning of this chapter, I have attempted to resist Lombroso's taxonomic constructions of knowledge of prisoners and their institutional experiences. Rather, *vide* de Certeau, I have grappled with the tactics and strategies of applied theatre in prisons. What remains, then, is the development of the argument through the theoretical modelling I have proposed in chapter 2.

Performance in Prison and the Cycles of Tragic Containment
I propose that the potential of victim/survivor/hero seen in relation to the cycle of tragic containment from chapter 2 is that there is the possibility to engage both the personal narratives of injury, loss and trauma (in the victim/survivor/hero model) *and* the narratives of recidivism and desistance that resonate in the realm of the political (seen in the cycles of tragic containment). However, these need to be articulated through the 'interpretive labour' mentioned by Salverson, in relation to both ethics and aesthetics (2001). The position of applied theatre practices as largely outside of the public realm thus means that it is important for critical practices to do this interpretation in relation to how the range of narratives become articulated in relation to one another. What is evident from the range of literature evaluating arts projects and sources offering case studies of performance practice is that the terms of effect/affect often become indistinct, and subservient to the dominant discourses of the commissioning agents. 'What works' [39] is articulated in the language of the prison service, reinforcing the generalising discourse of the regime, rather than carving out productive tools that can be adopted by individuals as 'habitus-specific resources' (Susen, 2011: 368).

In Chapter 2, I propose that the cycle of tragic containment is productive as a means of exploring dramaturgical structures of tragedy in relation to the cycles of incarceration/

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[39] This is again the prison service buzzword employed by bureaucrats to justify the further application of evidence-based targets in recent years. See Arts Alliance, 2011; McNeill et al, 2010.

recidivism/ desistance.[40] However, by considering the cycle in relation to practices of performance-making in prisons, its limitations become evident because the 'stages' are both pre-determined and fixed, and do not provide space for slippages, or 'failures', that inevitably form part of projects with intentions of change.[41]

Concluding Remarks

Balfour offers a gloss on Neelands' querulous concern about what he calls hero narratives that make claim for change through evoking the language of transformation and revolution. He relies on Neelands' argument that 'it is important to distinguish between localised and anecdotal 'miracles' and how these instances are 'generalised and theorised or proved in the textual discourses of the field' (Neelands, 2004: 47 cited in Balfour, 2009: 353). Taking this argument further, Balfour proffers that it is everything that goes into gaining access that highlights the ideology of the practice. He says the need for

> discharging and advocating for aesthetics [is] central, and of establishing open-ended relationships that hold in tension the quality of the process that participants go through in making theatre and the quality of the work that is created. The point of entry is where competing ideological values interplay with each other, some are articulated, whilst others are deeply subterranean within the practitioner, the institution, or group (2009: 357).

The separation of the impact or effectiveness of performances in prison from the wider field, and the affect(s) of such work is both difficult and counter-intuitive. From a Bourdieusian perspective, the interplay between habitus and field, and the multiple forms of capital that are formed and lost in everyday processes shift constantly in relation to one another. 'It takes the *meeting* of disposition and position, the correspondence (or disjuncture) between mental structures and social structures, to

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[40] Desistance is the processual and continuous choice ex- prisoners have to turn away from criminal habitus. This assumed requirement of theatre programmes in prisons is borne out by a paper connecting the experience of the arts as part of a prison sentence with desistance from crime upon release. McNeill et al say that desistance is not just about discovering a new personal narrative or personal empowerment, but rather about acquiring new skills.

> Desistance requires social capital as well as these forms of human capital that programmes may provide[…] The social and structural contexts within which obstacles to desistance are both constructed and overcome (or worked around) are as significant as the subjective elements of the process; the 'objective' and 'subjective' aspects of pathways to desistance interact in complex ways (2010: 4).

[41] Refer to table 1: cycles of tragic containment in Chapter 2, p.78.

generate practice' (Wacquant, 2008: 8). It is short sighted to argue for a purely aesthetic judgment of performance work in prisons, since the very aesthetic is imbricated within the field of the institution, its values and norms. Equally, though, it is reductionist to attempt to calculate the value of 'effects' of such work, as interventions do not happen in a vacuum. Rather, the moral and ethical questions arising from this study suggest that the important questions are related to determining the implications of 'good performance'; and to working through what the performative signs might be.

The chapter has demonstrated the need to consider the paradoxes and messiness of performance projects in prisons, in which claims for 'giving voice' and 'representing' women in prison are circumscribed by competing agendas (funding demands, political affiliations and activist intentions alongside permissions to gain access in the first instance). Indeed, what is investigated more fully in Chapter 5 on the project I conducted in HMP Drake Hall, is the possibility that women's tactical refusals and resistances reveal more deeply the force-field of the institution, its perpetuation of power, domination and control. I acknowledge, however, that my rendering of these tactics retains an aesthetically charged 'distance' through the lens of a visiting theatre practitioner/ researcher.

By constructing this chapter in the balancing act of practice, I offer an original contribution to research about performance in prisons. My research does not seek to measure and evaluate 'effects' or 'impacts' of the arts as intervention. It does not seek to position theatre processes as a transformative or ameliorating practice that radically alters the prisoners (or indeed, the institution). Rather it raises questions about what performance in prison claims to do. By positioning the practices in relation to trauma theory, it insists that 'healing' and catharsis are potential, but not inevitable, effects. It suggests that institutional access and gatekeeping always already mark the project with an agenda. Prison theatre must necessarily be seen in the relationship between both these more private, process-based applied theatre projects as well as contemporary performances about prisons. The possibilities of participation and representation of women in prison are always reflected in both modes of performance practice. This approach resists the discursive and practical boundaries of

'interventions' or 'events', as women's durable dispositions are modelled and re-modelled in light of their experiences both in prison and in the transition to communities upon release. It is this dynamic of inside and outside, public and private that characterises both this research project and the performance of women prisoners as they navigate their journey(s) between prison and society.

What is distinctive in this chapter is the articulation of the prison's performance strategies in relation to the tactics offered by two examples of applied theatre processes. This sets the ground for the subsequent account of empirical research practice in HMP Drake Hall in chapter 5. In particular, it provides the framework for engaging with the aesthetic and ethical tactics I employed in my own navigation of the prison as site and in collaboration with women on a performance project. Projecting outwards after 3 densely theoretical chapters, Chapter 4 offers a perspectival shift by attending to performance practices in prisons. In the next chapter, then, readers will recognise the need for a shift in tone as I begin to model the issues already raised. As such, I engage with how such practice is generated, and by doing so, I am modelling the meeting point between disposition and position – which is, as Wacquant (2008) points out, the function of habitus.

CHAPTER FIVE: ETHNOGRAPHY: PERFORMANCE *OF* PRISON

Introduction[1]

This chapter's account of practice-led research about women in prison makes use of de Certeau's distinction between 'place' and 'space' – in which place or the 'law of the proper' is redefined in relation to space, time and affectual variables that seem to shift the very functioning of place (1984: 117).[2] This notion is repeatedly invoked in prisoner's testimonials of how moments in prisons which engage imagination (such as art workshops and writing) are 'liberating' or 'legal escapes', despite the restrictions of institutions.[3] In other words, there is a functional difference between space and place, in which purposive acts and performances re-map the subjectivities of both sites and subjects. For de Certeau, what is important is a 'process whereby stories thus carry out a labour that constantly transforms places into spaces or spaces into places' (1984: 117-118). The chapter recounts such 'stories' from my own practice with women in prison in 2012. I offer accounts of theatre practice via reflexive practitioner diary entries in order to examine the affectual, temporal and spatial stages of a closed women's prison. HMP Drake Hall is the 'field' (informed by economic and political dynamics); read against the 'event' - a particular theatre-based programme with women conducted over three months in Summer 2012. The women's aesthetic narratives developed in workshops are considered alongside their everyday performances of regulation, adaptation, deprivation and resistance.[4] This chapter thus functions as the core ethnographic evocation of my creative research process in prison. Its findings explicate the new knowledge gained from the specific institution in relation to the detailed consideration of prison habitus as well as prison's performance.

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[1] Sections of this chapter have appeared in a paper entitled 'Space-making in women's prisons: personal performance testimonies of 'doing bird'' originally presented at a conference at University of Northampton (Walsh, 2012d). This chapter received the first prize at the TaPRA PG essay competition 2012.

[2] Place and space are more fully explicated on p. 155.

[3] I am referring here to the propensity for writing about arts projects to position arts processes as spaces unbound by the rules and regulations of the institution (see Bamford & Skipper, 2007; Carrabine, 2012; Caulfield, 2011; Caulfield & Wilson, 2010; Digard & Liebling, 2012; McNeill et al, 2010; Peaker & Vincent, 1990; Williams, 2003). This is, of course, fallacious, since the project always exists within the regulations that govern all interventions in the institution (Cheliotis, 2012a; 2012b).

[4] These terms are foundational in criminology and have been more explicitly mentioned in Chapters 2 & 3. For more, see Goffman, 2007.

As a way into the analytic approach I am taking, I offer an initial research diary from fieldwork that positions one woman's tactics of negotiating her own desire with institutional norms and values.

> **Locating Capital:**
> **'I found a pound and you woulda thought I'd won the bloody lottery'**
> *During one of the coffee breaks, a woman recounted an experience she had as a cleaner in the visits hall. The women have strict timeframes for cleaning when visits are not underway. Dani[5] was cleaning near the vending machines when she found a pound coin. Money, as she explained to me, is contraband, but when she found it she was so excited. However, she was concerned that someone would notice her picking it up, so she moved elsewhere to vacuum, returning to look at the renegade coin on the carpet several times before she felt safe enough to slip it into her pocket. She narrated her sense of breathlessness as she left her job that day, feeling the pound coin in her pocket, to check whether it was real or not. She said 'I found a pound coin and you woulda thought I'd won the bloody lottery.' Dani's willingness to risk being discovered with contraband highlights the absurdity of institutionalisation. She knew that she would not be able to use the money inside the prison, but nevertheless, the lure of money was too great to avoid. Her risk would be to get 'statemented' – where a red statement is notated in the prisoner's file. Most likely, she would need to hide the pound coin, keeping it as a memento of her discovery. (Research Diary, August 2012).*

Dani's treasure served as a symbolic, rather than actual, capital, to gloss Bourdieu's most widely adopted concept (1984). Her pleasure derived from possessing the coin, despite it being worthless in prison because there is no use of currency within institutions, demonstrates the performative impact of believing that one possesses agency. She grappled with the fear of discovery, but ultimately, took the coin. There is a sense of investment in her identity as an agent capable of making choices that run counter to the institutional regulations. The coin symbolically links her to her Self outside. What is more, her subsequent re-telling of the finding and keeping of the coin was a re-enactment, in which she explicitly contrasted the stakes she experienced with the small 'reward'. In her re-telling, she modelled a reflexivity of her imagined Self

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[5] As indicated in Chapter 1, all women's names have been changed in order to comply with data protection. I have not included any information that would identify any of the participants to authorities, nor disclosed any information that might be harmful to themselves, the institution, or others. See Appendix A for the full ethics form.

outside and the disbelief of winning large amounts of money in the lottery, with its correlative luck in prison. Her story highlights the dearth of opportunities that women in prison have for breaking through the limiting discourse of the institution to alternative performativities in which rewards and good fortune are possibilities.

Spaces, Stories and Symbols: Prison Ethnography
As discussed in chapter 3, prison *as* performance is viewed in light of Marvin Carlson's conception of performance as 'a border, a margin, a site of negotiation' (2004: 20). Performance as a means of analysis allows us to explore the ways 'hidden values, assumptions and beliefs' (2004: 27) are represented by the social actors and institution of women's prisons. In other words, the prison itself is explored as a cultural construct that both conforms to and deviates from wider social narratives and scripts about transgression, and the law. In turn, these scripts are viewed, I argue, through a specifically gendered lens,[6] which predetermines appropriate subjectivities for women. My contention is that prison performs its activities of punishment, removals (both spatially – in the sense that prisoners are removed from society; and materially – in the sense that rights and privileges are removed) as well as denial (of agency, subjectivity and space) on the bodies of its inhabitants within a moral and ethical framework. To paraphrase Dostoyevsky, prison is a microcosm of its society, and as such, becomes an important measure of the inequalities, deprivations and marginalisations of that society. What this chapter aims to do is to unpack the terminologies and concepts of performance in relation to prison in order to work towards viewing prison as performance. The chapter shifts between more descriptive ethnographic sections introducing HMP Drake Hall as 'place' and critical reflections on how these specific carceral spaces are performed and rendered performative by different agencies in the operations of punishment, exclusion and surveillance. In particular, although I continue to draw on the work of Foucault (1977), as well as making use of Goffman (1990) in order to consider the functioning of the prison as

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[6] In this chapter, as in Chapter 2, I make use of the term 'gendered' in relation to the conventions of feminist criminology that seeks to highlight the inevitable assumption of prison spaces as designed for male subjects, constituted and informed by masculinity. Thus, where I suggest a space is considered in a gendered way, I am not eliding the male gender, but rather, articulating that gender constructions, roles and performances should be clearly considered in relation to the ways punishment operates on the bodies of both prisoners and officers.

performative; I am aware of more recent debates that position prisons less as 'totalising' and more as what McWatters considers 'dynamic spaces replete with temporal flows and social encounters that defy absolutist conceptions of prison as monolithic capsules of space and time' (2013: 199). The shift, in this chapter, to ethnographic accounts of contemporary women's prison in the UK is necessary in order to evoke the ways incarceration is experienced by women as simultaneously disciplinary *and* rehabilitative. The claims for this both-and formulation are borne out in the ethnographic evocation that attempts to make sense of prison through the performance residency at HMP Drake Hall.

The findings I present in this chapter are understood in relation to the frame of performance ethnography I outline in Chapter 1. This frame unravels the power assumptions that have plagued traditional ethnographic methods in which textual representation of 'others' have been widely critiqued (Fabian, 1990). Such representations maintain binaries of us/ them and inside/ outside and rely on vocabularies of authority, as outlined by Castañeda (2006: 85).

> [The] experience and interaction of fieldwork is a potentiality that corresponds not to the right then and there but to the subsequent re-constitution of information and experience as knowledge in writing, text, and representation that circulates for other audiences of readers and viewers detached from the specific time and space of the fieldwork. In many ways, the contemporary moralism of ethnographic writing (see Pels, 1999) is precisely the (im)possibility of rendering, not only ethical dilemmas but this invisibility of fieldwork, into transparency (Castañeda, 2006: 82).

Furthermore, Fabian challenges received ethnographic practices (1990: 756-757), suggesting that representations need to be understood as 'praxis'. His formulation operates to untangle the problem of 'accurate reproduction of realities' with the consequence that researchers seek to understand repetitions or re-enactments; while Minh-ha encourages reflexivity of one's own position and privilege (inflected by race, class and gender) in research (2011: 50-51). Representations are only efficacious when considered in relation to the entire cycle of performance ethnography, which incorporates original witnessing, writing, performance and audience responses. As such, the chapter presents a series of autoethnographic research diaries in

conversation with analysis. I avoid asserting a monolithic 'truth claim', but rather engage with the embodied experiences of making performance in a particular prison. My experience is partial, framed by permissions to enter, and underscored by the dynamic of the researcher as outsider. Nevertheless, the research diaries contribute to a coherent story of this project; and as such add a valuable example to prison ethnography – which tend to account for male experiences of prison life (Crowley, 2007; Leverentz, 2010; Mazzei & O'Brien, 2009; Phillips & Earle, 2010; Rhodes, 2009; Wacquant, 2002; Waldram, 2009; Weil-Davis, 2011).

Chapter 1 outlines the ways the ethnographic approach is framed by and through performance studies. This chapter attempts to provide an ethnographic insight into the everyday habitus of women in prison. The chapter analyses the processes of entering and exiting the prison and the daily rhythms of prison work, education, and 'interventions' for the women incarcerated there.[7] The main function of the chapter is to demonstrate the ways performance tactics are utilised as a means of coping (through an understanding of Goffman's 'line' and 'face' (2005)). These performances are not necessarily seen as transgressive or radical, but as tactics that amount to 'performing (for) survival'. This is understood in relation to masking past identities/ challenging background stories and the ability to develop new personae within the frame of the institution as field. In addition, the work considers how prison rules and regulations demand and reward good performance through a system of incentives and earned privileges (IEPs). The chapter returns to the understanding of carceral performance by exploring how the habitus of women is in turn circumscribed by wider discourses.[8]

Goffman's concept of 'face work' (2005) outlines an understanding of interactions that attend to the ways context scripts appropriate behaviours that he calls 'line'. 'Line' is

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[7] 'Intervention' is the prison service term for all activities that could be considered extraneous to the prison regime of education and work. All compulsory courses relating to resettlement needs, as well as psychotherapy, additional training, and extra-curricular activities are considered 'interventions'.
[8] The initial development of the notion of carceral performance is put forward in Chapter 3, in which I have positioned the spectacle of prison's operations alongside the day-to-day repetitions of an institutional habitus as a performance that is not static, but rather, culturally and politically defined. In this regard I have drawn on the work of cultural geographers such as Moran, 2012 and Moran, Gill & Conlon, 2013.

not the same as material conditions, but rather, is understood as a set of tacit understandings that operate between cultural, material, emotional and behavioural contexts. Examples could be the dispositions expected of people entering a place of worship. Such expectations are often implicit, or gleaned from close observation of others in the same place. Goffman argues that in everyday interactions, people work towards 'saving face', which means that they attempt to maintain confidence and self assurance; but when in 'the wrong face', they can feel judged or threatened (2005: 8-9).[9] 'Face-work' implies a system of obligation and interaction that can uphold the hegemonic order in the sense that subjects need to understand and mimic the 'correct' way of presenting face within certain contexts or otherwise face the shame and embarrassment of being judged.

Goffman's concept of line and face can be productive when put into conversation with Bourdieu's habitus, when habitus is understood as a transferable set of dispositions that operates on the level of everyday interactions and in a range of contexts. Each context requires analysis of what the 'line' requires, along with a repetition of behaviours and responses that maintain appropriateness in interactions. Goffman also suggests that an understanding of 'face' is also useful in relation to conflict, in which threats to 'the line' or to others' presentation of 'face' in various interactions serve as performances that destabilise the line. He calls these kinds of interaction 'corrective', stating that if individuals

> Find themselves in an established state of ritual disequilibrium or disgrace, […] an attempt must be made to re-establish a satisfactory ritual state for them […] The imagery of equilibrium is apt here because the length and intensity of the corrective effort is nicely adapted to the persistence and intensity of the threat (2005: 19).

In his analysis of 'face-work', he acknowledges that this conception of face requires a sense of agency (2005: 39) – such that the person is able to draw on a range of resources to 'save face'; which is not always possible in systems of containment that

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[9] It is important to acknowledge the importance of cultural norms and gender norms in relation to 'face' and 'line'. Goffman does not specifically deal with these issues. Nevertheless, performance tactics are explicitly modeled in and against the prevailing (hegemonic) values that are specific, yet changeable over time. Further research on difference, the multiculturalism agenda and religion would be valuable in relation to women's prisons in the UK.

denude inmates of their agency and essentially limit the repertoires available to them to pre-determined 'scripts' of good behaviour. These correlate with notions of institutionalisation, or Foucault's definitions of 'docility' (1977), whereby people are compelled by the force and insistence of the institution to conform to limited, positivist behaviours.

Thus, in relation to prisoners, we can consider face-saving as operating in multiple ways, since some prisoners would avoid compliance with 'lines' of authority – preferring instead to develop a set of dispositions that conform to another 'line' – of resistant, transgressive, or 'criminal' conduct. Yet, such lines also operate as a set of codes and learned behaviours, and as such, offer examples of how quotidian performances of self may operate as 'face-saving' rituals between and through both the institutional lines and the transgressive lines. I believe it is important to consider this theoretical perspective, although it could be critiqued for being universalising, because it provides a means of understanding the ways the field (or line) could be both upheld or undermined by a range of behaviours. Women's agency in deploying 'face' as either compliant or resistant would be understood differently by different audiences to the behaviour. For example, fellow prisoners may read certain performances of compliance such as alerting officers to contraband materials as 'selling out' or 'grassing'; while the institution would reward women who appeared to be upholding the line of good order and discipline.[10] Furthermore, line and face are also culturally expressed, and there is important research to be done in relation to the multiple possibilities cultural specificities bring to carceral institutions. At present, however, criminologists agree that minority ethnic (and foreign national) prisoners are doubly and triply marginalised due to the difficulties of translating culturally specific concepts such as line and face from the institutional norms to specific cases (see Gelsthorpe & Morris, 2002; Naffine, 1996).

The value of ethnography is in the ability of the writing to evoke the sense of places and spaces, and provide analysis of performances within those contexts. The

theoretical considerations I have outlined in this initial section are now explored through the fieldwork encounters. As such, there is a shift in the writing style – accepted practices in ethnographic fields such as criminology, feminist narrative studies and in applied theatre case studies (Beck et al 2011; Denzin, 2003; Saldaña, 2003; Mienzcakowski & Smith, 2000; Rossiter & Godderis, 2011). This means that there is, initially at least, more descriptive account of the 'place' of the investigation. In the final third of the chapter, I fold in more analytic reflections as I return to the theoretical considerations driving the research.

Ethnographic Testimonies from the Visiting Researcher
Having waited for six months for enhanced security clearance, I gained permission to conduct the project with a group recruited from all sectors of the prison. I spent three months visiting HMP Drake Hall where I conducted performance-based workshops and focus groups with 13 women with the assistance of Mary Fox, the writer in residence. As a visiting practitioner with full security clearance, I was granted my own keys, which gave me the opportunity to navigate the different areas *en route* to the 'Virtual Campus' where the workshops and focus groups were held.[11] However, I ensured that all research activities were clearly signalled as such, with women given every opportunity to refuse participation. Furthermore, I used the opportunity to engage actively with the institution (its spaces, affects, and untold stories) as I observed the daily operations of the prison on my way in and out of its fences. This approach is central to prison ethnography, as it augments the quantitative, authoritative accounts of policies from the practitioners in criminal justice, as Deborah Drake outlines in a seminal work on the pursuit of security (2012). What is of value here is the potential to incorporate observation, performance processes and ethnographic fieldnotes in the

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[10] These prison slang terms refer to the prison ethos of maintaining a distinction between 'us' (prisoners) and 'them' (officers or representatives of the institution) in their articulation of a set of codes or practices.

[11] The Virtual Campus is the name of the teaching space that includes an IT lab and a driving simulation machine. Women can book times to work on coursework and prepare for driving instruction, when equipment is operational. Deborah Drake's reflexive account of research gatekeeping (2012) retains a critical view of researchers holding keys. However, my experience as a practitioner, having encountered being locked in bathrooms, needing to rely on the good will of officers for mobility changes the dynamic of the relationship with both staff and women participants. I am aware of the extreme power, privilege and symbolic capital that holding keys suggests, and note that, in this project, keys merely served to

research methods; adding to the growing body of literature in carceral geographies that attends to the 'affective dimension of human experience' (Moran, 2013).

This growing field of investigation places importance on the interrelationship between places, experiences and responses that immediately demonstrates its confluence with central concerns in performance studies. For de Certeau, 'place' refers to those operations that make an object ultimately reducible to a fixed location; 'to the *being there* of something dead, [and to] the law of a place [… where] the law of the 'proper' rules' (1984: 117). The institution relies on being perceived as 'place' – discursively fixed in relation to its permeability, accessibility and its function to contain those within it to protect those outside. By contrast, 'space' occurs 'as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize [sic] it, and make it function in a polyvalent way. Thus, space is created by the actions of historical *subjects*' (1984: 117, emphasis in the original). In other words, there is a functional difference between space and place, in which purposive acts and performances re-map the subjectivities of both sites and subjects. The research analyses Drake Hall as the 'place' of theatre based activities; while throughout, by analysing interaction with the women in creative processes, moments of conviviality, and instances of empathetic exchange, I assert that Drake Hall transforms into a space of radical openness. One objective of the research (and the integration of ethnographic descriptive sections) is to engage with the context of prison and its place as a cultural and political trope by rendering the spaces more accessible through the writing.

The ethnographic approach that describes the specific institution of Drake Hall attempts to sketch the ways prisons operate in a generalised and routinised manner; while the account of the performance making processes within the prison is concerned with the specific, subjective and polyvalent voices that make place into space. In particular, individual resistance emerged in the research process as a tactic for making 'space' in the prison. In other words, the accepted habitus of the institution is ruptured by specific, embodied and detailed acts of resistance. This links back to Goffman's

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facilitate my own entries and exits, and did not grant me any additional authority to facilitate women's mobility. This is because there is generally freedom of movement within the regime hours.

theories of line and face by making explicit the individual 'faces' presented by the women participants in this project. This serves the purpose of presenting the daily experiences of prison in relation to the construction of prison as cultural trope.

As outlined in Chapter 2, Wacquant explains that habitus is 'the way society becomes deposited in persons in the form of lasting dispositions, or trained capacities and structured propensities to think, feel and act in determinant ways, which then guide them' (2004: 316). Habitus can be seen as the set of coded behaviours that make space for changes through improvisation; in other words, the site or field of the institution provides a fairly rigid set of scripts for behaviour of both workers and inmates, and yet we must acknowledge that the socio-political and economic context of the milieu impacts and changes the scripts. Prison is a particularly valuable site for understanding habitus because one of its institutional functions is the tutelage from one set of dispositions (criminal ones), through rehabilitative efforts, to the dispositions of 'functioning' members of society. That such agendas are contentious is evident in critical criminology, particularly since 'rehabilitation' as an outcome is rarely interrogated, and measured only by the reduction of reoffending.[12]

Repertoires: Performing Transformation

A young woman was telling me that an Enhanced Thinking Skills programme was part of her sentence plan, along with a Drugs Awareness Course. She was told she needed to undertake this training as a mandatory element of progressing through the system. Sentences in the UK reflect a tick-box culture; and when she finally managed to get access to the course, she felt that she knew exactly what they wanted to hear. She was able to ape the 'script' that others from the course had told her. Her thinking skills were indeed enhanced, but her 'transformation' was a performance. I remember being unsurprised that she had resorted to such a script. After all, as she reflected, her honest opinions were just getting her into more trouble (Research Diary, August 2012).

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[12] Of course, there are other claims regarding the purposes of incarceration: I am highlighting the most hegemonic script that purports to inform the Ministry of Justice's decision making, budget allocation and programming. Indeed, while reducing reoffending seems to be the most prominent informing principle, it also subsumes other goals in the consideration of 'what works' (such as learning and developing personal and social skills, engaging with all sociocultural institutions as prescribed by legal statutes, behaving in 'new' ways, etc.) (See McNeill et al, 2010).

Reflecting back to de Certeau's distinction between place and space, it is perhaps unsettling to conceive that the assumptions of a monolithic, stable and unambiguous institution that holds such power is, in fact, characterised by arbitrariness, chaos and dead ends.[13] The generalised nature of the systems of complaints and the unfair allocations of incentives and earned privilege were starkly evident in the women's prison. Arbitrariness in the operations of power, as Kershaw puts it, is what the panoptic system would prefer to keep hidden (1999: 138). Through repeated visits and over three months of contact with the institution's staff, I was able to witness the lack of agency that such arbitrariness perpetuates for the women, who must, in preparedness, be willing to improvise in order to gain the results they need (for example, gaining additional privileges, or accessing a particular course, or attending a specific workplace, or receiving access to legal advice). By this I mean that improvisations are not always 'truthful' but rather conducted as a means to an end.

This raises important questions about the imposed narratives the institution prescribes and calls into question the ability of prison officers and the prison as institution to handle deviant or transgressive responses. I do not believe such utilitarian behaviours are unique to prisons, but rather wish to highlight the interplay between the field as disciplinary and inevitable and the subject's agency as operating within the field. In order to maintain a balance in the institutional field, the habitus that must be practiced is an institutionalised one, as Goffman (2007) has pointed out. However, I do not believe that it is only habitus that is shaped in a unidirectional way. Rather, a collective habitus of prisoners has the potential to alter the scripts of the field by insisting on redefinition. It must be acknowledged, however, that resistance by prisoners may not be constructed as collective, or agential in relation to wider systemic oppression, and often results in petty, superficial damage to themselves (via self-harm) or to property (via destructive acts).[14] In both cases, the overarching mandate of the institution to protect the public and house prisoners with humanity means that such acts are understood in a context of reduced agency and lack of status.

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[13] See also McWatters (2013) writing about poetic testimonies of incarceration.
[14] I explore issues of resistance more directly in Chapter 6 in relation to plays by Rebecca Lenkiewicz.

Archive: Riots and Resistance

One of my prior experiences in a male prison made me think anew about how the illusion of control operates in a prison context. It was a bank holiday weekend, and I was planning to work in the category C prison for a full week to make a performance piece with a group of prisoners, when I saw a news clip that showed the prison on fire. In the wake of the Strangeways riots of the early 1990s, and the Woolf report (1991, 1996) prisons were required to implement several dramatic reforms to ensure that such destruction and violence did not have such a devastating outcome again. It is under these parameters that prisons are currently inspected by the inspectorate of prisons.[15]

I am not able to reveal too much about the reasons for the 'riot' in this prison, but I can state that the staff: prisoner ratio and the semi-open security level meant that prisoners were able to leave their cells, lift the security gates off their hinges and break into the gym, setting fire to the Offender Management Unit, and several of the wings. The destruction was widespread, and resulted in more than two-thirds of the prisoners being moved to other prisons because of uninhabitable wings. It seemed to me, at the time, that the institution had relied on its perceived power, while neglecting to admit that the failures in detailed care had led to this expensive insurrection. The riot highlighted the oversight of the roles prisoners play in maintaining the status quo in prisons; and yet, the results were that there was now more reason to implement draconian controls (Research Diary, Reflections on HMP Ashwell, October 2012).

The field was reframed by the violence and destruction of the prisoners' acts. In their collective actions, the performance of the prisoners re-casts the prison as a contingent and fragile space of negotiation and violence, rather than the fixed and monolithic institution the public expects. Yet, the disruption may have been counter productive, since we might see the material destruction as a 'victory' that rallies against power, the 'success' of the rioting prisoners' performance may have been undermined by their move, as social groups and communities were disrupted. The 'riot' had challenged the ontological assumptions of penal power, just as hunger strikes force an ontological reckoning between subject and system (Anderson, 2010). My experience of the prison riot was at first mediated by repetitive news clips that showed burning buildings; building on the moral panic (Cohen, 2002) of the Strangeways riots. As the performative presence of the spectre of the earlier riot played out on the media news, it seemed as if the impenetrable authority of the prison was easily surmounted and

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[15] The inspectorate is at present led by Nick Hardwick. See Ministry of Justice (2013a).

overturned by the angry prisoners. Indeed, there are many compelling films depicting the ways the prison operates merely by the good will of the body of prisoners, but that if they 'turn', the safety, security and integrity of the institution would be under threat.[16] Yet, in this seemingly spontaneous outburst of affect, the prisoners in fact performed to script as out of control, violent and destructive people who need to be under the surveillance and control of those that know better. Instead of revolting in a way that challenged the stereotypes, this particular prison insurrection conformed to the normative representations of the self in relation to carceral spaces. This was particularly acute as media reports alluded to the shortsightedness of prisoners setting fires to their own 'homes'. The prisoners had made themselves visible to the public eye but undercut whatever solidarity they may have hoped for with the implications of widespread destruction.

Resistance can be both directed towards institutional powers (in the case of political prisoners, for example); but it can also find expression in more embodied and personal examples.[17] Resistance can find form in the arts; when personal expression is limited or controlled by the state yet nevertheless finds innovative and unexpected means of creating and disseminating counter-narratives to those under a regime of punishment, deprivation and control. I propose that all prisoners develop a set of tactics that serve to mark their behaviours within prison within a shifting continuum of resistance-compliance. These tactics must be understood as operating within the wider socio-political construction of institutions, and not merely as personal narratives.

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[16] The tropes of the male prison riot have been explored in film from a range of contexts such as the Brazilian *Carandiru* (2003); Spanish *Cell 211* (2009); *Das Experiment* (2001) based on The Stanford Experiment. Two adaptations from memoires are *Papillon* (1973) by Henri Charrière and Billy Hayes' *Midnight Express* (1978). A British film dealing with the Northern Irish prison Hunger Strikes spearheaded by Bobby Sands is *Hunger* (2008).

[17] Chris Jenks uses the formulation of boundaries and transgression as mutually constitutive. 'Transgressive behaviour […] does not deny limits or boundaries; rather it exceeds them and thus completes them. Every rule, limit, boundary or edge carries with it its own fracture, penetration or impulse to disobey. The transgression is a component of the rule. Seen in this way excess is neither an aberration nor a luxury; it is rather a dynamic force in cultural reproduction – it prevents stagnation by breaking the rule and it ensures stability by reaffirming the rule. Transgression is not the same as disorder; it opens up chaos and reminds us of the necessity of order' (2011: 235).

Space Making in HMP Drake Hall: Locating Prison Ethnography

Important reports on the status of women in prisons in the UK by Baroness Jean Corston in 2007 and its follow-up in 2011 detail the issues and challenges of incarcerating women. Corston made several influential recommendations based on her findings, most notably, that there should be gender specific provision (2007, 2011).[18] Her most recent report shows that '68% of women are in prison for non-violent offences, compared with 47% of men' (2011: 10); and the suggestion is that this indicates a need for different kinds of punishment. Furthermore, at the time of her report, 4,208 were in prison, and made up '52% of the self-harm incidents in prison despite constituting only 5% of the total prison population' (2011: 11). The disproportionate result of self-harm may indicate that firstly, the women that are incarcerated suffer disproportionately from poor mental health prior to custodial sentences; and secondly, that the processes of incarceration affect women's mental health more severely than their male counterparts. On the other hand, if we read self-harm as a resistant performance of agency, rather than as an extension of vulnerability, then self-harm can be seen as a way of making space for personal transcendence of the limits of the body, for example.[19]

My performance and research practice was conducted in a specific prison in the female 'estate' of the UK prison service. HMP Drake Hall is a closed women's prison housing approximately 315 women and young offenders.[20] Originally, Drake Hall was a munitions factory during World War II, and as such, its groundplan is dispersed. Discrete buildings form 15 'houses' within an inner fence surrounded by administrative and workplace buildings and a perimeter fence. It began operating as a male open

[18] Ngaire Naffine (1996) demonstrates that in criminology, gender is usually assumed as male since males are the presumed subjects of criminological investigation. Women are usually referred to as victims of crime, but she argues, it is rare for gender to form a vector of investigation in research. Thus, where I use the term 'gendered' it is understood to refer to the female gender, in line with both the focus of this research and with the field of feminist criminology (Corston 2011; Dehart & Lynch, 2013; Renzetti et al, 2013; Walklate, 2012a, 2012b).
[19] Self-harm causes significant problems in prisons because the staff has a duty of care to prisoners, which requires them to minimise the risk of all harms to their safety. This is also connected to the wider remit of providing protection to the public by ensuring that prisoners are not seen by the public to have agency to perpetrate damage of any kind while incarcerated. Whilst in custody, women's bodies are considered the property of the state, and thus self-harm in the context of prison must be understood in relation to pain, embodiment and the slipperiness between agency and victimhood.
[20] 'Estate' is the collective description of the institutions within the category (separated into female/ male/ young offenders).

prison in the 1960s, but has been a women's prison since the 1970s, changing security status from open to semi-open to closed. In addition, the prison faced a significant shift in its population demographic after a foreign national prison (HMP Morton Hall) was re-categorised in 2010. Shifts in the categorisation of the prison demand a sudden and thorough re-regulation process during which time the field and its correlative habitus are re-imagined (particularly in relation to institutional differences between male and female prisons). This can be a source of stress and anxiety, as institutions (and staff in particular) struggle to implement changes from the 'way things were' to the way they are now. It is worth noting that prison officer uncertainty also tempers the operations of the prisons in a milieu of change in which redundancies, spending cuts and restraints characterise the administration of institutions. While not explicitly the focus of this research project, the performance of prison must also be understood in relation to staff agency, the interrelationship between political agendas, and wider public sentiment. These factors are bound up with problems of representations of crime and justice, and thus, I have also maintained an awareness of the wider context of the prison residency as I approach this ethnographic account.

These changes in security considerations reflect the pressures on the female estate as more prison places are needed for women considered a 'risk' to the public. Despite its classification, the operations of the prison are different from other closed women's prisons because of the architecture that inspires free movement rather than highly controlled movement. The regime reflects this almost contradictory nature; in which women are not locked behind cell doors but only the houseblocks are locked. Their movement during the regime day is free (monitored by attendance at work, appointments and education). This leads to an unsettling sensation that was described to me by one of the women participants who had moved from a closed remand prison. She described her disbelief at the flowers, the trees and the sense of horizon. She was moved and perplexed by the sense of space (Research Diary, 2 August 2012). Her description is consistent with the disorientation of institutionalised inmates described by Goffman (2007), in which the woman begins to articulate a readjustment process when certain freedoms are reinstated. While the panopticon is the enduring image of prisons put forward by Foucault (1977), the more appropriate characterisation of HMP

Drake Hall is as a carceral space. In spatial terms, it is similar to the panopticon, but it allows for freedom of movement within the constrictions of external walls and secure perimeter fences. There is thus the sensation of freedom despite incarceration.

My assessment of Drake Hall as relatively welcoming was largely due to the fact that I conducted the residency with the support of the writer in residence, Mary Fox. I am certain that her presence helped to navigate suspicions and obstructions that can otherwise hamper the progress of arts-based processes, such as participants who are forced to attend to make up numbers and thus engage in destructive behaviours, for example bullying or self-harm (see Hughes, 1998; Johnston & Hewish, 2010). Since I had experience of the tensions and pitfalls of performance-making in prisons in the UK, I had specifically sought a prison in which I knew there was already an established point of contact with whom I would be able to negotiate issues of security, gaining access to the women for participation, and resolving problems. It turned out to be a most valuable prerequisite, because of Mary's excellent track record with both prisoners and the management team. As a caveat to my largely positive experience with the participants in the research process, it is also necessary to reflect that the women participated voluntarily, and as such would have self-selected from those that felt confident enough to risk a 'theatre' activity. In other words, I did not experience the most withdrawn, depressed or mentally unwell participants because they would not be likely to volunteer for such a project.

Mary's professional methodology is similar to my own as a former writer in residence with the Writers in Prison Network (2007 – 2010). Both of us had taken the role with a wider remit than creative writing, with Mary using her professional experiences as a BBC radio journalist to devise projects such as a Drake Hall magazine and a forthcoming training DVD. She also works with a group of 'mature' women; and forms a valuable link between women and the wider institution, particularly in relation to events and opportunities for creative development. Chapter 4 details the background and current context of the arts in prison, focussing particularly on the challenges raised by the power differentials, and the potential for the arts being co-opted by the institution (Cheliotis, 2012b). Nevertheless, there are some compelling examples of

be seen as individual, specific and with particular case histories and pathways out of prison. It was this group that highlighted the difficulties of general system/specific story for me. Drake Hall was characterised by the multiple subjectivities of women in prison, their own tendencies to be self-critical, and the pervasive illusions of hope despite 'failure' looming larger.[22]

Space making is, in de Certeau's view, about situating, temporalising and opening up fissures for polyvalence. Most of the institution's operations work against this possibility, but women, through embodied and creative acts of resistance, find ways of working around the fixity of prison. These resistances are both 'positive' and generative, for example women swapping skills such as poetry writing and drawing skills, which may be acceptable to the institution. Yet, they can also be destructive or 'negative', taking the form of destruction of property, the tensions accompanying sexual relationships and bullying. 'Positive' and 'negative' would undoubtedly be understood differently by women and officers. In my experience as an observer of the everyday life of the prison, I would argue that the distinctions between positive and negative resistances are not distinct. Embodied agency is ultimately an important goal, but in the context of prison, the authority of the institution is called into question by acts of resistance; and furthermore, as the account of the 'riot' I discuss demonstrates, the negative result of destructive resistance is also that these provide justification to the institution to be more authoritarian. The unexpected, unscripted and unpredictable nature of women's resistances are improvisations that challenge the normative logic of the prison, and as such, form a valuable though ephemeral counter-narrative to the hegemonic performance of the prison itself.

Gender, Sexuality, Motherhood & Rehabilitating 'Bad Girls': Performance *of* Prison
Lynne Haney offers an important reading of the ways gendered bodies are governed in a US context. For Haney, the state's social welfare strategies perpetuate powerful

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[22] I am alluding to the findings from detailed quality of life questionnaires (see also Drake, 2012) I conducted from the core performance group. The findings indicate a veneer of hope and positivity that is not realistic in the current milieu (of cuts and economic austerity), and that, as Haney (2010) shows, may be predicated on the discursive framing of women's prisons as empowering, rather than punitive. In the thesis, I have not made specific reference to the questionnaires aside from this, since I preferred to focus on the actual 'performances' of women in prison rather than their self-reported attitudes towards their offending background and belief in the future.

'gender regimes' (2010: 8) that operate through distributions of 'rights' and responsibilities.[23] Such rights (as underscored by feminist scholarship as constitutive of social difference) extend to entitlements and protection, but are manifest in relation to social rights such as the ways divisions of labour are determined and the factors surrounding care (2010: 9). The state's gender regime is most pertinent at the level of bodily rights, whereby states 'stratify women's reproduction through the differential granting of the right to control of one's body; of protection from violence, abuse, and harassment' (2010: 9). Haney's scholarship offers a template for the critical feminist ethnographic approach modelled in this chapter. However, I have been careful to avoid mapping US-contextual concerns onto those of the UK; instead, I am influenced by Haney's articulation of gender governance.

In the subsequent section I evoke several moments from the performance-making context. Yet most of the research diary extracts do not refer to the theatrical performance alone, but extend to personal observations of the contextual everyday performances of the women in the group as well as others encountered in the prison. The four key indicators I identified are interrelated, and emerged both from feminist criminology and from the site itself (Fabian, 1990; Saldaña, 2003). They are gender/ sexuality, motherhood, locating capital and rehabilitation. These indicators all relate to personal conditions that may be real or fictive, imagined or imposed by internal or external circumstances. I evoke some of the performance tactics related to these conditions that I encountered during the residency at HMP Drake Hall.

There are many cultural tropes that perpetuate the image of 'caged heat' (Cecil, 2007); arguably drawing from the invisible status of women behind bars, resulting in partial representations of women as both worthless and violent. Mediated and cultural representations of women in prison stand in for daily encounters that would inevitably challenge stereotypical tropes, and thus, as Cecil argues, any cultural product that offers alternative stories helps to dismantle some of the inaccuracies of mainstream media (2007: 305). The entertainment media tend to portray women as 'sex-crazed' to the extent that there is a sub-genre of prison films about women in prison that rely on

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[23] Discussed further in Walsh (2011).

narratives of dominance, submission, punishment and penitence underscored by women's positions as sexual objects.[24]

So pervasive is the imagery of the prison lesbian that this has become a metonym for almost any woman in prison, since, as mentioned in Chapter 2, criminal women are stereotypically understood as masculine, unfeminine, and unruly (Smart, 1977; Faith, 2011), thereby conflating lack of adherence to the dominant performances of gender and sexuality with modes of transgression (Dirsuweit, 1999; Freedman, 1996; Rowe, 2012). Accounts of cultural tropes in women in prison genre of film and novels suggest that there is a predominance of lesbian imagery. 'Lesbians, as symbols, are disruptive and highly charged. They evoke active, autonomous female sexuality; women as sexual subjects and sexual objects – desirous and desirable to each other' (Millbank, 2004: 156).[25] However, while this present study is not directly about performances of lesbian or bisexual identities in prison, I nevertheless found an interesting perpetuation of what Adrienne Rich called a 'compulsory heterosexuality' (cited in Hart, 1994) that I read as a performance for survival.[26] In other words, even though some women in this prison (and others I have worked in the UK) were engaging in consensual (although unsanctioned) sexual activities with each other, they would almost all insist on presenting themselves as heterosexual to their wider community of friends and family. This consensual sex is distinct from sex between officers or staff and prisoners which is de-facto non-consensual. Performing according to the line of compulsory heterosexuality that prevails in the prison aids women's face-saving is a tactic for navigating the system smoothly.

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[24] Cecil cites a range of films in the genres otherwise referred to as 'babes-behind-bars' or 'vixens in chains' films, such as *Big Doll House* (1971), *Caged Heat* (1974). Television shows include Australian drama *Prisoner Cell Block H* (1979 – 1986), and, from the UK, *Bad Girls* (1999 – 2006) (Cecil, 2007: 305-306). *Bad Girls* was also staged in the West End as a musical (2007). More recently, Piper Kerman's (2010) memoir *Orange is the New Black: My Year in a Women's Prison* was filmed as a US television series (2012). Australian Channel 5 has created a prequel series to *Prisoner: Cell Block H* that develops backstories to popular characters in *Wentworth Prison* (2013).

[25] However, there have also been several examples of novels that do not re-inscribe dominant cultural codes of gender and sexuality (Hart, 1997). Millbank (2004), for example, refers to Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus* (2006) and Sarah Waters' *Affinity* (1999), both of which have been literary inspirations in my theatre practice.

[26] Hart's study of 'fatal women' (1994) in relation to lesbian performativity was formative reading. See Owen (1998: 134-148).

The semi-open structure of Drake Hall, despite its closed status, lends itself to a paradoxical sense of freedom of movement. At night, women on the houseblocks are not locked into individual cells, but only have front doors to the houses locked. This means that in practice, women are able to move between cells to continue a discussion with a friend, borrow a food or hygiene item, and in some cases, engage in sexual activities. Describing this nocturnal mobility, one of the participants in my sessions alluded to the disruption – or in her word, drama – that accompanies sexual intimacy in prison. She positioned intimacy in opposition to the functioning space of the houseblocks. In her statement, it seemed that other residents' sense of privacy was somehow threatened by the insertion of a more private space of sexual intimacy. As she recounted nocturnal rhythms of the houseblock, she (perhaps unwittingly) aped the language of the institution as she condemned the 'girls' for their lack of 'control'. Yet, if 'control' extends to desire and intimacy, then the power of the institution is paramount; and we might then characterise lesbian performance as transgressive (see Millbank, 2004). This is explicated further in Chapter 6 in which I explore Lady Celia Cain's transgressive lesbian desire in the play *Her Naked Skin* (Lenkiewicz, 2008).

Within the performance sessions, the women were asked to improvise with objects that formed materials for the final performance we shared with other prisoners and invited staff. In one session, each woman developed an improvisation with a bright blue plaster that she would 'sell' to the others as if it were anything but a plaster.[27]

> ***Performance Aesthetics: Risk, Harm, Blue Plasters***
> *Many of the routines perpetuated a sense of salvation – an item that could 'magic' away pain, fear, or trauma. But what was most surprising was the repetition of the 'ideal' woman. One woman used the plaster as a magic patch that would augment one's womanly assets to make her more desirable to men; another showed the plaster as a protective private space to which she could retreat from external harms (Research Diary, August 2012).*

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[27] This exercise is adapted from a common improvisation exercise 'this is not a bottle', as described by Boal, 2002; Johnston, 2005, 2011 and others. It is primarily about extending the visual imagination so that players and audience become aware of an augmentation of the realm of possibilities in the fictional context. The choice of objects related specifically to what I was allowed to bring into prison that provided openness for imaginative possibilities but also did not prove to be a security risk.

In performance, these selling sequences punctuated the longer scenes; reactions to the humour and familiarity of selling illusions reminded me that these pervasive understandings of women as sexual objects proliferate in prison. Yet, beneath the comedy, there was a sense of inevitability – that performing ideals demands a normative audience. In other words, the 'performance' of hyper-femininity gains prominence in the homosocial space of prison (Case & Abbitt, 2004; Millbank, 2004; Sedgwick, 1985).[28]

By means of explanation, it was especially evident that women made use of multiple grooming routines when there were family visits, but often 'let themselves go' (in the words of a participant) between visits. While interfacing with 'the public' (or anyone outside of the day-to-day prison regime), some women rose to ever more extreme performances of femininity that tended to be directed towards men, in line with my observation above. Yet, during one morning walk between the perimeter gatehouse and the workshop space, when I encountered a group of younger women walking towards their education sessions, I was the outsider, or 'the public'; and thus, I was the intended audience of infantilised, flirtatious behaviour. Without having stopped to engage with the group of women, I cannot suppose their intentions, but what I realised was that sexuality and the sexualised body become a form of currency or 'capital' in the institutional field which impoverishes women of 'positive' or affirmative attentions.

The implications of sexual intimacy for the institution are that women form close attachments within a system designed to atomise and control the ways relationships are formulated. In each prison, near the entrance, there is a graphic representation of the 'web of associations'. Officers monitor 'known associates' for signs of attachment with the implication that partners should be separated or 'ghosted' to other prisons in order to maintain good order and discipline (GOAD) (Liebling, 1999; 2004; Loucks, 2000). This crude mapping of associations offers an insight into the regime of

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[28] I am glossing Sedgwick's (1985) term here, which refers to the interplay between desire and power in relation to the ways patriarchal cultures are upheld by presumptions of social glue of homosociality. In similar ways, prison cultures are formed around perpetuations of women's labour, women's habitus and women's 'place'. This is in addition to the manifestation of (female) homosexual desire.

controlling women's desires, outlined by Haney (2010). The implication of the noticeboard is that close relationships that 'appear' to be intimate are threatening to the institution. By extension, women may come to understand the performance of hyper-sexuality threatens the stability of the prison, and it then serves as a tactic – either to divert attention from something more 'serious', or to 'test' the staff member or visitor for their understanding of prison conduct. Conscious performance tactics render gender and sexuality of extreme importance in the everyday navigation of prison spaces. This characterisation is not intended to be definitive on the nature of women's sexuality in prison, which demands further in depth study – especially since the performativity of lesbian desire in the context of prisons is so maligned and misunderstood (Dirsuweit, 1999; Freedman, 1996; Rusche & Kirchheimer, 2003; Ward & Kasserbaum, 2007). I must acknowledge the observational nature of my understanding of this aspect of prison life, since we never directly engaged the topic. Thus the 'realities' of gender and sexuality would undoubtedly be reported differently from the perspective of prisoners, officers and visitors, since they are performed towards different ends.

By contrast, women in prison that have children are also afforded a degree of capital not extended to childless women. In this section, I examine the perilous position of women who are inevitably incarcerated far away from families in their attempts to maintain the contingent bonds of motherhood.[29] Currently, the UK estate for female prisoners comprises of only 13 prisons, in which 8 have Mother and Baby Units (Vallely, 2012a). These units are designed to house up to 80 babies from birth till 9 or 18 months.[30] Motherhood poses an important set of challenges for the prison service. In the first instance, sentencing of women is meant to assess the potential impact on family life a custodial sentence would necessitate, and, as Kennedy points out, 'place the well-being and interests of children at the centre of their deliberations' (2005: 28). Custodial sentences of more than 6 months almost always imply that children will be

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[29] For a detailed exploration of the positioning of motherhood and its correlative in the prison framework as creating 'pseudo- families', see Barbara Owen's (1998) detailed ethnography *In the Mix: Struggle and Survival in a Woman's Prison*, pp. 120-130.

[30] See also PSI 54-2011 (Ministry of Justice, 2011) that indicates the legal and practical framework for compliance.

taken into care by Social Services.[31] This means that women would need to engage in a long bureaucratic struggle to re-gain parental rights upon release. The presumptions of maternal bonds are inflected in a range of ways within the prison. Mothers are expected to engage with their children, even when constant reminders of the distance and difficulties of maintaining relationships prove distressing. Some women make the choice to avoid their families while they are in prison, as an attempt to 'save face', that Rowe (2011: 576) relates to Goffman's (1963) notion of 'stigma'. I had several women explain that they would prefer their children not to see them 'like that'; and some who had not disclosed they had a sentence. The research process highlighted the pervasive role of motherhood despite often-contingent relations.

HMP Drake Hall does not contain a Mother and Baby Unit, and so all mothers in the prison remain separated from their children during their time there. The performative permanence of the maternal role is undermined by the 'disappearance' of the mothers from the lives of their children – sometimes without warning.[32] Given more time in prison, it would be interesting to observe whether there is a shift in maternal habitus over time. The lack of trust, denial of solitude and refusal of intimacy is counter to the idealised togetherness of mothers and children. However, I would also suggest there is a need to consider that motherhood is not always a 'natural' or unproblematic category, and that the over-sentimental considerations given to cards, keepsakes and letters also serves to essentialise the biological fact of motherhood in particular emotionally charged ways. Kennedy shows that 'good mothers' get credit with the courts; but goes on to highlight that 'the tests are always the same, revolving around how […] clients function as wives, daughters and mothers […] Yet, the principles applied in deciding whether or not someone is a good mother are essentially middle-class' (2005: 76). This suggests a performative intersection between perceptions of class, privilege and the ability to function in acceptable ways as a mother (Ferraro & Moe, 2003).

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[31] Kennedy says: 'Because their lack of resources makes financial penalties unsuitable, and because there are so few community programmes suited to women, female offenders end up in prison, despite the often trivial nature of their offending. Three times as many women as men go to prison for a first offence' (Kennedy, 2005: 33). This is not only the case for single mothers. Even women with partners or co-parents face social services interventions.

Whilst in prison, women with children must face a range of hurdles organising visits, which are irregular, due to the costs of getting families to travel such long distances. When they get visits, they are encouraged to interact 'normally' with their children, but must nevertheless submit to a series of humiliating rituals of searches and sanctions about what is and is not allowed. The UK has a set of mandatory family-friendly policies designed in order to safeguard children undertaking visits such as non-intrusive search techniques and play areas in prison visit halls.[33] However, these are always circumscribed by discourses of institutional security. The embodied experience of visits is stressful for the women – despite being fairly rare, there are always unrealistic expectations from children, family members and mothers about what a visit 'should be'. The performance of maternal care and the realities of being the child of a prisoner contain complex mixes of desire for intimacy, shame, pity and are surrounded by insecurities. These insecurities lead to a contingent bond of motherhood, even while the role of 'mother' is all-pervasive.

Rethinking Custody: The 'Failed Mother'

One woman in my group – Suzy – presented herself cheerfully at every session, although one morning she was clearly distressed. She arrived early and shifted chairs to make a circle. She explained that she was a foreign national prisoner and she had spoken to her son on the telephone. He had disclosed a personal problem that she felt unable to deal with from such a distance. She used all her telephone credit to talk to him, but she felt anxious that he needed help she was unable to provide.[34] It took her a week to get a meeting with the person that would be able to help her contact her embassy to make a social services intervention. This outcome meant that despite knowing that her sentence would be over soon, that she faced deportation back to her home country, and that she would then have to begin the process of acquiring visitation rights in a custody battle with the

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[32] I am alluding to the permanence of the biological role of mothers and fathers despite the material circumstances (chosen or accidental) that may interrupt this relationship.

[33] There are a range of Voluntary Sector Organisations working on family-friendly policies, such as Babies in Prison, Action for Prisoners' Families and PACT. Action for Prisoners' Families has developed a set of toolkits for evaluating good practice in visit centres.

[34] The prison service charges a premium for telephone calls. Prisoners are able to use their wages to purchase prepaid telephone cards and are allowed to make phone calls to certain screened numbers at specific times of day. This can be difficult for foreign national prisoners who may face additional costs for connections abroad as well as being charged for faulty connections. An article reporting on an Ofcom report on telephone costs states that in England 'the Prison Service receives a 7% commission on calls made by prisoners' and that '2007/8 the revenue generated by call charges across all publicly - managed prisons in England and Wales was more than £10 million' (Roberts, 2008).

state. Her decision was played out with the group in coffee breaks as she tried to argue for the best interests of her child, with the awareness of her own complicity in his current problem. She felt like a 'failed mother', she claimed, even though her son was 'the world to her'. (Research Diary, August 2012).

The women in the group were quick to comfort Suzy and assure her that she was a good mother. The processes of problem solving relied on her tenacity and willingness to spend her wages on phone calls rather than food. In this vignette, the operations of bureaucratic obfuscation and the reminder of distance and removals were evident; although it was also clear that every woman faces similar anxieties about families breaking up, housing allocations being rescinded and partnerships dissolving (Carlen, 1983, 2002; Heidensohn, 2012; Naffine, 1987; Smart, 1977). Kennedy states that for both men and women,

> separation from the family is the worst aspect of imprisonment, but for women the guilt of failing their children exacts a special burden. Their offence is seen as being against more than the criminal law, and that is how they […] feel it (2005: 84).

This woman's tactics were to prioritise her longer-term role of caregiver for her son rather than subsume to the temporary role of 'prisoner'. There was, however, slippage between the two roles: Suzy presented herself as a model prisoner (engaging other women, a peer mentor, working with foreign national women), and when it was necessary to 'perform' to her role as mother, even at a distance, she attempted whatever she could to make contact and continue to care for her child.

Throughout the fieldwork, the prison service 'seven pathways to reducing re-offending' were plastered on posters throughout the hallways and peppered the language of officers and other support staff. There is a wholesale belief that if programming 'hits' the pathways, and if efficacy can be proven in terms of a reduction of the numbers of women recidivists, that prison has 'worked'. In other words, the institution ostensibly supports any programme that can be seen to contribute to this exceedingly complex project. It was evident in conversations that women had also internalised some of the narratives relating to 'rehabilitation'. Indeed, focus group discussions suggested that most of the participants in the group felt positive for the

future, and prepared for release. I became wary when I realised that I was hearing the same language about 'assertiveness' and 'drug awareness' that prevails in the short obligatory courses women must complete for their sentences plans. Women were repeating a script they have been taught to believe about preparing for their future.

Stan Cohen has said the main function of rehabilitation programmes is to serve as 'good stories' that

> stand for or signify what the system likes to think it is doing, justify or rationalise what it has already done, and indicate what it would like to be doing (if only given the chance and the resources) (1985, cited in Cheliotis, 2012b: 33-34).

Cohen's statement demonstrates the importance of 'good stories' for perpetuating the controls of the criminal justice system. Yet, it is alarming that women's self-reporting of confidence, trust and bonds with community is less inflected with their own individual circumstances, and instead complies with institutional norms and values. The carceral norm is to set women up with unstable imaginaries about what life after prison is like. Rather than operating as joined up systems that would support women's training, development and mental health needs in specific and localised ways, the prison service's subservience to 'payment by results' is hollow, and foreshadowed by the neoliberal margins of profit and growth.[35]

Carceral Performances: Performing (for) Survival
What remains is a reflexive account of the ways my own fieldwork 'intervention' played into this set of values. As I outline in Chapter 4, the arts often presume a benevolent gloss that is not critically interrogated. Cheliotis says

> The greatest irony of all is that […] symbolic effects have grave material consequences for the supposed recipients of state and middle-class benevolence, insofar as they work to legitimate offenders' past and ongoing repression by way of penal institutionalisation (2012b: 34).

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[35] This is one of the primary critiques of the prison industrial complex (See Ahrens, 2008; Bliss et al, 2009; Wacquant 2002; 2010b), in which profit is made on the basis of growing industry whose interests are served by maintaining or increasing the numbers of prisoners in institutions, rather than diminishing reoffending through effective rehabilitation programmes.

I must acknowledge a limitation of this research that is related to one of its strengths I outline earlier in this chapter. The support and framing of this project in partnership with the writer in residence meant that the women recruited were drawn from those that participated in the 'cultural' life of the prison. My experience in this prison was different from other shorter projects, in which I also worked alongside women less able to articulate emotions, less willing to engage in groupwork, and less likely to participate in any creative tasks that challenged their 'face'. By contrast, HMP Drake Hall provided a participant group that presented a range of prison-related 'performances', including some bureaucratic interference, confusion relating to timetables, participants' fatigue, my own fatigue from the long journey, as well as the women's personal and evolving narratives of survival in the prison. I did not, however, need to confront the problems of highly medicated participants, or those with severe mental health problems; nor did I have to stage-manage a response to self-harm or bullying within the sessions. This is not to say that these repertoires would not have played out had I been in the prison for a longer time.

The performance making process in prison was defined by all the predictable and unpredictable obstacles that characterise research in prisons (Liebling, 1999; Miles & Clark, 2006). Moran outlines the challenges in prison research in relation to ethical concerns, methodological challenges and the inevitably unequal power relationships between prisoners and visiting researchers (2013: 184). Liebling goes on to demonstrate that prisoners tend to wear a 'mask' to conceal their 'true selves' in the intense atmosphere of the prison (Liebling, 2004: 306, 353). This is usually related to the sense that research perpetuates the measurement and enacts the punitive functions of institutions by scribing subjects as 'problems'. Prisoners rarely have cause to believe that research will benefit them directly (Waldram, 2009). Yet this is also the benefit of working through arts-based research methods, since while institutional suspicion about the arts results in fewer activities being sanctioned (Cheliotis 2012b) prisoners' experiences of the arts are that they generally allow for more direct engagement with representing their perspectives (Caulfield & Wilson, 2010). This project was also circumscribed by the fears and anxieties that accompany arts based interventions in criminal justice settings – in particular, worries about security

awareness, as well as general mistrust of affect in institutional spaces (Arts Alliance, 2011; Balfour, 2004, 2009; Peaker & Vincent, 1990; Peaker & Johnston, 2007). The prison-based practice afforded me the opportunity to test my hypothesis about quotidian performances in the carceral landscape. I have reflected on my own entry and exit into the prison as one kind of performance; and noted the values and ethical tensions inherent in the freedom of mobility to enter and exit. Yet, it is worth reflecting more deeply on the notion of 'putting on a face', since this was a lynchpin of the performance and research process.

> ### *Putting on a Face: Group Tactics*
> *The performance developed around the rituals characters found to 'put on a brave face'. The women constructed a series of short scenes in pairs where they embodied a range of rituals women employ in order to, in the words of one participant, 'focus and go on with the sentence' and also tactics to 'keep from thinking of self-harm' (Interview participant Julie, August 2012). In our conversation, Julie mentioned several of the concerns that feminist criminology raises, namely that prison is a set of reports and sentences that can in no way capture the chaos and confusion of women's lives. There is enormous pressure on women to 'put their heads down' and 'get on with it'. Yet, the statistics relating to mental health show that there are complex considerations related to the ways women manage both pre-existing mental health issues alongside the stresses of surviving the prison system itself.[36] (Research Diary, September 2012).*

It is perhaps worth noting that the performance we developed was not framed inside the prison. The women decided they preferred to play 'outside'; so the characters were not 'prisoners', even though many of the scenes touched directly on issues the audience later reflected happened inside prison. An example was a scene developed by the two youngest group members, Suraya and Kenya, in which one woman comforted another and tried to help motivate her to cope with a friend who was bullying her. The women explored how collaboration and affirmation from others can

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[36] The charity Women in Prison highlights the following critical statistics in relation to mental health: Women account for 47% of all incidents of self-harm. 30% of women (as compared to 10% of men) have had a previous psychiatric admission before they come into prison. Of all the women who are sent to prison, 37% say they have attempted suicide at some time in their life. 51% have severe and enduring mental illness, 47% a major depressive disorder, 6% psychosis and 3% schizophrenia. 83% of women in prison stated that they had long-standing illness, compared with 32% of the general female population. 73% were on medication on arrival at prison – mainly benzodiazepines (42%), methadone (36%), antidepressants (14%), and sleeping pills (10%). Women prisoners are subject to higher rates of disciplinary proceedings than men. According to the Ministry of Justice, 'women may be less able (due for example to mental health issues) to conform to prison rules' (Women In Prison, 2013b).

serve as 'survival' tactics. In other words, creating a community of belonging that is stronger than the perceived threat of outsiders. The scene was clearly a struggle for the youngest woman, and the final performance repeated the theme of their scene when she became exceedingly nervous and was unable to remember the transition scene out of her 'bullying scene'. The other cast members tried to motivate her, and ultimately worked through collaboration to re-work the transition as an ensemble rather than allow Suraya to feel exposed.

The second vignette from the performance that I will highlight was about Jean, the oldest member of the group, who took on the satirical role of a psychoanalyst she chose to name 'Dr Schadenfreude'.

> ***Putting on a Face: Personal Space and Survival Tactics***
> *Her scene asked the audience to witness the ways a professional therapist also needs an emotional and professional 'face' to cope with the stories of suffering, anxiety and pain she hears. Afterwards, Jean reflected that she had been dwelling on the theme of 'putting on a face'. She was a 'lifer', and had already served more than 8 years, and as such, was due to be re-categorised to a lower category of prison to serve part of her sentence as part of re-integration programming. Through the process of thinking about her own strategies for coping she had realised that she needed her 'space'. She spoke movingly about her morning rituals of silence, contemplation and preparation for dealing with prison life, and reflected that she would not get this in a category-D prison, where women are housed in dormitories. She was, at the same time, aware of her tactics and anxious that these would not be available to her. She ended her reflection by asking the group whether she should decline the option to 'move down', and instead stay in the closed prison, further away from her family, and possibly risk having to serve a longer sentence for refusal to comply. (Research Diary, August 2012).*

Both of these examples reflect the tension between the women as legible – inscribed by predetermined sentences that do not appear to have any flexibility for interpretation. The agency they demonstrated in thinking, through improvisation and mutual collaboration points towards the importance of engaging in specific, personal narratives of personal development and progression routes. The women's tactics that are evoked here demonstrate the capacity for performance methodologies to go

beyond legibility, and to begin constructing spaces in which personal agency is adopted and rehearsed, in however discrete a project.[37]

Concluding Remarks

How then, does HMP Drake Hall, and this account of performance making, contribute to a wider understanding of carceral performance?[38] I am concerned with examples that point towards wider performances in which the embodied experience of prison can be considered as a series of tactics, a constructed series of performed acts both institutionally 'sanctioned' by the state and prison systems, and a 'space' for resistant or transgressive performance by prisoners. These tactics are played in a complex paradigm, the potential aesthetic rubric of which has been evoked by the vignettes I present here. The underlying argument I put forward is one that can not perhaps be resolved in a single project, but that was distressing in its simplicity: why can prison not function on an individual, local and grounded way through witnessing the real lived experiences of women; and in response, design an appropriate course of action? My question, borne of frustration for the thwarted desire of Suzy to be a good mother, of Jean who wanted her privacy, and of Suraya who sought collegial collaboration to bolster her confidence. Although my experience was positive on the whole, I was left angry at the flattening of personal stories into a series of 'warnings' or 'statements'. On this point, I am aware that my own research draws on statistics to demonstrate the extent of the system's 'line'; yet I have also attended to the affect of embodied stories of navigating and coping that I encountered in the field.

The chapter has offered examples of the ways performance tactics may be used both in order to maintain the institutional line and to subvert it through transgressive or non-conforming practices. My description of women's performances suggests that many such tactics draw upon well-worn tropes of gender and Goffman's 'presentation' of the self; and as such, my exploration of the carceral subjectivities aims to draw attention to the ways gender functions as a performance. In addition, some of the

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[37] I have mentioned the wider problem in the field of arts in prisons for grand claims of 'transformation'. What is necessary, from this research, is the explication of the value(s) of performance, agency and resilience in navigating the institution.

[38] I am indebted to Moran (2012) for her theorisation of carceral geographies.

examples I have highlighted point towards the operations of time/space for the women.

The performances *of* prison are always already framed by us/them; inside/outside; public/private dyads. Several of the examples I foreground demonstrate the necessity for reflexivity about what counts as 'performance', and indeed how consciously performance tactics are deployed as a means of reacting to - or against - the patriarchal oppressions of the criminal justice system. The account does not valourise these performances as revolutionary, or entirely transgressive; nor does it aim to present an account of the performance process as 'transformative'. Rather, it sheds light on the everyday existing performances that help women encounter, and not entirely submit to, the institution. Dominant ideologies of 'bad girls', and the narrow spectrum of essentialised characteristics of motherhood, gender and sexuality are scrutinised in this ethnographic account.

Departing from this specific, located account, the next chapter returns to theatrical representations of women in prison, specifically in order to trouble the limitations inherent in staging prisons. This offers a means of crystallising the argument by engaging a reading of performance about prison against the practices from HMP Drake Hall.

CHAPTER SIX: STAGING PRISONS: VICTIM-SURVIVOR-HERO IN CONTEMPORARY PERFORMANCE

Introduction

The close analysis of examples of face-saving and a resistant habitus in HMP Drake Hall in Chapter 5 considers how prisoners' choices of everyday performance are rendered in relation to gender and the institution. From the presentation of self of women prisoners, I turn now to representations of women in prison. This chapter provides a critical perspective on contemporary plays by women writers staged in the last six years (2008 - 2013). The analysis of several plays queries the stability or fixity of female prisoners' subjectivities by unpacking the ways realism as a dramaturgical choice operates to uphold hegemonic positions – which I have shown in Chapter 3 are in part spatially determined in carceral locations. This chapter shifts from the prior chapters' empirical investigation into performances *of* and *in* prison, in order to provide an important triangulation in the argument by scrutinising plays that represent women in prison.

If we accept that prisons are performative and if we read operations of criminal justice as *merely* 'theatrical', then some of the political implications of incarcerated bodies are erased. Sophie Nield critiques the ways resistance or oppositions are called 'theatrical' since this serves to undermine their legitimacy or the claim to the 'real' (2006b: 54). In other words, prison-as-performance presents a foreclosed morality that accepts the operations of power that incarcerates 'deviants'. The research thus demands an exploration of the means by which these operations of power are understood through representation. By turning here to the representations of prison (and women in prison) in plays, and the promotion of specific theatrical tropes, we can better understand the ways dramaturgical structures maintain (or indeed, subvert) dominant views. In this light, I draw on Jill Dolan's work on lesbian positions in realism (1990). She explores the ways realism promotes 'readability' or legibility in the terms of the presumed patriarchal (heterosexual) audience (1990: 43– 45). For Dolan, 'lesbians disappear under the liberal humanist insistence that they are just like everyone else. Difference is effectively elided by readability' (1990: 44). In much the same way, the apparently humanist positioning of women in prison as just like everyone else, the

specificity of women's backstories is erased. By adhering to the constructions of female prisoners as holding binary positions of either 'monsters' or 'victims' of the system, plays can re-inscribe morally unitary approaches to women's deviance and resistance. Many plays about women in prison hold a claim for resisting stereotypes and in opposition to the injustice of criminal justice processes in the UK, and yet, in the realist mode, the monster/ victim position seems to be an inescapable binary. I will explore, through a close reading of several key play texts, the limitations of the dramaturgies of the cell.

(En)gendering Habitus: Women, Prison, Resistance[1]

In this sub-section, I examine contemporary performances about women in prison that have foregrounded gendered behaviours in relation to the institution. In the context of women's prison, a resistant (gendered) habitus works against the notion that Foucault's 'docile bodies' lack agency by showing that agency may result from - and be inscribed by - traumatic past experiences such as abuse, violence, or incest. Such agency might disrupt the institutional discourse through expressions of resistance such as hunger strikes, dirty protest, destruction of property, or insurrection. Indeed, a gendered habitus becomes a means of women asserting agency in terms they define for themselves. This section extends the foundational work on habitus in Chapter 2, explicitly seeking to explore habitus in relation to gender. Bourdieu's concept of habitus has incited both critique and re-appropriation by feminists. On one side of the argument, in the relationship between habitus and field, according to Judith Butler, habitus encounters the field, and submits, dominated by the compelling objectivity and authority of the field (Butler, 1999). On the other hand, feminists have found value in re-working and even, in Toril Moi's words, 're-appropriating' Bourdieu's social theories to the purposes of feminist agendas (Moi, 1991).[2] The argument here is to what extent contemporary performances about women in prison elucidate the operations of a resistant habitus.

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[1] It expands upon and furthers the arguments put forward in Chapter 2 regarding habitus. Extracts from this section have been published in *Contemporary Theatre Review* in slightly different form (Walsh, 2014).

[2] Also see Adkins, 2004.

Gender as a social construction is inscribed by differing contexts, Moi argues (1991); and in the context of women's prisons, prisoners' habitus is (en)gendered by the roles, rituals and rules of the institution, whose function is characterised as 'correctional'. I explore habitus by analysing two 'types' of prisoner that appear in contemporary plays by Rebecca Lenkiewicz; namely, politically active women who are deemed transgressive of social norms and women judged of criminal offences. In *Her Naked Skin* (National Theatre, 2008), Lenkiewicz focuses on the suffragette movement, in which the principal characters identify as feminists, and are imprisoned in HMP Holloway for actions resulting from their personal/political beliefs. *An Almost Unnameable Lust* (Clean Break/ Soho Theatre, 2010) identifies two 'ordinary' women in an unnamed UK prison, both of whom are serving life sentences: one has murdered her abusive husband; the other hints at long term sexual abuse from her father, but her crime is not explicitly referenced. I am not trying to claim that all women in prisons are victims and therefore blameless (clearly, arguments about how crime and justice are performed are wide-ranging). Rather, these two examples provide ways of exploring how women's habitus is informed and delimited by prison as an extension of patriarchal hegemonic structures of society in general.

The two plays by Lenkiewicz can provide a means of exploring the notion of habitus in different ways. In the first example, Suffragettes in Edwardian England draw upon what I call a 'transgressive habitus' – their political suffrage determines and motivates their resistant behaviours in prison. In the second example, prisoners serving a life sentence rupture the smooth operation of a prison writing workshop (itself a micro-field intended to operate on different terms and rules from its frame of the institution). Yet in doing so, they return inevitably to their docile subjectivities as always already foreclosed by the prison, and by their past experiences as vulnerable women. I call this model 'institutionalised habitus'. Bourdieu developed the argument for habitus out of a frustration with the theories of social science to deal with mechanisms, 'structure', and the limits of 'agency'. Harnessing his conception of habitus for feminist analysis becomes an important tool for examining how gender itself functions as a set of durable 'dispositions, habits and ways of being that orientate

people in and out of structures' (1990: 56).[3] At the level of applying the theory, as Lovell states, habitus 'may provide a powerful conceptual antidote to postmodern voluntaristic politics, insofar as it permits us to focus on the social conditions of existence of resistance' (2000: 18).

Lenkiewicz' plays offer instances of the ways in which gender and prison habitus are performed as these plays stage female criminal bodies resisting docility. The positioning of these two examples within both mainstream theatre and the fringe may provoke further questions about what stories are told and under what circumstances. In particular, analysed alongside one another, the plays raise questions about the ongoing marginalisation of incarcerated women, hinting at insidious programmatic 'cures' for deviance; not always as violent as forcible feeding, but nevertheless with the aim of putting unruly women 'right'. Engendering habitus becomes a means of framing women's performances of transgression and resistance of domestication. Thus, the argument seeks to add to the exploration of feminist strategies in performance writing, in relation to how characters are afforded a wider spectrum of characterisation that are not limited to binaries but reflect complexities of female subjectivity (Aston, 2003; 2006). The two plays by Lenkiewicz attempt to stage prisons by engaging with stories of resistance and desire and explore oppressions within (and beyond) their walls.

This chapter furthers the argument begun in Chapters 3 and 4, in which I suggest that it is possible, through examining everyday performances and the habitus of incarcerated populations, to witness the subjective agency of prisoners as manifesting prisons as sites of openness and possibility, and not merely as sites of containment. I believe some of this 'space-making' happens in transgressive or resistant acts such as 'dirty protests', hunger strikes, riots and rebellions, and sexual transgressions (Anderson, 2010; Heritage, 1998). A recent promenade performance created by Mark Storor and Artangel, *a tender subject* (2012) highlighted the disruption between prison's limitations and the possibilities for human connection. The performance engaged audiences as witnesses of moments of tenderness between men (officers and

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[3] Also see McNay, 1994.

prisoners) in prison.[4] This brief gloss of a contemporary performance demonstrates the potential of experimental forms to edge towards the politically urgent task of developing wider aesthetic and ethical responses to incarceration. The majority of this chapter, however, develops a critical response to realist plays written and performed in the last six years in the UK.

'I try not to let my steps become smaller':[5] Women's Performances of Resistance in Contemporary Plays about Prison

Her Naked Skin was critically acclaimed for being the first production by a female playwright to be performed on the Olivier Stage at the National Theatre.[6] Its plot centres on Lady Celia Cain, a suffragette whose social position and marriage are called into question by her 'unruly' actions (demonstrations, window-breaking and public campaigns) that result in several bouts of imprisonment in Holloway. These political themes form an uneven backdrop to an erotic affair she develops with a younger seamstress whilst in prison. Some critics disparaged the play for subsuming the political urgency of universal suffrage within a lesbian love story.[7] While certainly a compelling and important feature of the play, the lesbian plot does not feature in my analysis of 'transgressive habitus'. However, both lovers transgress a range of norms by becoming intimate; Celia by having an affair with a woman; and both for transgressing the sisterhood of the Suffragettes for alternative erotic ends. The lesbian plot line deserves additional attention, and could be usefully modeled as 'transgressive habitus' – as suggested in Chapter 5.

I propose that the lesbian plot line distracts from the political and social concerns relating to incarceration of 'unruly women'. Instead, in this chapter, I focus on scenes of incarceration, particularly those which demonstrate Celia's class and the privileges and political sophistication she holds alongside scenes with Florence Boorman, an older suffragette who testifies to forcible feeding and regular humiliation by prison

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[4] Storor's *a tender subject* was performed in a secret location in March 2012. See Walsh, A. 2012a.
[5] This line is delivered by Katherine in *An Almost Unnameable Lust* (2010, scene 8: p. 126). Subsequent references to the play are given in parentheses.
[6] While Lenkiewicz wrote the first original play to be staged there, this claim was inaccurate, since *Coram Boy* (2005) was adapted by Helen Edmundson. For critical responses to Lenkiewicz, see Cavendish (2008) and Kellaway (2008).

officers and medical staff. The visceral force-feeding scenes of Celia's lover, Eve, resulted in several audience members at each performance leaving in disgust.[8] The spectacle of women's embodied humiliation is shocking, but for critic Viv Groskop (2008), the device is devoid of political efficacy because we empathise with the young (innocent) lover of the protagonist. In other words, Groskop highlights the limitations of the realist mode in this scene, in which the violence of the force-feeding simply positions Eve as a victim – and the audience as witness to her suffering.

If the purpose of habitus is 'to examine under what conditions these dispositions are socially constituted, effectively triggered, and rendered politically efficient' (Wacquant & Bourdieu, 1992: 81), then it is clear that for these characters, the transferable 'habitus' afforded by their class and social standing means the women are able to articulate themselves in the face of trauma. In the first representation of HMP Holloway (2008: 9-14), we see many women who participated in window-smashing protests lining up to be 'processed'. It is clear that some of them have experienced incarceration in previous campaigns. They know their rights and present their politics before their personal status.

Potter:	Name.
Florence:	Florence Dorothy Mary Boorman.
Potter:	Occupation.
Florence:	Suffragist.
Potter:	Occupation, Miss Boorman, not offence.
Florence:	Suffragist. Suffragette. Womanist. Woman. That's what I'm occupied with at the present moment in time and have been for the past sixty years.
Potter:	Employment.
Florence:	Suffragette. Sentence seven months.
Potter:	Can't get enough of it, can you? (2008: 9-10).

Florence Boorman's articulate, rehearsed position serves to motivate the women lining up behind her. By contrast, the working class women who have also been arrested are shown to be docile, meek and inarticulate. Yet, those who have been arrested as Suffragettes (largely machinists in the textile industries) are also granted a 'capital' that

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[7] See for example, Groskop (2008).
[8] See Groskop (2008).

other 'criminal women' do not have. Indeed, Boorman reinforces the distinctions between those Suffragettes whose protests have been criminalised and others.

> Florence: Which division are you putting us in?
> Potter: Second.
> Florence: We are politicals. Not thieves or child-killers. We should be placed in first (2008: 10).

It is surprising that the play does not explore the political dimensions of women's criminality of the time inscribed then, as now, by class. Instead, the 'child-killers' remain offensive to society without adequate reflection that their crimes often resulted from crimes committed against them, and are inevitably related to class deprivation. For example, Eve – Celia's working class lover – tells her of a young woman who smothered her child conceived after her rape by her employer (2008: 36). Neither Celia nor Florence ever question or expose the mechanisms of capital from which they continue to benefit. Rather, Florence's forthright demands emerge from a wider conviction of herself as a representative member of the group of women she identifies with which is set against a view of 'criminal' women. Her on-going resistance to institutionalisation is upheld by the political aims for equal representation to which she is committed. In other words, her agency is expressed in relation to the socio-political sphere in which women were not accorded equal liberties.

> Potter: (*indicating his form*) Criminal damage. See.
> Florence: [...] If you insist on putting us in second, you'd better arrange for the prison glazier now. We will immediately proceed to break our windows. It is our legal right to be in first. Visitors we should have, pens, paper. Associated labour. Permitted access to other cells (2008: 10).

In this exchange, the prison is merely an extension of the world in which she, and all women, are discriminated against. Answering officer Briggs' taunt that she is locked up, her response is 'the walls are incidental' (p. 66). By contrast, as I demonstrate in the next section, Lenkiewicz' contemporary representation of women in prison demonstrates walls as more than physical constraints - as barriers to trust, creativity and imagination. Here, however, the claim that prison walls are rendered meaningless

in light of the political struggle for suffrage places the women's struggle for representation at the centre of the play's argument.

In Act 2, scene 3, for example, we see Florence in her cell in Holloway, being visited by the prison doctor, Vale. She says 'I know who you are. How many unwilling mouths did you feed today?' (2008: 53). He has come to appeal to Florence to exert some influence on other women undertaking hunger strikes, in an attempt to cease the strike. His motives appear to be concern for their health (and future reproductive capacity) but are underscored by growing political pressure. Florence's steadfast convictions are not altered by the expert opinion of the doctor. He asks Florence how her mouth is. Her reply foregrounds her political fervour over the bodily harm she has faced at the hands of prison medics.

Florence:	I can speak. That's all that matters to me.
Vale:	You lost three teeth. The last time you underwent forcible feeding.
Florence:	I did not lose them, sir. They were not mislaid. They were smashed. By the steel gag that they used to force my mouth open (2008: 54).

Florence presents evidence of her bodily harm while maintaining respectful terms of address for the doctor. The practice of engaging politely with men (transferred from her social class outside of prison) is at odds with her dogmatic determination to resist. Anger, desire and fury are distorted by the lens of history. Lenkiewicz offers a genteel version of resistance, in which bodies (predominantly of working class women) are damaged, but not irreparably. What is foregrounded is the potential of political activism, and by extension, resistance in prison as what inevitably marks women's reputations in perpetuity. Celia is not able to return to her family, despite a forgiving husband. She remains in service of resistance. As an upper class woman, drawing on a larger spectrum of 'capitals' than afforded to her suffragette comrades of the working class, she demonstrates a certain degree of agency.

We might see the critical responses to *Her Naked Skin* centring on concerns of authenticity. Groskop (2008) wonders whether it is possible to imagine a lesbian love affair being authentic for the Suffragettes, while Cavendish (2008) praises the

authenticity of the archival footage of Emily Davison being trampled by a horse at the Epsom Derby. However, a claim of authenticity neglects the political efficacy of aesthetic framing. Rather, in order to engage with concerns related to 'corrections' of women, Lenkiewicz focuses on the personal character-driven plot of Celia's transformation from respectable society wife and mother to an irresponsible adulteress. The personal narrative points towards the transformative choices made by politically active women in order to resist domestication. Incarceration, as shown by Boorman, is incidental and inevitable. In the struggle for agency, women would always and inevitably challenge their pre-determined habitus. Lenkiewicz' choice to stage Suffragette stories of embodied resistance in scenes of punishment in relation to tenderness invites audiences to encounter pain and pleasure bound together through questioning women's agency. The frame of historical social movement demonstrates the suffragette's habitus is resistant to the patriarchal system they sought to question. The critical reception of the performance highlights a divide between those critics who felt the staging lacked political drive in favour of personal stories (such as Groskop, 2008) and those who were satisfied with the staging of suffragette stories as political in itself (such as Cavendish, 2008).

As I reflect on the dramaturgical structures of the plays it seems any staging of resistance within a normative frame allows for the hegemonic patriarchal order to be maintained. The production at the National Theatre directed by Howard Davies did not deviate from 'social realism', in which the protagonists, despite being female, are nevertheless framed by male perspectives on the place of women. Celia's husband, for example, is portrayed as an emasculated, yet supportive, husband, whose identity as head of the family is challenged due to his wife's activism. What is more, his disintegration in public life mirrors the failure of his marriage, and we are asked to pity him. The lesbian love story, framed as all consuming, allows Celia's characterisation to be limited by her sexual profligacy. Both thematically, and in theatrical realisation of space, the women's domain remains the home, and the maintenance of family the priority. For Suffragette women, radical fervour is momentary, while their gender is an unfolding set of durable dispositions that define and limit women's performance trajectories.

These theatrical representations of resistance from a historical perspective provide important considerations for the ways we might examine the durable dispositions of women in prison in contemporary times. Some of the wider questions raised are: who has judged those dispositions to be deviant? In what ways do these dispositions enable the women to 'survive' their punishment? And how does the play depict these examples of resistant habitus? Both plays by Lenkiewicz position the women in prison as inscribed a set of meanings by those outside. The Suffragettes are pilloried for their agential choice of hunger striking as a means of protest; while the contemporary women in prison demonstrate the chasm between public perceptions of criminals and their rich interior lives.

Lenkiewicz' *An Almost Unnameable Lust* is one of the one-act works included in Clean Break Theatre Company's *Charged* season at the Soho Theatre in 2010, and remounted in *Re-Charged* in 2011. The play, set in a present-day women's prison, explores the tensions of a prison writing workshop in which a Writer conducts a series of creative writing workshops with a group of women in order to gather material for her new book. Lenkiewicz evokes a motley collection of women, including a 'people pleaser' and a 'junkie' (2010: 128), but the group is represented on stage by just two characters – Liz and Katherine – both serving life sentences. Liz is a woman in her forties who reveals fairly early on that she killed her husband after years of abuse. Her friend, Katherine is an older woman who does not speak in public, only making bird-like sounds. Lenkiewicz shifts focus between the cringe-worthy writing workshops which point towards the deadening of the women's emotional registers, and the two women's cells, marked out in tape on the floor to represent standard cells. Liz and Katherine inhabit their cells by reaching back through time, engaging in narrating a complex interplay of past/present, memory/ desire by evoking other, richer landscapes outside of prison. In this imagined context of the cell as memory-container, Katherine is able to speak in these scenes, drawing metaphors from her childhood to reflect on the Writer's tasks.

The Writer – the unnamed witness – tries to engage women serving life sentences in creative writing exercises that do little for her participants, but do expose her own naivety. She seems keen to gather 'authentic' accounts from the women, whose responses in the group demonstrate years of being silenced, neediness, explosive tempers and back stories the Writer can only blindly grope towards understanding. She is also ill equipped for the women's articulations of their time in prison.

Writer:	Do any of you feel you've benefited from prison in any way?... No. But Gina, you said you felt it had given you time.
Liz: (*to Gina*)	You'll say anything you think the other person wants to hear… Yes you will. And then you say stuff about us. Which isn't true.
Writer:	Okay… Let's go back to this idea of time. Lou, you said that you felt prison had sort of punctuated your life.
Liz:	Yeah. Given it a big fucking major fucking full stop.
Writer:	You think it's a mad idea, Liz? That prison might give some women just time on their own. To break patterns. Aisha?
Liz:	And start new ones. Like drug dependency. Clinical depression, Self-harm. Smoking. You can't get through prison without fags. You just can't.
Writer:	I suppose it's comfort, yeah?
Liz:	No. You're not listening to me. It's not comfort. It's necessity (2010: 127).

The Writer gestures towards the tutelage model of incarceration. Her approach in the workshops tainted by smug righteousness as her process seeks to justify the harms of prison: that prisoners will be able to learn new ways of being in the world through time to reflect. Liz, who is a prototype of the 'resistant prisoner', explodes in one session, telling gripping examples of how isolation wears away at the women, and the Writer is unable to respond. Lenkiewicz' short scenes show Liz respond to probing questions, revealing shocking grimy incidents of what the women in the group have suffered. These uncomfortable scenes explode in bursts of fury, punctuated by imagined contributions from offstage characters. The Writer, as witness, does not speak. She has encountered the unspeakable in a direct encounter. The argument emerging here reflects the position of trauma theories in relation to representations of experiences, as discussed in Chapter 4. The workshop scenes are interspersed with scenes of Liz and Katherine alone in their cells. Katherine's monologues are poetic

accounts of time in nature as a child; and in the adjacent cell we encounter reflections of the abuse Liz had suffered; both hint at the traumatic event, but without quite revealing it. Their monologues draw on the dark humour of prison life, yet this short play seems to fix the characters into one frame: of 'survivor' and 'victim' and these binaries seem inescapable.

> Katherine: I have a book. I have carved the pages out of it to make it hollow. To keep my tools in. A lot of the youngsters here do it. I asked the doctor about self-harm. Told him I had flirted with it a little during my marriage. I burnt a cigarette onto my hand when that seemed the only thing to do. And one night I banged my head against the kitchen wall. And I realised that pain could be displaced. That it was mobile. I told him, 'When I cut myself, there's no pain. Only relief. And actually a bit of a rush.' 'Endorphins,' he said. 'They're a natural pain killer.' Dr Pi prescribed pills. I didn't take them. I preferred the razor (2010: 132).

Katherine offers an argument for self-harm as a form of resistance from her domestic situation (about which we never hear further explicit details). She refers to self-inflicted violence as a means of escaping the uncertainty of abuse at the hands of someone else. In this conception of self-harm, the body, and purposeful transgression of the body's integrity are necessary for a sense of agency. Katherine's self-harm is resistant habitus: the repetition of dispositions that both reinforce and undermine the prison as field. By contrast, Liz's narrative journey moves her away from this prison, which is a prelude to release as women move to open institutions as part of their reintegration plan. In one of the final scenes, we see Liz preparing to leave the prison.

> Liz: Makes me nervous. Moving. Like starting a new school. Stupid. It'll be better for Clara. Means she can get back to Gideon, doesn't need to leave him for the night. Much better. Talked to him on the phone the other day. 'Are you coming down the park, Nan?' he said. 'I'm taking my bike.' 'I'll come another time,' I said. Clara tells him I'm at the library. That's a lot of fucking books I must have read. 'Are you rehabilitated?' they ask. No. I'm just a lot tireder [sic] than when I came in (2010: 134).

In this speech, Liz reflects on the imperative to 'transform' that continues to define criminal justice. The self- effacing comments show her habitus to have been 'dominated' by the field. She is the same, she asserts. She is still herself, just 'tireder'. The speech points towards an inside/outside thematic that is a mainstay of prison theatre. Dramaturgically, Lenkiewicz places the Writer as an extension of the surveillance and power of the institution through her intrusive, insensitive questions. The 'outsider' defines and delimits the 'inside' with her presumptions. The cells become sites of imaginative release; where other characters, other lives, and other times are manifest.

Lenkiewicz navigates the transition from inside/outside much more successfully in *Her Naked Skin*. Perhaps this is due to the social mobility that upper class Suffragettes held. For incarcerated women in contemporary times, then, the inevitability of prison as delimiting current and future repertoires, needs challenging. Where the struggle for equal rights for women served to motivate Lady Celia and Florence Boorman to endure hunger strikes and forcible feeding, the contemporary vision of prison put forward by Lenkiewicz does not offer a sustainable set of practices for Katherine or Liz except for self-harm, dependence, and the need for tobacco. It seems, though, that the assumptions of female vulnerability are somewhat re-imagined, even if Lenkiewicz offers a normative, matriarchal sense of women's habitus as they move through the criminal justice system. In these two examples there is thus a hierarchy of experience of those women incarcerated for political beliefs and women who have been convicted of crimes, although, as I have demonstrated in prior chapters, women's criminalisation is underscored by patriarchal structures in society. I propose that it is the potential for resistance that can render audiences' understandings of prisons as political.

Resisting 'the cage', Resisting Domestication: 'Only be thou strong and very courageous'[9]

The desire of the public to experience and encounter 'the caged' is borne out through our endless fascination with the mediated images and stories of crime and punishment through television, film and other media (Carrabine, 2010; Cheliotis, 2010; Jewkes,

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[9] Florence Boorman's line that is repeated throughout *Her Naked Skin* (2008).

2006). Canonical representations often affirm our cultural assumptions of a stable notion of the prison (McAvinchey, 2011a: 37-8). This desire to locate the workings of justice in a site, and on the bodies of prisoners, serves to mark both the bodies and the prison with a fixity that limits the potential for both to disrupt the labels and binary narratives of justice. There is the desire within popular culture to display prisoners' moral 'otherness' in an embodied way. Most mediated images and stories about prison encountered by the public highlight (and perhaps exaggerate) the divide between acceptable and transgressive behaviours, relying on stereotypes that are inevitably inscribed by race, class and gender. The public imagination is inevitably conservative when it comes to the ways in which criminal identities are performed; and the prevailing narratives of how criminal women might be transformed through incarceration are mostly expressed negatively (Ferrell & Sanders, 1995). Contemporary performance has a role to play in exposing and subverting these conservative trends – particularly if we take Conquergood's (1991) concern that we ought to view culture as a verb and not a noun.

Ferrell, Hayward and Young propose an understanding of cultural criminology that is predicated on this notion, stating that

> Culture suggests a sort of shared public performance, a process of public
> negotiation – but that performance can be one of acquiescence or
> rebellion, that negotiation one of violent conflict or considered capitulation
> (2008: 4).

To return to the subject of women in prison, seen in light of this statement, performances of both docility and resistance demonstrate something about the cultural force of the institution as well as the social context. That said, whilst Lenkiewicz' plays offer instances of resistance in the prison scenes, they do not adequately consider how resistances could be sustainable as a means of countering the hegemonic norms. Instead, her characters ultimately submit to routines and domestic expectations. Perhaps the largely realist mode needs more radical generic challenges in order to subvert the dynamics that define prisons as spaces of belonging and transgression, empathy and disgust. Recent performances from divergent approaches to contemporary theatre have explored the ways site and audience

engagement serve to resonate more complex relationships between prison spaces, the phenomenology of 'the cage' and prisoners' journeys through prison spaces. These include Badac Theatre's *The Factory* Edinburgh Festival (2008); Clean Break's staging of Lucy Kirkwood's *it felt empty when the heart went at first but it's alright now*, Arcola Theatre, (2009); and Hydrocracker's staging of Harold Pinter's *The New World Order*, Brighton Festival, (2011). Despite these alternative representations of prisons in performance, I suggest that the challenge of hegemonic repetition of 'the cell' could have a ricochet effect in the wider cultural sphere, as for example, is demonstrated in the 'victory' claimed by Lenkiewicz' success on mainstream stages.

The critical reception of Lenkiewicz' plays demonstrates the hollowness of feminist victories' praise for being the first playwright to stage an original work at the National Theatre.[10] Yet, as Groskop points out, *Her Naked Skin* is largely devoid of political verve. It is as if, by staging women in prison, their pain and suffering, that it is enough of a demonstration of emancipation. Rather, as the textual extracts demonstrate, the modest, sometimes silent, resistance of individual women in prison needs much deeper attention; and perhaps a wider arsenal of aesthetic and dramaturgical structures in order to be heard. *An Almost Unnameable Lust*, however, breaks apart the social realist model in order to present more alternatives and possibilities for the place of resistance in prison. Not simply for the shock value of resistance, but rather because representations (in theatre as well as media – demonstrated powerfully by Cheliotis (2010)), serve as insights into the workings of the public sphere (2010: 180).

This analysis of several prison scenes from Lenkiewicz' work has served to demonstrate that resistance is a challenge to prison as field. This first half of the chapter examines Bourdieu's theory of habitus through considering the daily dispositions of women in prison; exemplified in two distinct historical contexts. Both plays stage the potential for re-imagining the structures and practices of women's existence in prison. Both plays may remind audiences that there is a great deal of aesthetic and moral labour necessary in order to work towards a more radical,

emancipatory platform for these concerns to be shared. For Lenkiewicz' characters, resisting the cage is akin to resisting domestication. It falls, perhaps, to other performance modes and genres to offer alternative practices that may indeed move representations of women in prison beyond normative gender structures. This is discussed in more detail in the second half of the chapter. Initially, however, it is necessary to remind of ways this research presents the institution as a structure through which to understand performance (in the widest sense). Performance too relies on various norms and structures. In the latter half of the chapter, I deploy the theoretical and methodological concerns of a feminist structure of feeling in order to articulate more clearly how performances about prison necessarily operate within given structures, but also provides affective possibilities.

Feminist Structures of Feeling
I return to a concept that was brought up in Chapter 2 – structure of feeling – in order to make an argument for a feminist re-appropriation in relation to women in prison and representations in performance. Raymond Williams' formulation of the social and cultural contexts of analysis offers a framework for exploring how meanings and values are experienced – and in particular, how relations between experiences and formal/ systemic beliefs are variable. As a (contested) term, used in relation to performance analysis, it offers a means of engaging with ideological structures as well as the images, gestures and performances that emerge from these structures. For Williams,

> certain experiences, meanings and values which cannot be expressed or substantially verified in terms of the dominant culture are nevertheless lived and practiced on the basis of the residue—cultural as well as social—of some previous social and cultural institution or formation (1977: 122).

Lisa Peschel constructs a compelling argument for reconsidering Raymond Williams' 'structures of feeling' as a methodological approach. She posits that by examining

> the specific type of affect, the spatial and temporal nature of the structure it engenders, and the structure's relationship to power—and describing how they manifest themselves in the situations we are attempting to analyze, we

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[10] By contrast, Clean Break is avowedly feminist in its advocacy and education programme and its artistic programme comissions women to write new work. Further research would be valuable in relation to the feminist thrust in their recent commissions.

> may actually conform more closely, not to the letter of his definition, but to its spirit (2012: 171).

The value of structure of feeling is that it asks us to articulate the specificities of forms and conventions that present and represent different socialities. In its consideration of 'emergence', it is in confluence with habitus as a methodological approach. Elaine Aston's formulation of a feminist structure of feeling (2003) is particularly useful in this study, since the feminist perspective necessarily engages with the ways entrenched patriarchal views become structured as normative; and that concomitant artistic choices in aesthetic representations of women are inflected with these underlying structures. Aston characterises a shift in contemporary performance of the 1990s that ultimately presented women as not merely victims of violence, but also as perpetrators (2003: 10). She draws attention to the social inequalities and injustices presented in plays; and then defines the 'rupture' or discontinuity of redefining 'agential' women as not merely passive recipients of violence, nor as aping the violence of others, but as agents reacting to structural legacies.

These reactions may be productive or destructive, and as such, the kinds of transgressive resistances mentioned in Lenkiewicz' plays present an understanding of the multiple ways affect complicates neat narratives. While realism proposes unity of meaning, other dramaturgical strategies can be valuable for the possibility of multiple, contradictory, and messy affect they promote. The female protagonists are complicated, rather than simplified, by these authors. Rather than being cast in one of the three categories 'victim', 'survivor', or 'hero', they shift, mercurially, between them. The following section engages with these shifts by exploring further examples of plays by authors commissioned by Clean Break. The first short play by Chloë Moss functions to illuminate a dramaturgical point, and is not analysed in as much detail as the second.

In *Fatal Light*, for example, which was a one-act play in the *Charged* programme at Soho Theatre in 2010, Moss uses a reverse time sequence to indicate the consequences of imprisonment. The first scene shows a mother being informed by a police officer that her daughter has killed herself in custody. The narrative shifts from

the ways in which the daughter, Jay, is trying to cope with being in prison (scared and lonely on her first night with an unsympathetic pad-mate and no one to talk to) to how the mother had been threatened with losing her daughter, tracing back family divisions to before Jay's birth. The reversed structure gives the audience a sense of the fragility of space and time inside, particularly highlighting the difficulty of separation of mothers from their children as a major problem in prison. The play constructs a delicate structure of maternal feeling that is examined as a kind of reversed legacy: loss that is repeated through imprisonment and suicide, and emotional despair that seems like a bloodline. This one act play is positioned here in order to demonstrate the potential of innovation in staging – in which the cell does not get represented as the 'answer' to an unruly woman, but the 'question' as to how Jay, a vulnerable young woman, could be failed by the system. It is worth noting here that Moss does not get any more specific than that – indeed, many of Clean Break's plays pose critical questions to state apparatus that is designed to protect the marginalised, but that often ends up perpetuating inequalities and injustice.[11] The reasons, according to feminist criminologists, range from cycles of poverty to racial and ethnic marginalisation (Carlton & Segrave, 2013; Smart, 1977).

It felt empty: Criminalised Foreign Bodies in Performance

The final performance I will analyse here is another Clean Break commission; Lucy Kirkwood's *it felt empty when the heart went at first but it's alright now* (Arcola, 2009).[12] Like *Fatal Light* (Moss, Soho Theatre, 2010), this work also relies on a reversed achronological time sequence that maintains a sense of actions and their consequences. However, it relies on dreamscapes and promenade, breaking the predominance of realism as aesthetic mode of the plays discussed above. Furthermore, we are asked to question the legitimacy of consequences of arrest when the suspect is herself a victim of crime. I explore the model victim-survivor-hero in more detail after a short overview of the play.

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[11] This poses a disjunction between artistic programmes (that necessarily depend on public funding) and more radical community-based organisations whose messages pose a stronger opposition to the criminal justice system.

The play is mostly a dramatic monologue presented by Dijana Polančec, an Eastern European woman who, we quickly learn, is a sex-worker.[13] Part One has the audience seated in a small room around a bed, where we witness Dijana preparing for her 'last client'. She admits to us that she has worked out her 'numbers' – that she had been led to believe she would be freed after she bought her freedom with £20,000 gathered through sexual labour. Dijana's impressive capacity for calculations sets a parameter – a sensible framework – to her incarceration by the traffickers, one of whom is called Babac. In this first section, our proximity to the woman's body stimulates the sense of witnessing her abuse at the hands of up to thirty men every day – while the only body actually present in the space is Dijana's. The section ends with Dijana promising to come and find someone in Brighton. She has directed her promises of escape in the first scene to this unknown 'little clown' (2009: 8). We imagine that Dijana has been forcibly parted from her child, and that she will attempt to find her in Brighton when she regains her freedom. Dijana holds onto an image of her reunion with the child on Brighton Pier, where she promises they will eat chips together.

Part Two partially explains Dijana's escape. After we move through a liminal space between the room in the brothel, following Dijana, who has climbed through an air vent in the wall, we see her clambering through a transparent pipe. We walk through an installation of kitsch teddies and children's clothes and pause in a long, sterile corridor with miniature doors, and hard benches facing one another. Dijana confesses that she escaped the brothel after Babac is arrested for fraud, and made her way to Brighton, as promised.

> In Brighton we ate chips, I had enough money for chips. Not enough money for swimming suit because it was like fifteen UK pounds but it was a big shop and I know what I am doing and Babac's coat have big pockets and the swimming suit it is so fucking pretty and I know you would look so beautiful in it and what am I supposed to do put you in the sea in your fucking underwear? (2009: 23).

[12] My exploration of this play cites the published text but refers to my experience as audience at the staging at the Arcola Theatre in 2009.
[13] There is only one scene featuring another character. Gloria is a West African woman who shares Dijana's cell. I discuss this artistic choice further in relation to the banality of the cell later in the chapter. The script is written in a form of patois that indicates the second language rhythms in English. Any perceived grammatical errors are accurate notations of Kirkwood's text.

Dijana has escaped sex-slavery without the attention of the police, has begged for money to get to Brighton in search of her child, and is subsequently arrested stealing a swimming suit.

> At police station, they were shits. Question they ask. The worst was woman police, she talk for like hours and I tell her everything again and then she go
>
> You say you wanted the item for your daughter, Miss Polančec? And the man, he whisper something in her ear like I am not sitting right there, and *then* she go [sic]
>
> Oh.
>
> But she still say it again she say [sic] You claim you take the item for your daughter.
>
> And I know she's got it right there on the paper fucking, in front of her so what a stupid fucking question but I just say Yes.
>
> Then there is a big quiet. And then she go [sic] You understand Miss Polančec, that you are against UK law?
>
> *Beat.*
>
> I say I don't know.
>
> She say [sic] You don't know?
>
> I say No (2009: 22-23).

Dijana's explanation to the phantom-child is interrupted by Gloria – a loud, exuberant cell-mate who initially frightens then pacifies Dijana. Gloria's presence is explanatory, charting the alliances of trust needed for 'survival' in the prison. She also reveals the inequalities in provision of basic rights, such as access to lawyers and healthcare.

> Gloria. They send you a lawyer already?
>
> *Beat.*
>
> Dijana. Today.
>
> Gloria. Today? Oh shit. You are *lucky.* I have been waiting time. They never send me one yet. They send you one already? What did he say?

> Dijana. She say. [sic] When ninety-six days are over I maybe leave here and
> go somewhere else (2009: 28).

Dijana is Eastern European, and Gloria is of African descent. Kirkwood's treatment of racial and ethnic stereotypes through this middle section puts forward a reflection of what encounters are to be expected in prison. Gloria's overt attention while she brushes Dijana's hair reinforces the tendency of cultural producers (in films, media representations, and theatre) to create typologies of prisoners. She describes various nationalities of the other women in prison, and their shortcomings, and claims that she will protect Dijana while she strokes her arm, and tries to sleep in her bed. 'Gloria will sort them. Anyone touch you. Gloria. Anyone say something. Gloria. Anyone – anything. Gloria. Okay?' (2009: 32).

Gloria's kindness is unexpected, almost maternal. Yet her insistence on touch, and compliance with the lights-out unsettle Dijana, who struggles, and bites Gloria in an attempt to escape from her grasp. The presumed conflation of maternal care, lesbian predation and protection against 'Others' is particularly vicious in this scene. Kirkwood's deployment of character typology is particularly acute here, and she does not move away from the readings of Other women as monstrous. Although Dijana is a foreign woman whose ignorance and naivety lands her in prison, Gloria is 'more foreign' and more threatening reflecting a propensity for hierarchies in the criminal justice system. These hierarchies are evident not only within the daily habitus of women who relate to one another according to what crimes result in conviction, but also according to other categories, and particularly local/ foreign categories.

The final scene in the play moves the audience to a large warehouse full of the debris of packing for holidays. We realise we have gone back in time, as Dijana is pregnant, waiting for her 'boyfriend' Babac, who, we are told, has organised a holiday for them. Dijana is talking to her unborn baby as she prepares for their holiday. She explains that Babac took her passport to prepare for the holiday, and kept it in a safe. While she packs, Dijana is answering calls, and organising escorts for various clients. She muddles through an explanation for what happened earlier that day: as she was sent out to

clean the rooms occupied by the sex-workers, she meets a woman who used to 'work the phones' but now who 'does this' (2009: 45 - 46). Dijana interrupts her conversation with the unborn baby to discuss holiday plans with Babac on her telephone. Between navigating her relationship with the child's father, her job and the child, Dijana is building a fantasy of a normative family life. She does not recognise the symptoms of control and domestic violence as she narrates her romance, and her excitement about being a mother. In her discussion with the baby, she glosses over the sections of Babac's story that expose him as a cruel and manipulative pimp, and instead focuses on how she can be proud of herself:

> And I know this sound like I am like, so full of myself, but I love also how much I can be proud of myself.
>
> Cos I *make* this happen. This morning, when I give my passport to Babac, I look at it and I think
>
> WOW!
>
> How much has happen since I last went on the plane! I never done nothing brave in my whole fucking life before and maybe I still be stuck in shit-smell apartment married to fucking coach driver but I save money so hard and I book the ticket. And I be brave. And I come here. And I am scared but also I hope. And I meet a man. And I fall in love. And I make you! (2009: 50).

As she waits for Babac to enter the locked room to rub her feet, we notice bloodstains on the back of her dress. They are not explained, as they spread. We listen to Dijana imagining her future with the baby, after the vacation. The spreading stain on her dress demonstrates her loss of the foetus. In the performance, the prior scenes are predicated on our understanding of Dijana as 'mother'; our sympathies for her search for her lost child compounded by her victimisation as a sex-slave. In the final moments of the play, we are offered a way of understanding her victimisation. Having been Babac's 'girlfriend', Dijana's pregnancy, she tells us, is what he calls a 'spanner' in the works (2009: 50). Once Dijana has been subjected to pregnancy and becomes victim of poisoning causing the onset of miscarriage, she is no longer a partner, but a female body as object. Her baby becomes the phantom – an affective presence to which she refers consistently thereafter. This imagery is consistent with the haunting spectre of motherhood that I raise in Chapter 5, in which women's identities as mothers suggests

a presence of children in their thoughts as they undertake the sentence. In this play, her performance of motherhood, despite the miscarriage, is Dijana's performance for survival.

Legibility of Women as Victim, Survivor, or Hero

Kirkwood's play provides a valuable example of analysis in relation to the model 'victim-survivor-hero'.[14] This is done primarily by positioning the audience as witness to the ways a young woman has been repeatedly failed by society; firstly, by believing that monetary exchange for 'protection' by a strange man in a foreign country is legitimate; and her subsequent control by a boyfriend who turns out to be a pimp. Secondly, her repeated abuse by customers, and the connected profiteering of an unscrupulous man from her sexual labour indicates her victimisation as a sexual object. The failings of the criminal justice system are also alluded to, in which, as feminist criminology suggests, female victims of trafficking are not believed by the authorities, and are presumed guilty of crimes instead of being treated as victims of crime (Erez et al, 2009; Heidensohn, 2012; Levy, 2010; Prison Reform Trust, 2010). Both Gloria's and Dijana's stories demonstrate the insistence of authorities' readings of foreign bodies as necessarily deviant. Both women are held morally responsible for being in the UK illegally, and being complicit with criminal activities, even though they had little agency in either choice. In effect, the foreign women are punished for being 'out of place'. Kirkwood's play stages the mental health stresses both women experience as overlooked by the system.[15]

Kirkwood's decision to include a second performer in the prison cell sequence is perhaps telling. It is as if the cell itself needs several perspectives – both to offer more force to the political positioning of the work by including a range of experiences – and

[14] For further treatment of these collapsing categories in art, see Marmo's (2009) analysis of *The Journey* by the Helen Bamber Foundation- a public installation that aimed to raise awareness of sex trafficking staged in Trafalgar Square and elsewhere between 2008-2009. Her article centres on the engagement of the audience with invisible subjects of trafficked women.

[15] These stresses arise from the fear, confusion, and frustration of being criminalised as a foreign national, along with the alienation of prison bureaucracy if people do not understand English. These intersecting oppressions compound the traumatising experiences of immigration detention resulting from sex trafficking (see Erez et al, 2009; Golash-Boza, 2010; Kara, 2009; Khosravi, 2007; McKinnon, 2009).

to shift attention from Dijana's internal monologue to another person. In other words, the processes of incarceration demand a social response, and cannot be thought of as internal processes. By having the audience witness two bodies in the cell, Kirkwood demands recognition that the problem of incarcerating women (in this case, specifically, women who are victims of others' crimes), are multiplied. As an aesthetic choice, Kirkwood includes the audience in the sphere of accountability for where Dijana is – initially as silent witnesses to her sex-slavery, then as bodies lined up in the prison cell, and lastly in a locked room, sitting or standing amongst the debris of a domestic life.

In the first and last scenes, Dijana's solitude provides a compelling, intimate view of a woman locked in a single room. The device of having her address her child offers a particular perspective as maternal tutelage becomes the mode through which we understand how Dijana survives in the UK by learning the language, by cleaning, by adding up numbers, and learning to perform sexually for her customers. Yet, Dijana's final speech demonstrates a contradictory position of herself as empowered by undertaking the journey to the UK in the first instance. She narrates her story to the unborn child by engaging the imagination: her heroism lies in her ability to concentrate on the achievements of imagining things differently to how they are now. She is telling a story of a possible future of happiness, fulfilment and independence. Yet, this monologue is inflected with the knowledge that her story is dependent on the powers of a man to lock her up and exploit her labour. Kirkwood's play provides an interesting perspective on my modelling of resistant habitus, since it seems Dijana's 'resistance' of her initial incarceration as a sex slave and her imprisonment, is through hyper-performance of motherhood. Her phantom child allows her to resist the pain she would otherwise be forced to acknowledge. The child – as perpetual listener to her working through of the trauma of her experiences – is witness.

The model I put forward in chapter 2 might be re-worked in light of a temporal dimension offered by these plays. In other words, it becomes necessary to unpack the temporal siting of the categories victim-survivor-hero. In *it felt empty when the heart went at first but it is alright now*, Dijana is (in chronological terms) first a hero – brave

enough to leave her home country and move abroad – and then a victim of sex trafficking. By the time we see her in prison, she has been 'removed' from the forces of victimisation – namely sex-slavery – and she may be read as a 'survivor'. Yet, we may reconsider the modelling again in light of the ways incarceration itself needs to be examined as victimising. From a structural perspective, the play does not offer any possibility to Dijana to escape such limitations. She is always already confined by her foreignness, her 'illegal' status, and her naïve propensity to trust her 'boyfriend'. Kirkwood's choice to explore sex-slavery and trafficking positions Dijana as 'outside'. She has none of the cultural capital, nor access to the habitus that native English speakers would have as they navigate the legal system. Furthermore, as Gloria's character demonstrates, there are inequalities in relation to services in the criminal justice system that perpetuate disempowerment, rather than encourage agency.

By contrast, Lady Celia Cain from *Her Naked Skin* is positioned as a hero, largely by virtue of her class. Her commitment to the cause of Suffragettes also lends her legibility as a hero. From a feminist perspective, we could argue she is victimised by her marriage, and yet Lenkiewicz' treatment of her husband rather demonstrates the social expectations of 'successful marriage' as the constraint, rather than Cain's patriarchal position that serves to victimise or marginalise Celia. By the end of the play she leaves her female lover, and remains estranged from her husband, preferring to devote herself to the Suffragette cause. Deploying the model in relation to Lady Celia, and in light of the engendered habitus argument, it is clear that her ability to survive the institution is largely determined by the privilege of her class, marriage and prior experiences of resistance. Celia is able to maintain her resistance by shrugging off the constraints of wife and mother. On the other hand, her lover Eve is utterly subsumed by the institution, by her affair with Celia, and dominated by the criminalisation of activism, with the result that she is domesticated. She attempts suicide, and by the end of the play, has been seen 'with a man'. All markers of difference have been erased as she is rendered legible by hegemonic patriarchal narratives.

The play that was introduced earlier in the chapter in light of its structure, Chloë Moss' *Fatal Light*, demonstrates the need for the model's temporal dimension. Even though

as audience, we know that Jay ultimately commits suicide, we are asked to imagine how her story might have been different as we trace back her journey. This is where a feminist structure of feeling is important, as audiences gain awareness of systemic failure alongside the affective labour of witnessing loss. The short scenes position the family against the prison system – attempting to glean answers as to why a vulnerable young woman was able to kill herself. The dramaturgy makes explicit the duty of care of the institution in relation to the family. Feminist criminology has argued for a more humane and gender-aware concentration on how institutions care for their inhabitants; as well as dispute the exaggerated role of incarceration in the first instance (Gelsthorpe & Morris, 2002; Kennedy, 2005).

Concluding Remarks

Wilcox and D'Artrey discuss representations of women victims as survivors of domestic violence, drawing on media analysis. Their argument demonstrates that discrete categories tend to reinforce dominant positions inevitably inflected by patriarchal interests. In crime stories,

> victim/survivor must be 'appropriate victims' fitting into traditional norms of femininity to appeal to readers. "The meaning systems that we apply to the category 'crime' are metaphoric systems; the coherence and consistency of their application operates to sustain certain relations: relationships of similarity/otherness and inclusion/exclusion most commonly" (Brown, 2003: 45, cited in Wilcox & D'Artrey, 2008: 5).

This argument suggests the need for aesthetic choices that make allowance for slippage, contradictions and complications of categories. In other words, there is a need for representations to move beyond simplistic representation of women as objects to more nuanced subjective representations. Pursuing this line of thought towards a view of representations of women in relation to the audience as witness, suggests the need for a break with cathartic closure, neat narratives, and hegemonic dramaturgies. In particular, I argue that contemporary dramaturgies can offer more radical possibilities for resisting foreclosure and the banality of the cell.

The analysis of these plays has developed from thinking through the relationship between audience/ witness and performer/ body. I am interested in exploring the particularity of the gendered body in performance; and how this is positioned more widely in relation to my argument on 'engendered habitus'. For each of the female protagonists, the texts and performances draw attention to the implications, effects and affects of victimisation and crime. While some of the characters perpetrate violence and destruction (of public property, for instance), they are each subjected to wider patriarchal violence that positions them as victims. It is through their bodies that audiences engage with the women's specific narratives. We are explicitly invited to reconsider the ways we view these incarcerated women by witnessing the ways they perform in order to survive years of abuse, for example.

In the examples I discuss, I adopt a critical view on realism as a performance mode. Instead, I propose that a feminist structure of feeling provides an analytic project that can destabilise realism's insistence on unitary morality. Rather, other performance modalities (such as site responsive or promenade performance) can propose new perspectives and demand new affective engagement with both trauma and the banality of the cell.

In conclusion, I refer to Nield's body of work dealing with theatre as 'a machine of appearance' (2010a: 39). In her work on the border apparatus as a space of appearance and the space of the law necessitating a flux between appearance/ disappearance (Nield 2010a; 2010b; and Leiboff and Nield, 2010), Nield draws on empirical examples in order to re-work the potency of 'theatrical', 'performative' and 'performance' as sites of ethical engagement (2010a: 43). In the spectacle of the law, incarcerated women are disappeared from the 'real' world, and made to appear in the world of the prison. Yet, as these plays demonstrate, their desires, habitus and hopes do not disappear. Their attachments to the 'real' world are extra-legal. Incarceration may lead us to imagine a caesura in the continuous narrative of people outside. The moralistic assumption that bodies in cells would necessarily turn towards penitent 'thinking' fixes the cell as a non-place. Rather, the women in the plays discussed here are troublesome precisely because they resist the banality of the cell. The playwrights

have foregrounded the women's multiple subjectivities, as we are asked to perceive these women not merely as 'wrongdoers' but as mothers, lovers, daughters and comrades, who maintain elements of their resistant agency despite incarceration.

Celia Cain survives imprisonment, and ultimately thrives as an activist. Jay is present as a ghost from the first moment of *Fatal Light*. Although her body disappears from the stage, she is a phantasm of the responsibility the institution should bear in relation to the predominance of suicides in women's prisons in the UK. Nield's evocation of the 'ex-person' (2010a: 40) is worth resurrecting here in relation to what Billone refers to as 'civil death' (2009).[16] By reworking the broad category of 'women in prison' to include these subjectivities and affective relations, theatrical representations perform an important incision into the fabric of the law. What is at stake is the unpicking of the ways both the system and the wider society treats women while they are incarcerated. The plays perform a function in the cultural landscape of the UK by making visible the struggles of women in prison. Theatre's unique function is the possibility it provides to point towards potential trajectories of undoing the fixity of victimisation, crime and justice. Yet, as I have shown, there is value in engaging with the problematics of representation by resisting fixed or stereotypical tropes. Staging choices are resistant when they explicitly work through the possibilities of embodiment, presence and audience experiences that engender a more diverse range of being together.

While this chapter has departed from the prior chapters' empirical investigation into performances of and in prison, it nevertheless provides an important triangulation in the argument by scrutinising plays that represent women in prison. It has formed a bridge between the two prison worlds explored in the thesis – empirical prison spaces and their representations. The chapter argues against simplistic 'legibility' of women in prison by, initially 'reading' the ways women in prison are shown to be resistant, and positioned as either victims of the system or as monsters. The return to a notion of

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[16] Billone's argument relates to the ways incarcerated populations are denied access to the responsibilities of civilians; in particular, access to the structures of democratic societies such as voting. In the EU, voting is considered a human right that is not eroded by incarceration, but the UK has refused to adopt the legislation that allows prisoners the right to inform choices about how they are punished, rehabilitated and prepared to re-join society. Billone's argument relates particularly to the disruption women (who typically serve short sentences) face in relation to their participation in civic life.

'engendered habitus' provides the counterpoint of embodiment to the fixity of character typologies. Finally, the discussion about several examples of contemporary performance seeks to shift the focus from the women directly, and rather towards a mutually imbricated structure of feeling created in the ways audience, performer and space co-construct meanings.

This chapter has positioned engendered habitus as a productive frame of analysis in order to consider how contemporary performance stages prisons. The argument now moves towards the final stages of the model of tragic containment or the performative presence that characterises imprisonment: release. In the next chapter, I consider the ways performance, presence, and traumatic traces of prison remain after women have been released. Chapter 7 explicates the assumptions of gender normativity as well as critical considerations of what 'success' looks like in the pathways towards reducing reoffending. The argument is constructed through modelling concerns from feminist criminology and reading these concerns through a close analysis of Chloë Moss' play *This Wide Night*.

CHAPTER SEVEN: PERFORMANCE THROUGH PRISON: INSTITUTIONAL GHOSTS AND TRACES OF THE TRAUMATIC

> The real […] is always nostalgically or futuristically outside over there, on the other side of fantasy, recessing away from the viewer like the vanishing point of perspective (Schneider, 1997: 95).

Introduction

The preceding chapters explore performance tactics of women in prison by examining habitus. In doing so, the object of study has largely remained focused on women's embodied acts of complicity and resistance within prison spaces. One of the profoundly performative elements of prison is its relationship with time as it separates out prisoners' sense of self through a promissory process of transformation. The 'successful' navigation of prison apparatus points towards potentiality of 'going clean', 'going straight', or getting out of 'the mix'.[1] Or, to put it another way, prison explicitly stages the rehearsal of repertoires of how to become 'good women', as argued in Chapters 2 and 3. Such repertoires are tied to a patriarchal (neoliberal) world order. It is particularly important to note that scholarship on theatre in prison often highlights the paucity of available data on assessing 'impact' after interventions (Hughes, 2005a, 2005b; Miles & Clark, 2006; New Philanthropy Capital, 2011).[2] As a result, most studies focus on the moment of incarceration – relying on the neat containment of theatre interventions in particular times and carceral spaces. They are inevitably focussed on documenting the more spectacular, convincing 'stories' (cf. Cheliotis, 2012b). However, these studies then limit and contain their own value within the values of the surrounding institutions. By addressing the shifts of women's performance post-release, I attend to some of the existing gap in knowledge. This choice is intended to

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[1] Barbara Owen refers to a slang term in US prisons that characterises 'the mix' as the confusing, chaotic behavior that results in conflicts, drug intrigues, petty thievery, illicit relationships and low level 'drama' (1998: 178 – 183).
[2] This is not only because companies tend to conduct short term work in specific prisons, as there are some notable exceptions to this, such as Writers in Prison Network, that situates writers in residence for two or three year residencies. It is also because the Ministry of Justice does not provide (or cannot provide) access to onward records of prisoners upon release, or even in the case of moving prisons. This is related to the complexities of re-housing and probation loads, but also draws attention to the ironies of basing rehabilitation on 'pathways' when such routes are not adequately mapped for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

expand how we might understand prison's relationship with time, narrative and habitus.

Feminist criminology is committed to researching the 'pains' (Sykes, 1958) of imprisonment, and its gendered implications; but what gets less critical attention is that these pains, stigmas and repetitive 'hauntings' continue post-release. This chapter thus turns towards women's pathways out of prison by examining how resettlement cycles always already retain the traces of prison as stigma, or ghostly haunting. In other words, I will show how institutionalisation becomes a citational repetition for women, even as they seek to distantiate themselves from identities, affects and the stigma of themselves 'before' incarceration. There is thus a necessity to introduce some additional theoretical concerns from feminist criminology before engaging in furthering the arguments of the thesis. Specifically, this chapter engages the final stages of the cycle of tragic containment by mapping criminological concerns with performance models. Following Carlton & Segrave, this chapter highlights the importance of challenging the assumption that prison 'comprises a discrete episode in women's lives' (2011: 552).[3] Their research proposes that there is value in extending the gendered analysis beyond the walls of the institution to explore post-prison experiences. This chapter thus serves the function of examining the aesthetic 'release' of performance and its relationship to the political, ethical and social implications of women's release from prison.

I make use of this approach to the pathways out of prison by means of consolidating the frames of performance analysis in order to trace the impact of the 'spectacle' of punishment (inside) in relation to the everyday (outside). In doing so, I propose that we should consider prison theatre, performances in and of prison and plays about prison within a socio-political context. The argument demonstrates the potential for cycles of repetition or recidivism that form one outcome in the model of tragic containment.[4] I engage the steps beyond prison (with concomitant surveillance,

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[3] Their research looks at women's survival rates (as well as suicides) post-release that can be directly attributable to traumatic experiences of both incarceration and release into unsupported, unmanageable living conditions (2011).

[4] See cycle of tragic containment, Chapter 2. The other outcome if women do not reoffend is desistance.

governmentality, the threat of return to prison, and the stigma associated with incarceration) in order to position this research alongside radical socially engaged research (Conquergood, 1991; Kershaw, 1999). Unlike other studies of theatre in prison, this research draws attention to the role of performance in challenging the intersecting structures that criminalise women in the first instance, and then punish them in gender-specific ways; in order to release women into lives still characterised by marginality, chaos, uncertainty and inequality.

Time, repetitious cycles, and the sense of the 'inevitable' churn of the prison population,[5] are examined by drawing on prison's performative presence in the lives of women ex-prisoners. In order to do so, I draw on literature that explores women's release, recidivism or desistance. There is comparatively little research on women's post-prison experiences; which suggests that the 'problem' of unruly women is only valuable when they are in the control of the state. The introductory section of the chapter is not simply about providing context about probation or experiences in the community, but serves to model the precarious positioning of women exiting the scene of prison's stages onto the rather less spectacular stages of everyday life. From a methodological perspective, I engage the current criminological understandings of women after release and deploy these in attending to performance examples. This argument is drawn from empirical observation of the charity Women in Prison (W-i-P), archival experience of Clean Break's education programme as well as analysis of a final play by Chloë Moss commissioned by Clean Break that relied on women's testimonies from a series of writing workshops in prison.

It is compelling, and indeed, fundamental to the Judeo-Christian ideology still underpinning criminal justice in Western countries to imagine that, once a prisoner is released from prison, the bounties of freedom may be savoured. This narrative of redemption suggests that, having 'paid debts' to society by 'doing time', the 'tragic containment' of institutions can be set aside.[6] But such a view draws on binaries that are more common in fictional narratives than in everyday examples. Instead of the exit

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[5] 'Churn' is the criminological term for returning prison populace.
[6] I discuss this in detail in Chapter 4, having defined the model in Chapter 2.

from prison indicating a 'new life' with many possibilities, the pathways to reintegration into society are much more complex. Recent data has shown that in the UK, of the women who are released from prison, 51% are reconvicted within a year.[7] In this chapter, I aim to engage with the cycle of re-offending, and the threat of return to prison as a powerful trope in the lives of women. Furthering Foucault's views, for example, on the inescapability of the dominating order,[8] I see prison and its operations as processual. Such processes are not merely inflicted on the bodies of the ex-prisoners as punishing regimes, but rather as extensions of the mechanisms of the system that become internalised, or what Allspach calls the 'transportation of 'the carceral'' (2010: 718). She explores the ways neoliberal governance re-regulates women's desires, behaviours and spatial locations. The regulation, she claims, 'operates through risk discourses that trigger a variety of practices spanning spaces, socio-economic fields and various actors, including the women themselves' (2010: 718).

Offending and re-offending, then, are tied in with value judgements about 'risk'; and such terminologies also extend to the ways women are expected to self-regulate their own multiple vulnerabilities and 'risk factors', such as alcohol or drug dependencies. In other words, women become accustomed to monitoring themselves in relation to their 'licence' or probation conditions.[9] We might read this as a set of tasks or obstacles in a performer's improvisation arsenal. And yet, as Allspach (2010) points out, many of the conditions women return to in the community perpetuate the conditions of risk. For example, many temporary hostels from which women are due to apply for more permanent housing (and which are monitored by probation), are also in poverty stricken neighbourhoods, and can place women in 'dangerous' proximity to drug dealing and prostitution. Most often, temporary hostels cater to mixed genders, which may prove risky for some women. The surveillance of intimate associations, the control of bodies (through random urine samples, for example, used for drug testing),

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[7] Women in Prison (2013a) collated statistics from The Bromley Briefing and the Ministry of Justice from 2012. In addition to the 51% reconviction rate mentioned above, 'for those serving sentences of less than 12 months this increases to 62%. For those women who have served more than 10 previous custodial sentences the reoffending rate rises to 88%'.
[8] See Counsell, 2009: 4.

and the licence conditions stipulating times women should be indoors seem overly demonstrative as 'corrective' gestures when the geographies of control are sited in risky spaces. This argument pits individual women's agency against territories in which their intersecting vulnerabilities are foregrounded.

Such extensions of the terrains of surveillance and control sound unnecessarily punitive, although they may be perceived by women as paradoxically 'welcome', according to Wacquant, who demonstrates that the pains and repressions of prison are contingent.[10] The prison may act

> counterintuitively and within limits, as a stabilizing [sic] and restorative force for relations already deeply frayed by the pressures of life and labor (sic) at the bottom of the social edifice (2002: 388).

Connecting Wacquant's position with Allspach's, the underlying drive of neoliberal apparatus serves to uphold its own regimes – and to gloss Foucault's notion of biopolitics, becomes a means of producing and maintaining its own systems.[11] The current cycles of incarceration cannot and will not produce 'functional' citizens able to contribute meaningfully to society. Rather, as I demonstrate in Chapter 2, prisons produce 'offenders', whose notions of social belonging are damaged through difficulties maintaining ties with families, exclusions from job markets, lack of appropriate education, etc. Institutions belong to what US activists and reformists have called the 'Prison Industrial Complex' – a formulation that draws attention to the mutual benefits enjoyed by criminal justice and the neoliberal order.[12] By contrast, criminologists in the UK are less explicit about these intersections of poverty, criminalisation and the construction of a cheap workforce through prison labour.[13]

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[9] All prisoners receive licence conditions upon release that are determined in relation to their risk to the public, and meant to reflect their specific criminogenic histories and patterns of offending.

[10] A recent ethnography by Rosie Deedes cites a prisoner: 'In prison, although it's an alien situation which is distressing, you are still sheltered, you are kind of among a set, a set regime, you're among a set of people who are fully aware of you and you are of them, and they've got their role and you've got your role but out there is a whole different thing' (cited in Gelsthorpe et al, 2007: 26).

[11] See Fassin & Rechtman (2010) whose argument relates to the perpetuation of trauma through medicalisation of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

[12] This term is most often used in relation to the US context, although the UK has recently begun housing male prisoners in 'super-prisons'. See Ahrens, 2008; Allsbach, 2010; Lawston, 2008. By contrast, recent changes to the women's prison estate means that there are to be fewer prisons in more remote locations.

[13] While this is not the focus of this investigation, further emphasis needs to be placed on the extension of public/ state controls through private corporations operating prisons in the UK. In particular the implications of domestic labour (such as the large laundry contracts currently undertaken by female prisons) need to be understood in relation to precarious workforces, austerity politics and feminist critiques of controls over labour.

There are wider political implications to the maintenance of a vulnerable, under-skilled, poorly educated populace of ex-prisoners whose dependency on state mechanisms renders them subject to penal control even when they are out in the community. Nevertheless, dependency and the structure of prison or probation controls can seem important for women. Barbara Owen, for example, writes about 'the mix', characterising the cocktail of intrigues, experiences and petty excitements of prison life in opposition to the banality of the 'real' of the outside world. One of her ethnographic interview participants makes the following claim:

> The majority of people who run things in here never had anything in their life [...] These people have no values, no convictions. They run the street all their lives. Here they are big because they get $140 [...]. Where else in the world can that be the top of life? They have it going on. Then they parole, and it is not so good anymore, and on the streets, they are not running shit. So then they get a case, come back and hey, they are big daddy now (1998: 179).

In short, prison gives some women a frame of meaning – a sense of structure against which to measure themselves. The performative paradox of prison is that it both positions women as convicted as guilty (victimisers) and as victims (by infantilising them and reducing agency). Prison does not fundamentally challenge women's prior experiences of victimisation; and, as criminological literature demonstrates, release from prison highlights women's vulnerability.

I have described above the ways in which the state, through prison and probation services, creates a carceral geography of furthering control through constant surveillance, the limitation of freedoms and the need for self-monitoring. Rather than a clear dichotomy between punishment 'inside' and freedom 'outside', it is clear that the mechanisms of enacting control are more pervasive, and more complex in their applications. I propose that this pervasive presence serves as a phantasmagoria – which from its Greek roots, suggests a shifting and complex assemblage of images that could be both real and imagined.[14] Thus, while in prison, women imagine freedom as a spatial and behavioural set of possibilities; and yet upon release, the repetitive

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[14] Crucially, the word *agora* suggests a spatial dimension, central to this argument.

flickering of the carceral apparatus of control serves to define and delimit such freedom. 'Real freedom' is an illusion that is always already the counterpoint of incarceration, drawing on Phelan's assertion (following Lacan) that the 'impossibility [of the real] maintains rather than cancels the desire for it' (1993: 14). In this view the imagined impossible freedom of release performs a legitimising function of the punitive present. Instead, freedom is the illusion that is brought into being through the repetitive cycles of incarceration, surveillance and control.

The next section aims to problematise the institution's legacy by modelling it in relation to several key concerns in performance studies; particularly notions of time and repetition; presence and visibility; and mimetic presence. The argument thus shifts from the contextualisation of women towards the function of performance. It takes Phelan's performance ontology further by suggesting that women's experiences post-release always already recuperate the power of the institution. The following section models the needs, desires and behaviours of women post-release by exploring them through the performative lens of the institution. I propose that women's repertoires remain influenced and sometimes even dictated by institutional limitations well after release. The extended engagement with research materials demonstrates how this argument is effected.

Performance 'Out of [the] Joint': Traces of the Institution after Release
In the internal lives of women ex-prisoners the institution takes on magnified proportions, casting a long shadow in their lives, as Rowe (2011) demonstrates.[15] Further, it is through the repetition and citation of 'being' an ex-prisoner that maintains the powerful force of the institution once women are in the community, through what Goffman names 'mortification' rituals of the total institution – leading to

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[15] Rowe's findings show that

> Imprisonment challenged, developed or confirmed identities in ways that were variously welcome or distressing. This reflexive management of self-meanings is a technology of the self, employed in response to the dislocation of imprisonment in order to cope with its painful and stigmatizing [sic] meanings (2011: 587).

Yet, as Rowe's study demonstrates, prison processes and the impacts on self-narratives are not always negative, but can be associated with recovery, growth or renewal. This is associated with 'having time to reflect, taking up opportunities to address personal problems, or experiencing respite from problematic personal circumstance or the attritional effects of active addiction' (2011: 579).

what he calls a 'spoiled identity' (1963).[16] This is often in spite of – and indeed because of – interventions by charitable organisations dedicated to helping women. Labelling women 'vulnerable', 'marginalised' and ex-offenders often perpetuates the feelings of stigmatisation. Goffman and women's performances of 'spoiled identities' (1963) are discussed later in the chapter in particular relation to *This Wide Night*. At the same time self-help discourses, as well as the characterisation of women prisoners and ex-prisoners as 'victims' are pervasive. At this point I would also point towards a caveat that agencies are beginning to recognise the difficulties of victimising language and have made claims for a 'post-Corston' narrative that allows interpretation in 'terms of women's inequality' (Clinks, 2013).[17]

Seen in relation to discourses of dependency culture (powerfully addressed by Lynne Haney (2010) in her exploration of US halfway house programmes), the ex-prisoner as 'victim' has been largely adopted and absorbed by liberal media.[18] In particular, feminist criminology shows that the same women who are vilified for 'abandoning' their children through unruly behaviour are then characterised as powerless against the might of the state post-release.[19] Their powerlessness is exacerbated by awareness that children in care are not always able to maintain contact with the ex-prisoner (Brooks-Gordon & Bainham, 2004). That such a system punishes women at both ends of prison sentencing in relation to family ties suggests, *vide* Haney (2010) that the state does not have the best interests of (working-class) women and their families at heart. It is important to note, too, that intersections of ethnicity, race, class and gender

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[16] As highlighted in Chapters 2 and 3, Goffman's 'total institutions' are not merely prisons, but all institutions that serve to separate people from a wider community – for reasons as diverse as education, mental health incapacitation, the need for health quarantine, or for punishment. Readers might make connections with boarding schools, asylums or hospitals. The focus of this argument is on prisons, although I am not arguing that these factors are unique to prison.

[17] I discuss the Corston report in greater detail in Chapter 5. The report highlights the need for gender-specific sentencing, prison regimes and alternatives to custody. See the most recent reports from a series of events around Women's 'Offending'. Clinks (2013); Gelsthorpe *et al* (2007); and Women in Prison (2013a). One of the lobbying phrases used to characterise resettlement resources and services is 'wrap around' and 'through the gate'. This suggests an omnipresent set of multiple agencies poised to comfort, support and hold women's hands out of prison and into security in the community, which is not only unlikely, but also patronising. This sets up the state as paternalistic and describes a relationship characterised by dependency.

[18] See reports in *The Independent* by Guinness, 2011; Peachey, 2012; Vallely, P, 2012a, 2012b; and *The Guardian* by Roberts, Y. 2013; Roberts, J. 2008; as well as an evaluation report by Thorn, 2013.

[19] Jewkes, 2007; Rowe, 2011; Schen, 2005; Townsend, 2012a, 2012b; Vallely & Cassidy, 2012a, 2012b.

coagulate in these narrative structures.[20] They often serve to reinforce typologies of ex-prisoner, in which race and class intersect, with the most 'acceptable' unruly woman a white British middle class woman, and the least acceptable a foreign national woman from a minority ethnic background (Vallely & Cassidy, 2012a, 2012b). Women experience further marginalisation and the vulnerability of familial bonds as 'failures'; and often articulate frustration at victimisation they experience as mothers (Brink, 2003; Golden, 2005). The effect of this is that public perspectives on women ex-prisoners (particularly in response to theatrical representations) become sedimented in particular range of affectual responses – pity, shame and outrage predominating.

The chapter seeks to explore how the norms and values of incarceration are repeated citationally long after women have left prison. The prison as trope needs to be challenged in artistic reproductions in order to avoid constructing prison in the cultural imaginary as a monolithic apparatus rather than as a process that is characterised by repetitive cycles. It is necessary then, to return to the notion of engendered habitus as I firstly introduce, and then unpack, some of the performance implications of prison's repetitive presence as traumatic trope in the lives of ex-prisoners.

The criminological literature demonstrates that, upon release from prison, most women return to impoverished neighbourhoods, with little chance of sufficient access to services and resources (Leverentz, 2010: 651). Often, they must navigate the difficulties of remaining isolated from criminal activities since (generally) women's criminal activities are networked in relation to intimate partners, family and friends (Allspach, 2010; Leverentz, 2010). A key factor in women's cycles of reoffending relate to intersecting issues related to poor educational attainment, low quality training in prison, little access to training outside prison and few job opportunities in a risk-averse employment landscape. In addition, the criminal 'licence' is used (often with extreme implications), to delimit and contain the repertoire of behaviours of women. For example, being in 'the wrong place' or drinking alcohol (even if not drunk) could mean

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[20] Gilfus says the 'process of criminalization [sic] for women is indeed intricately connected to women's subordinate position in society where victimization [sic] coupled with economic marginality related to race, class, and gender all to often blur the boundaries between victims and offenders' (2012: 27). Women living in poverty are often impacted harder than middle class women, who may have better access to childcare provision and more stable support networks while they are incarcerated.

a woman ex-prisoner 'violates' licence conditions, and is returned to prison. As noted above by Allspach, this suggests that women become self-monitoring to the degree of risk posed by their surroundings. They must adopt a set of strategies and tactics related to identifying and avoiding risk. In other words, they need to engage in complex re-inscriptions of their own status as survivors/ victims – particularly since, in many cases, women's criminal activities stem from addiction and association with violent men (Allspach, 2010; Gelsthorpe et al, 2007). Thus, women that intend to maintain 'successful' pathways out of prison necessarily engage pre-determined terminologies, and a sanctioned habitus that remains focused on their presumed victimhood and vulnerability.

The limen between inside/outside, incarceration/freedom becomes a site of negotiation in which women must confront the distance between their current situation and imagined situation. Much of the time women's re-entry into society coincides with painful negotiation of practical problems relating to housing, access to children and benefits, and in some cases, the ability to get a job, or access to benefits. Almost all women leaving prison would face significant worries about surviving – especially since in order to justify their 'freedom' they need to at least attempt to refuse involvement in what may have been a lucrative 'career' from the proceeds of crime (through sex work or involvement in drug and gang culture, for example). Feminist criminologists have engaged with the gender specific issues in criminal justice policy and practice that could increase women's opportunity for desistance.[21]

Carlton and Segrave's important study on women's survival post-release demonstrates that 'experience of imprisonment can emulate and magnify pre-existing traumas, placing women at risk upon release' (2011: 558). Their investigation draws attention to the prison as extension of trauma that has circulated in their lives in complex and intersecting ways prior to incarceration. Yet, in this consideration of prison itself as traumatic, they unpack the functions of the institution as mimetically reproducing the dynamics of abusive relationships. They see 'prison as punishing women in a way that emulates and entrenches their experiences of control and victimization [sic] on the

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[21] Desistance is the criminological term for not reoffending. See Cheliotis, 2012b; McNeil et al, 2010.

outside' (2011: 558). Gelsthorpe et al, following Bourdieu, suggest that community based resources could increase both 'human and social capital':

> Post-prison provision arguably needs to empower women both psychologically and materially so that women can re-evaluate and distance themselves from the attitudes and values which characterised their lives before and during prison (Gelsthorpe et al, 2007: 25).

Gelsthorpe and colleagues' detailed research for the Fawcett Society on resource provision for women in the community suggests that women who were 'successful' desisters 'crafted highly traditional 'replacement selves' (e.g. child of God, good wife, involved mother) that they associated with their pathways out of crime' (2007: 22).[22] In other words, they need to develop a post-institutional habitus that can 'pass' in the day-to-day struggle to survive outside of institutional constraints (and comforts). Most women significantly underestimate the challenges of re-entry in relation to how a new 'performance' may conflict with/ contradict or undermine the 'place' they may have occupied prior to incarceration. However, most women do not factor in the enduring stigma of prison in their imagining of life outside; because, for women who have led 'criminal lives' before going to prison, stigma, deviance and 'spoiled identities' are often important identity markers, forming a codified and accepted habitus. The stigma may not feel devastating to their own identity in this case, since the prior habitus had already incorporated danger or risk. If they attempt to remove themselves from this kind of group or 'association', then they need to develop new repertoires of living. The analysis of women's experiences post-release involves their abilities to face uncertainty, the willingness and capacity to adapt to the expected normative role. In addition, successful desistance requires that women's achievements (such as staying 'clean' from drugs or alcohol) are recognised and validated.

For those women that have been in prison without having had the kinds of experience mentioned above (in terms of risk or dangerous criminal habitus prior to imprisonment), re-entry may be a shock, because they experience the stigma of having been a prisoner is a visible marker. Women mention how factors such as appearance, for example their skin, weight, as well as ways of walking, and ability to cope with

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[22] Their findings also indicate that 'work was not a key factor. This may be partly explained by a shift in the market economy and the fact that women are frequently marginalised in unstable service sector jobs. However, this may also be to do with how women see themselves' (2007: 22).

everyday things such as traffic have been affected by institutionalisation. Women's prison habitus has been so structured, limited and controlled that the unpredictability of the flows and tensions of everyday obstacles can seem insurmountable. There is an assumption, noted by Goffman (1963) that everyone 'can see', or read what he calls the 'mortification' through their bodies – perhaps more relevant in times where women wore the scarlet letter, for example, or had heads shaved during incarceration.[23]

Unlike Hawthorne's character Hester Prynne, however, contemporary women leaving prison do not have 'real' stigmatising symbols, but feel marked by traces of incarceration. This 'marking' is experienced as embodied, in the sense that the body becomes accustomed to restricted distance, for example, or that sight is reduced due to lack of stimulus.[24] The women negotiate an interrelated set of stigmas – social judgements related to physical or psychological 'appearance' – alongside the constant presence of the prison's function of increased self-surveillance. Such stigmatisation leads to women's excessive shame, anxiety and struggle to release prison's grip on their self-image. As Goffman suggests, however, stigmatised people can develop a capacity for improvising in the everyday. That is, women are required to engage with a wider set of survival skills that are fundamentally about successful performance.[25] Goffman's insistence on the development of normative performances that help to 'pass' in the 'real' world outside of the institution raises some important questions with which performance studies has been concerned. The following section returns to

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[23] Nathaniel Hawthorne's treatment of Hester Prynne in the novel *A Scarlet Letter* has been well worn in scholarly accounts. I include a short extract that is indicative of the letter as stigma: 'On the breast of her gown, in fine red cloth, surrounded with an elaborate embroidery and fantastic flourishes of gold thread, appeared the letter A. It was so artistically done, and with so much fertility and gorgeous luxuriance of fancy, that it had all the effect of a last and fitting decoration to the apparel which she wore; and which was of a splendor in accordance with the taste of the age, but greatly beyond what was allowed by the sumptuary regulations of the colony... But the point which drew all eyes, and, as it were, transfigured the wearer, - so that both men and women, who had been familiarly acquainted with Hester Prynne, were now impressed as if they beheld her for the first time, - was that SCARLET LETTER, so fantastically embroidered and illuminated upon her bosom. It had the effect of a spell, taking her out of the ordinary relations with humanity, and inclosing her in a sphere by herself' (2010: 30, emphasis in the original).
[24] These points are often noted in relation to activism concerning babies in prison in relation to the babies' biological and psychological development being hindered by incarceration (See Vallely, 2012a).
[25] I note here that I do not agree with Goffman's characterization of stigmatised people in opposition to what he calls 'normals' (1963), nor do I advocate his repertoires of surviving stigma, which he does not necessarily contest. Yet, his explorations of how stigmatised persons present various 'symbols' is valuable to this argument.

some of these questions, in particular, relating them with trauma theory in order to revisit the implications of the 'tragic-containment' model.

The argument that the institution maintains a disciplinary function is, of course, not new. Foucault argued this in *Discipline and Punish* (1977), though my argument in this chapter draws more on the notion that there is a wide frame through which to understand the means by which (criminal) bodies continue to experience stigma, erasure and invisibility after release. The seeming impossibility of 'transformation' discourses is evident in light of the structural inequalities that continue to perform exclusionary functions against women whose race, ethnicity, habitus and gender performances do not conform to societal norms. In light of the tension between narratives of transformation, the probation-related imperative to perform successful reintegration, and the affects related to carceral traces, the next section returns to the importance of performance studies in order to unpack some of the complexities raised by women leaving prison.

There is both an ethical and intellectual obligation, following Conquergood (2002a: 342), for performance studies to examine the performative function of women's cycles of incarceration in relation to the political implications in the UK. Yet, Conquergood was writing on the performance of lethal theatre (or the ritualised execution of death row prisoners) in the United States, while my focus here is on the ways women's emergence out of the 'civil death' (Billone, 2009) of incarceration is singular in its lack of ritual, its paradoxical refusal of continuity of meaning.[26] In other words, release from prison can suggest a severing of meaning, rather than a return to a 'normal' life. Rather than experiencing coherence associated with a return to the 'real', women's narratives are fragmented. Such fragmentation of meaning is a logical conclusion to the pains of imprisonment. Yet, the fragmentation is not merely the women's ontological experience, but relates to the dynamic of stories played out in the public sphere.

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[26] Billone outlines the function of incarceration as effectively characterizing women as 'dead' in the civic realm, since they are unable to function as citizens (i.e.: have the right to vote). In other words, for Billone, the women's existence is circumscribed by civic sphere in which they have no agency or participation in democratic functioning. This is relevant in the UK context since there has been a refusal to cooperate with the EU mandate on voting rights for prisoners (Prison Reform Trust, 2013a).

The publicness of punishment has been explored in Chapter 3, but it is the specificity of what is publicly visible as women leave prison that is important here. Writing about the death penalty in the US, Conquergood demonstrates that the spectacle of public executions was historically driven by audience fascination with the 'fate of the prisoner's immortal soul' (2002a: 345-346). By contrast, there is very little spectacle remaining in relation to women leaving prison in the UK. However, despite being able to depart from the physical site of incarceration under the illusion of freedom, women are nevertheless drawn into a series of performative reckonings that are as much about attempting to live 'by the letter' as staking a claim to a place in society. As I suggest earlier in this chapter, women are required to follow a script after release that has been determined by probation officers in relation to their sentence. While in prison, they are monitored and surveilled and subject to 'writing up'. In the community too, the women are inscribed by probation reports that, instead of reflecting their complex and chaotic lives, often reduce their stories to bullet points about how they served their sentences. Probation reports are thus not only about how women survive on a day-to-day basis, but underscored by how they 'do time'. The wider context of crime and justice, and how they are represented, is upheld by the symbolism of women's recidivism. The inevitable story of hopelessness, melancholia and loss is an argument that supports the existence of the institution as curative. Prison's 'failure', when played out on the stages of women's everyday domestic settings after release, paradoxically becomes its justification: women must be incarcerated again because the first time did not work, returning ex-prisoners to the cycle of tragic containment.

Performance, Trauma and Witnessing: Prison's Presence
Performance research is not merely about describing events, but it poses problems about embodied experiences of doing, acting, being and witnessing. Thus, in this chapter, what is foregrounded is the mimetic repetition of the theatrical presence of the prison. The complicity and reciprocity of meaning-making emerges through women performing the cycles from prison to the community and onward – either by returning to prison or by treading a pathway out of a life of crime. I propose that,

following Roach (1996) and Taylor (2003), there is value in thinking about the impact of performance genealogies as constitutive of a kind of cultural performance.

> Performance genealogies draw on the idea of expressive movements as mnemonic reserves, including patterned movements made and remembered by bodies, residual movements retained implicitly in images and words (or in the silences between them), and imaginary movements dreamed in minds, not prior to language but constitutive of it, a psychic rehearsal for physical actions drawn from a repertoire that culture provides (Roach, 1996: 26).

I do not mean to conflate all women's experiences of prison habitus as constitutive of a singular or even coherent 'prison culture', but rather, to propose that prison's performance in the lives of women leaves a trace or scar of its presence. In doing so, the repetition of prison (through memory, mimesis, stigma and nightmares) is aligned with the performativity of trauma as outlined by Douglass and Vogler (2003). I return now to what I outline as modes of trauma in Chapters 2 and 4 before examining several instances of women's return to the community as scarred by the mimetic repetition of the presence of prison.

Links between trauma and narrative have gained prominence in recent scholarship (Ball, 2003; Caruth, 1995; Vogler, 2003; Wade, 2009), and yet, as Diana Taylor argues (2002: 154), traumatic memories often rely on live, interactive performance for transmission. Several studies have concentrated on the demand for testimony and witnessing that trauma narratives propose (Felman and Laub, 2002). Yet, Performance Studies scholars have developed further explorations on the potential of the live encounter in performance as a participatory, shared moment of telling and listening (Harris, 1999; Peschel, 2012; Rokem, 2000; Stuart Fisher, 2011; Wake, 2009b; 2013). Taylor says that 'bearing witness is a live process, a doing, an event that takes place in real time, in the presence of a listener' (2002: 154) who 'comes to be a participant and a co-owner of the traumatic event' (Felman and Laub, 1992: 57). However, trauma narratives do not turn on their truth claims, but on their aesthetic qualities. As Ball suggests, there is a necessity to recall the difficulties of validating experience of trauma: 'it would be impossible to validate survivor experience on moral grounds that require consensus about its status as a referent in relation to the law' (2003: 261). In

this research, then, the women's status as unruly, criminal, and stigmatised always already positions their narratives or testimonies of surviving trauma (including in the institution) as suspicious, partial, and unreliable. Perhaps it is in this frame that organisations dedicated to staging women's concerns tend towards positioning women's experiences firmly as survivor-victims. This would demand a particular kind of moral/ ethical witnessing from audiences whose own positions in relation to the law are called into question. I turn now to specific examples from two charitable organisations in the UK by considering how charities are always already required to perform according to the shifting dynamics of the socio-eonomic milieu.

Bearing Witness to Women's Pathways out of Prison: The Balances between 'Success' and 'Failure'

Women in Prison (W-i-P) is the only national charity that has a remit to both support women through the gate and lobby for more equitable treatment while women are in prison. There are two main hubs – one in London and one in Manchester – staffed by professional counsellors and support workers as well as trainee staff comprising women ex-prisoners. It is a small but committed team of women. They form part of this research as a political organisation not afraid of engaging with the arts as a means of representing the concerns of their constituents. Their primary focus is always on the legal and social support of vulnerable women through the gate, and as such they concentrate on reducing reoffending.

Rachel Halford, director of Women in Prison, says:

> On release, they wait weeks for their benefits, are often deemed intentionally homeless [27] by removing themselves to prison and therefore can't get a job or their children returned from care. Six out of 10 women on short sentences reoffend (cited in Roberts, 2013).

Some women report that they felt safer in prison, due to the chaotic nature of their neighbourhoods, the ongoing threat of violence from 'associates', and the inability of the probation services to engage with the multiple potential threats to stability

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[27] 'Intentionally homeless' is a bureaucratic category. Halford suggests that if women's incarceration results in problems keeping a home, it is seen as a deliberate choice on the part of benefits agencies. This suggests an extension of the blame from the women who offend to their children, for example.

(Carlton & Segrave, 2011). This charity campaigns for women-friendly institutions as well as conducting support and outreach with women ex-prisoners in the community, particularly in relation to accessing services in order to reduce the potential for re-offending.[28] In order to understand the ways Women in Prison's discourse operates, I make use of Haney's valuable work on community-based penal interventions for women (2010). While ostensibly working to affect policy and practice, and whilst its local drop-in centres in Manchester and London meet some of the social needs of women, there is a fission between the performative force and rhetoric in the ways women's voices are exploited.

I attended an event at Whitehall (referred to in Chapter 2 and Thorn, 2011b)[29] in which women's offending and re-offending were framed in relation to state failures: the charity clearly signals that its intention is to challenge current policy by relying on the force of statistics that demonstrate the futility of prison sentences for many women, the unequal treatment in the eyes of the law, and the harsh impact on families during and after incarceration. The women presenting on behalf of the charity framed the ways state control, local authorities, as well as community and personal circumstances intersect in the fields of women's criminal acts and in their processes of resettlement. The event also served to launch a book of poetry by women in prison working with Leah Thorn (2011b) on the subject of self-harm.

In such public displays platforming marginalised voices, there is often a simplistic cosmetic solution offered that cannot possibly account for the multiple ways prison's traces are evident in women's lives. In both Thorn's (2011b) edited collection of poetry and in the event at Whitehall, women's emotional needs were foregrounded as if mental health were the predominant consideration that needed to be resolved, rather than the problem of incarcerating mentally ill women in the first place, or indeed, the

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[28] The notion of the gendered institution has been widely discussed by criminologists. While most agree that specific attention must be paid to the cycles of criminalisation, sentencing and the resource provision in prison, the actual concept of 'women-friendly' institutions needs further critical attention for the ways it often deletes intersecting issues relating to women's contexts and vulnerabilities. See Corston, 2009; Gelsthorpe et al, 2007; Hedderman et al, 2008; Heidensohn, 2012 and Ministry of Justice, 2010.

[29] This event was a Third Party Solidarity session hosted by Whitehall engaging with women in the criminal justice system. Also see p66.

implications of prison on women's mental health. In the framing of the discussions, it was as if mental ill health were a performance strategy, rather than symptomatic of a wide range of complex causes sometimes enacted on the body.[30] What was effective in the event, however, was the ways the organisation foregrounded the contexts of the discussion as always already under the shadow of prison, probation and community programmes.[31] While W-i-P's aim is to support women 'through the gate' and to provide compelling evidence to policy makers on the need for gender-specific provision, the specific training programme offered by Clean Break sits alongside programmes that aim to raise awareness about the impact of criminal justice in the lives of women (at all stages of the 'offending' cycle).

Clean Break's main activity in their purpose-built studios in North London is an education and training programme for women. They target ex-prisoners and women 'at risk' of offending due to drug and alcohol abuse or social marginality. Their programme offers a range of training possibilities that seek to engage women in social activity, train them in skills relating to theatre practice, and also to seek transferable skills for pathways to further education, such as essay writing, team work and confidence in public speaking. The organisation is explicitly feminist in approach, working in an all female 'safe space' for women who may have been vulnerable to abuse by men to be able to focus on self- development through education. It is beyond the scope of this study to place too much emphasis on the education programme, although its value in producing performances by and with women ex-prisoners and those at risk of offending, is clear.[32] Rather, I will turn to another performance from their artistic programme to serve as a counterpoint to my prior arguments about

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[30] This echoes the long performative history of hysteria – demonstrated in the figure of physician Charcot and his scopophilic performance demonstrations in which he proposed 'curative' functions for hysteria through, amongst other things, masturbation. See Bosworth, 2000; Diamond, 1997; Duggan & Wallis, 2011. Schneider discusses strategies in feminist performance for recuperating hysteria (1997: 115-116).

[31] This, as Haney demonstrates, relates to the difficulties of surviving as a third sector organisation, dependant on funding and support from a range of stakeholders (2010: 222). However, rather than the tactic of 'wishing social inequalities away' (2010: 222), W-I-P does not stop listening to women themselves, even though this work demands more interpretive space.

[32] I also wish to note that I had a vested interest in the organisation as an ex-facilitator there, and thus did not want to engage too explicitly with that aspect of their work. However, I have consciously chosen to bring my archival experiences of working with Clean Break into the autoethnographic reflections, providing valuable triangulation of hypotheses between current repertoires and archival experiences.

women who leave prison. First, I demonstrate the ways this community-based training programme offers a set of survival repertoires to its students and graduates that serve as citational repetitions.

In a promotional video for a student production, one student performer at Clean Break makes a point about the value of motivations for desisting from reoffending. She is quick to point out that motivation is not always predicated on mass resources or expensive programming, but that 'sometimes it can be a little thing that makes a massive difference for people' (Clean Break, 2013).[33] Yet, as Haney argues, the myth of 'transformation' place enormous pressure on individuals, and it can be 'debilitating and ultimately threatening' (2010: 153). It supposes that a habitus can be adopted that can somehow be divorced from the 'field' – suggesting that women who emerge from community based programmes will have transformed to such an extent that the material realities of community, housing, relationships and addiction can be recognised and assessed for risk and danger and avoided through sheer strong will.

Whilst there is undoubtedly a great deal of value in the programme, there is also an underlying tendency to rely on victimising narratives, to the extent that women begin to repeat 'scripts' that testify to the ways particular interventions 'saved them' from themselves. I do not wish to undermine the value of such education and training, but rather to draw attention to the ways in which the programmes construct and repeat narratives that serve to uphold a hegemonic position of prison in binary opposition to the relative freedom of the course or programme. Yet, such binary discourses do not make allowance for the slipperiness of concepts such as 'freedom'; nor do they scrutinise the problematic assumptions of victimhood and transformation that at the very least demand rigorous longitudinal research, rather than self-reportage – particularly in light of the ways reporting by third sector organisations is tied to the value it can offer for future funding and support. Therefore, it would be unlikely that 'failure' to uphold the 'transformation myth' would be disseminated by the organisation, since it would undermine their claims.[34]

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[33] See Herrmann, 2009.
[34] See Chapter 4 in which I discuss the problem of evidence.

It may be worth considering to what extent the myth of transformation is an obvious 'drag act' (Butler, 1993b), in the sense that it is deployed against and through the image of women as survivor-victim/s. In other words, it does not serve the interests of the organisation's survival to have women who leave truly able to survive in society – but rather, the ways in which 'transformation' is painted on top of the victimised women is bold and brash – a citation (cf. Diamond, 1997). The chapter explores performative pathways out of prison by outlining the pathways or expectations of 'success' (desistance) or 'failure' (re-offending). What is not accounted for is the vast spectrum of possibilities that exist in the performance of everyday life that slip between success and failure. However, probation systems are called to characterise women's adaptation and resilience to the community in bold, quantitative measurable outcomes rather than reflecting the more nuanced possibilities of expression related to the self, identification, work and leisure. The measurement of women in these limited terms (already outlined in Chapter 2) suggests that they need to adopt the language and performance register in which they are being judged. It is this citational adoption of 'cheer', or 'strength' or 'resilience' that I propose is a drag act. In order to explore this further I engage with a final play text by Chloë Moss.

I turn now to analyse the performance of *This Wide Night*. I have mentioned this play in passing in other chapters as emblematic of performance about women in prison.[35] It was produced in the UK in 2008, was recipient of the Susan Smith Blackburn award for writing in 2009, and has been staged in Australia and the USA.[36] In the play, the two characters, Marie and Lorraine are reunited when Lorraine is released from prison. They are unlikely friends: Lorraine is a cheery yet medicated older woman whose immediate action on release is to look for her old cellmate, Marie. The younger woman, Marie, has been housed in a dreary studio flat. She is consistently on edge, masking something from Lorraine. As Jill Dolan notes in her review of the Broadway staging of the play, the women's back stories remain murky, 'as if Moss insists that the details of their histories, their crimes, and their rehabilitation don't really matter to how they'll go forward in their lives' (2010: online).

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[35] See Chapter 2.
[36] See Perman, L., 2009.

'I want you to look like a mum': Gender Norms and Institutional Haunting in *This Wide Night*

The play raises important questions and obstacles faced by women who re-enter society after time in prison. It stages concerns relating to the mask adopted by women who feel they must 'present' themselves as coping because by definition being 'free' is understood to be better that prison in an unspoken hierarchy of contexts. Most importantly, the play's setting within Marie's studio presents the contingent and precarious placing of these women as adumbrated by the carceral geographies of limited mobility, restricted opportunities and modest aspirational horizons. Both women leave the flat (never together), but the audience experiences them within the confines of the four walls of the studio. The fact that they never leave this precarious 'home' suggests that even when women do manage to obtain housing, it does not indicate the beginning of a cycle to desistance, but rather, the possibility that failure/ re-offending are very likely. This is suggested through the play's action in the isolation, marginalisation, poverty and lack of social ties evident in the two characters' narratives. Running throughout the play is the condition of the relationship between the two women. Criminologists demonstrate that relationships are one of the important factors in resettlement (Gelsthorpe et al, 2007: 22). The analysis will also look at the intersections of trauma studies with thematics of family reparations as the two women attempt to reassert their positions in structures that have been strained (or broken) by crime and incarceration.

Jill Dolan's reflection on a New York production of *This Wide Night* highlights the impossible ties between the women as constitutive of a mimetic repetition of prison's operations.

> Because the women don't have the emotional or social or financial resources to propel themselves elsewhere, the room becomes an existential "no exit," in which they're bound to one another through fear as well as through longing for a future neither one of them can really imagine (Dolan, 2010: online).

In her reflection on Lorraine's institutionalised habitus, Dolan mentions that for the character, her biological functions have continued to be governed by the mechanisms

of the prison. Time, for Lorraine, is marked out between mealtimes and medication time. She depends on the regularity of these markers in her day.

> Lorraine, whose awkward, jerking movements represent a woman desperately trying to embody what she thinks freedom means, hasn't a clue how to remake her life. Lorraine is so accustomed to the regimentation of prison life that she gets hungry precisely at 5:30, when dinner was served inside (Dolan, 2010: online).

While her body is still adumbrated by the presence of the prison, she is emotionally dependent on Marie – seemingly the only human contact Lorraine has had since leaving prison. Yet, despite being more world-wise, having been out of prison for a while, Marie is not clear from the pull of prison. Dolan characterises them both as 'among the forgotten, formerly institutionalized [sic] women for whom a world not bound by four confining walls is impenetrable, unreadable, and utterly uninhabitable' (Dolan, 2010: online).

The play does not merely demonstrate the impact of the institution on their bodies, but positions the remains or traces of institutional expectations in the form of probation as infantilising. In my analysis, I have found it necessary to include fairly long interchanges between the women that I find necessary for the reader's sense of the cyclical, repetitive dialogue that reinforces the characters' sense of hopelessness.

> MARIE. I don't have to see her no more. That Suzanne. She got right on my tits. She used to put her arm round me when I sneezed like somethin' bad had just happened. If we were sat next to each other. In the park. On the bus. I'd sneeze and her fuckin' arm'd come round and give a little…
> LORRAINE. Jesus, I wouldn't want none of that. I just wanna bit of help getting some money, somewhere proper to stay. I wouldn't want none of that fuckin'… shit.
> MARIE. You haven't got no choice sometimes. S'what you gotta do. Prove you're good enough. Show them.
> LORRAINE. I'm not a performing monkey. What you supposed to do?
> MARIE. Talk. Only I never said nothing. She did all the talking and I pretended I was listenin'. She used to say stuff like 'value'. Not like 'value for money', like 'personal value' (2008: 10 – 11).

Marie's disgust at the suggestion that she performs 'strength' is at odds with her bravado in this scene. It is also undermined by a later scene, in which she reveals

herself to be afraid, and unable to cope with the minutiae of everyday life. Yet, in the early sections of the play, Marie engages in tutelage of Lorraine, giving advice for how to remove the visible traces of prison – in other words how to survive her release. She is defensive, buffered by her months 'outside', and thus puts on a face of courage - partly, we suspect, to entertain Lorraine, and partly to convince herself that she is managing. Marie buys Lorraine a gift of a blouse, so that she can appear more 'like a mother' when she meets her adult son for the first time since he was adopted, aged seven. Marie scrutinises Lorraine while she changes into the blouse, which is too small for her.

> LORRAINE. […] How about that?
> MARIE. I want you to look nice.
> LORRAINE. Well, this is it, I wanna look nice but it isn't a fashion parade.
> *Pause.*
> MARIE. I want you to look like a mum.
> LORRAINE. What's that meant to mean?
> MARIE. You wore that jumper inside all the time.
> *Beat.*
> LORRAINE. So.
> MARIE. So I just think… you can tell. (*Beat.*) You have an idea in your head.
> He might have an idea in his head. Of something, I dunno… what (2008: 32).

Marie goes on to tell Lorraine how she imagines her mother. The scene demonstrates a performance of gender norms as Marie offers to 'make' Lorraine over into a more effective, more believable woman, rather than appear to be a 'lifer'. The younger woman attempts to dress Lorraine 'as if' she were a 'real mother'. She implies that the prison jumper she criticises negates this element of Lorraine's identity; as if the costume of a 'mum' will be convincing enough for Lorraine's now-grown boy to see her as such. Marie's actions suggest she is projecting her own desires for her mother to be something particular onto Lorraine. However, Lorraine says she wants to 'be herself' (2008: 34). The older woman rejects Marie's explicit suggestion that prison traces can be seen, and instead remembers a specific duffel coat her little boy wore when he was taken into care years previously. This memory – described through the sensory traces it has repeated over the years – is what has nurtured her own identity of motherhood during her life sentence. While we experience this story of loss from

Lorraine's perspective, the image of the seven-year old boy being removed from his home suggests a traumatising cycle of abandonment, loss, and guilt.

While Moss never explicitly states Lorraine's motives for killing someone, we are led to assume she murdered a long-time abuser (presumably her partner). Some readings of the play suggest the abuse was targeting her child, Ben. This understanding reveals a different understanding of the cycle of tragic containment – whereby Lorraine's violent (self) defense is justified, and therefore the trauma of incarceration and its impacts on her identity as a mother in particular, as well as on the son (who is himself a survivor/victim), is the core of the play's impact.

Later, Marie turns on Lorraine for settling into a comfortable routine after Lorraine chastises her for coming home late. The audience is not given precise information about what she is doing outside of the studio. Depending on the direction of this scene, it could seem she is involved in prostitution again, or another nefarious activity she needs to keep secret from Lorraine, who, it seems, has internalised the institutional narratives about 'sanctioned' and 'unsanctioned' behaviours. Marie tries to deflect attention away from her nocturnal activities by telling Lorraine they should go away on holiday (something she mocked her for in an earlier scene as unrealistic). Lorraine is unwilling.

> LORRAINE. Why the rush?
> MARIE. Why Not?
> LORRAINE. It's a bit… unexpected.
> MARIE. What, your affairs not in order or something? You not finished highlighting the rest of the week's telly in the TV Quick? (*Beat.*) Just stick a pair of knickers in a bag. Get a B&B. Go and sit on the beach-
> LORRAINE. It's raining.
> MARIE. Go and sit in a fucking pub, then. This was your idea, Lorraine.
> LORRAINE. I know.
> MARIE. Right then. Get ready.
> LORRAINE. Not… now though. Not straight away.
> MARIE. Why not?
> LORRAINE. I just need a bit of time. Get me head round it. Feels a bit… sudden.

MARIE. I'm talking about going to Brighton for two nights not emigrating to Australia. (*Beat.*) When was the last time you did something spontaneous, Lorraine?

LORRAINE. I'm not s'posed to go on holiday yet, am I?

MARIE. Oh fuck them, Lol.[37] You're a free woman now. What about the sand between your toes… all that?

LORRAINE. I do want to. I'd love it, Marie. More than anything. Just need to get geared up first, that's all (2008: 48).

Having become settled into a housing arrangement, having her personal networks, and a promise that Marie will approach her employers for a job, Lorraine feels somewhat secure in the studio flat. Dolan's understanding of their predicament is that their intimacy

comes from being forced to share space, which fostered a connection between them that they can't even describe or name. On the outside, Marie wields the power of the space and the lease, but Lorraine holds the power to care, an obscure notion on which Marie clearly can't depend. She's waiting to be abandoned again, as it appears her mother left her earlier in her life (Dolan, 2010: online).

Tensions between Marie and Lorraine grow more visceral after Marie returns in the early hours of the morning having been beaten in some way that remains unexplained. Lorraine attempts to comfort her:

LORRAINE. We'll be alright, you and me, Marie. We will.

MARIE. Why d'you keep doin' that, Lorraine? Why d'you keep sayin' 'we' and 'you and me'? There is no fuckin' 'you and me'.

LORRAINE Course there is… what you saying that for? I love you.

MARIE. Oh Lorraine, stop it, you make me feel fuckin' – you creep me out when you say you love me. You don't even fucking know me.

LORRAINE. Don't say that, Marie, don't say that.

MARIE. Love. You aren't my fucking mother, Lorraine, or my fucking… girlfriend.

LORRAINE. Marie, stop it don't say stuff like – We're mates –

MARIE. Yeah, well, 'mates' don't spend every fucking second of every fucking day together, Lorraine. They don't sleep in the same fucking room night after endless night, talking about everything under the sun apart from what the fuck they're gonna do with their miserable fucking lives.

LORRAINE. There's things to look forward to. Things to hope for (2008: 54).

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[37] 'Lol' is Marie's nickname for Lorraine.

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This extract demonstrates the effects of a temporal lag in their experiences. Marie's cynicism about what 'freedom' means is connected to her sensation of having no reliable connections, and a lack of security – financial and bodily – even though she has been out of prison for more than six months. On the other hand, while Marie is concerned with the fear of tangible and practical loss, Lorraine is holding on to their connection from prison, where trust and proximity meant that 'mates' could survive because of ties of solidarity or kinship. Marie's reaction reveals the need for the re-working of prison habitus outside.

For both women, the dramaturgy emphasises the traps and pitfalls of idealised imaginaries – either of what 'care' or kinship might mean, or of what 'freedom' might mean. The play highlights the practicalities of surviving in a hostile world that operates on financial and skills-based capital rather than the capacity for care, patience and generosity demonstrated in different ways by the two characters. Yet, while it is both warm and empathetic in tone, the play conforms to a rigid understanding of gender habitus that demonstrates the poverty of the role spectrum for women who leave prison. Perhaps more than any of the other plays discussed here, *This Wide Night* positions gender norms very specifically as a set of internalised and disciplinary functions that, in particular, have traumatic consequences for children when the norms of family, care and protection from harm are spoiled. Indeed, the very gender of women criminals results a 'spoiled' identity – to gloss Goffman's (1963) concept.[38] In this view, women who commit crime call their legitimacy as women into question. Furthermore, the processes of prison and the legacy of its operations serve to further erode the notion of a coherent pathway or narrative potential that conforms to gendered expectations.

In the final sequence, Marie explains why she seemed to abandon Lorraine in her final months of the sentence. She conflates the prison with her relationship with Lorraine.

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[38] Goffman's notes on the management of spoiled identities relates to stigmatisation discussed briefly in Chapters 2 and 6. The stigma arises from individuals living with (real or perceived) undesirable or adverse characteristics that make them 'less worthy' than so-called 'normal' members of society. As mentioned previously, I do not agree with the distinction between 'normal' and 'spoiled' identities, but see the value in Goffman's explanation of how stigma can serve to performatively repeat the undesirable qualities, thereby externalising the internalised stigma.

Her yearning for the intimacy of their friendship or nurturing relationship became located in the spatial dimension of the institution.

> MARIE. I'm so sorry I stopped coming in. I hated it.
> LORRAINE. That's alright… Jesus, that's okay. Fuckin' hell, you've just got shot of the place, you don't wanna be back in there every five minutes, do yer? Gotta get on with things.
> MARIE. I hated it mostly because I sort of missed it. (*Beat*.) Or I missed you (2008: 58).

It is as if she could not imagine it outside of that space, and therefore that the plan to move in together was an attempt to hold on to, or map across their connection – bridging the chasm between inside and outside. Yet, Marie's temporal and emotional distance from prison as she navigated her everyday life threw a new perspective on that intimacy. It is as if, rather than the legacy of prison casting the negative shadow on 'real life', for Marie, the everyday casts a pall on the prison reality. Each space makes the other unbearable. In each space, the other becomes a phantasmagoria of impossibility and loss. This points towards the inevitable repetition of inside/ outside as a scopic field, not only for representations of women post-release, but in their own performative reflections of their time inside.

Reflecting Inside/ Outside[39]
In prison workshops after this play, the women always wanted to piece together the backstories of the characters. While Moss is deliberately obfuscatory about biographical specifics, women always seemed to want to define what was happening outside the studio flat, reading into the blocking, body language and hidden codes of performance narrative details that resonated from their experiences. For instance, many of the women accessing drug treatment were quick to recognise Marie as a 'junkie' who was 'turning tricks' with her landlord, for example, whenever she left the studio. Most of the women in workshops were sympathetic to Marie, although they would always challenge her on her lies – suggesting that the code on the outside should be about trust.

Many women wanted to believe in the possibility for care and affection, but were often cynical about the possibilities for friendships mapping across from

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[39] The research diary extracts here relate to my archival experiences as workshop facilitator in a Clean Break prison tour in 2009 with this play, in which I facilitated workshops in 9 women's prisons across the UK through theatre activities after the performance by professional performers.

inside/outside. Many women claimed that prison time was about being alone, which seemed to contradict the empirical evidence of community and intimacy in workshops and between prison buildings. Nevertheless, these statements testify to the schism – both spatially and emotionally described – in relation to trust and togetherness. (Research Diary about archival experience of Clean Break Workshops in 2009, July 2013).

For women in prisons watching *This Wide Night*, there is an important exchange that may be considered mimetic-cathartic.[40] While they are currently incarcerated, they are reflecting on the pathways out of prison and their own potential (and archival) experiences of release. For the audience, there is catharsis in the shared witnessing of what Peschel outlines as affect, time, social space and contested power (2012: 163). Together, women witness the characters' new relationships to prior shared experiences that were institutional but nevertheless experienced as personal and embodied. They also encounter the ways prison continues to function as a touchstone – both spatial and temporal – to which women refer as they testify to their experiences of incarceration.

The notion of catharsis in relation to the expectation of the purging of fear, as pointed out in Chapter 2 demands that an audience feel sufficiently able to identify themselves in relation to the protagonists' struggles. However, this kind of sentimental assumption suggests that a theatre-going audience would identify with women whose stories reflect intersections of poverty, marginalisation and a lack of choice. More interesting for this argument, is the suggestion that audiences comprising of women in prison may experience a cathartic moment in mimetic empathy with the two protagonists. A reflection from a performance of *This Wide Night* in HMP Morton Hall demonstrates the potency of mimetic collapse.

> **Conflating the I**
> *Women in HMP Morton Hall had gathered in the early morning and were waiting outside the gymnasium in order to enter as audience for This Wide Night. During the performance, I was aware of the many mutterings that accompanied scenes women 'recognised'. They seemed to be making a commentary (as they would in front of the TV) about whether the characters were authentic enough. One woman made quite a lot of noise rustling*

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[40] As outlined in Chapter 2.

through her bag of snacks, in order to locate a pen and paper. Rather than being alienated, she was aroused by the emotions relating to her experience of the play. She was, she told me afterwards, inspired to write a poem to one of the women.

Later, in the workshop, it did not take very long for the women to begin to give advice to the two women about how to handle their reintegration better. One woman told us proudly that she had noticed Marie coming in with some money and hiding it, which is what she used to do when 'on the game'.[41] She shifted in and out of character – speaking as both Marie and herself – as she narrated the difficulties of staying off drugs, and away from abusive relationships.

Other women stepped into role as Lorraine or Marie and questioned the women about what survival strategies they would recommend. As facilitator, it struck me that the women were quick to judge themselves, conflating the character's stories with their own (Research Diary about archival experience of Clean Break Workshops in 2009, November 2009).

I suggest that the cycle of tragic containment positions the reintegration stage as cathartic. This relies on evidence that criminal habitus can be transformed through 'correction' such that women exiting prison can adapt to an everyday or acceptable habitus. This, however, rests on the assumption that the external environment is conducive to 'straight' behaviour; and that wider structural inequalities would not be responsible for women's 'choice' to re-offend. Rather than operate as a productive mode in the cycle I outline, catharsis becomes a means of reducing women to 'rightful' places – in which economics, education, relationships and addictions are subservient to a moral righteousness that is somehow presumed to be restored through incarceration. While theatrical representations in general (and the tragic form I outline in particular) tend to rely on such arguments, the daily stories of ex-prisoners' re-integration into society expose the insidiousness of gendered expectations that do not make allowance for the embodied experiences of chaos that obstacles and bureaucracy produce in their lives. These institutional factors, coupled with the 'softer' weaknesses of addictive behaviours and destructive life choices are not simple choices to be made and enacted. Rather, they are messy processes that are inherently contradictory.

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[41] This phrase alludes to prostitution.

As Moss demonstrates through Marie and Lorraine, hope and inspiration can indeed be gained whilst in prison through forging caring friendships; through a sense of achievement in education programmes or workplace training; and through the space and time offered for self-contemplation. Yet, these hopes and desires are all too often revealed to be phantasms as the incessant temporal churn of everyday life outside does not allow for reflexivity, but requires action. Carlton and Segrave's ethnography suggests that research should point towards the

> importance of contextualizing [sic] imprisonment with respect to women's lives, acknowledging that the pains associated with imprisonment can magnify and/or replicate existing trauma, marginalization [sic] and dislocation (2011: 559).

Moss' play provides glimpses of the ways prison continues to victimise women who have survived incarceration.

Concluding Remarks

The claim for this research is in the ways we may begin to view performance strategies as potential archival knowledge that may have practical, embodied, political force. Drawing on Diana Taylor's (2003) thinking about the archive and the repertoire, I have worked through the concerns of prison habitus as simultaneously archival (in the sense that they are fixed and scripted by regimes of punishment and correction), and repertoires, in the ways that past issues and scenarios may be understood in the present. But, Taylor says, 'performance does more than that. The physical mechanics of staging can also keep alive an organizational [sic] infrastructure, a practice or know-how, an episteme, and a politics that goes beyond the explicit topic' (2006: 68). While Taylor's concern is explicitly on the interrelationship of national/ transnational histories, her formulation of the ways performance paradigms can provide models for understanding and working through their often traumatic histories can also be applied to specific individual narratives. She refers to the ways the past is 'used' as

> a repository for strategies in carrying on their lives, confronting contemporary struggles, and envisioning futures. The repertoire, this often overlooked system of storage, makes these resources of the past available,

useable over time, both through… repetitions and in moments of crisis (2006: 72).

To reiterate, this is not a unique factor to prisons and release, but may be applied to any of Goffman's total institutions (2007).

On a wider scale, if we view social and cultural practices that circumscribe women released from prison, it is evident that the repetition of unhelpful structures of deprivation and punishment outside has a negative effect on the 'transformation' of the tragic cycles of inevitable return to offending behaviour. Taylor's argument provides a means of seeing how strategies and tactics (*vide* de Certeau) developed through incarceration, and in response to surviving chaotic contexts can be transposed to everyday performances once women are released from prison. Furthermore, following a Foucauldian logic, Taylor's assertion that performance can function to extend and maintain organisational structures may be seen as further disseminating the disciplinary function of prison as institution into the wider community. The traces of prison as visible and perceived stigma serve as performative warnings to the wider public of the consequences of crime.

The chapter has attended to the modelling of women as survivor-victims of the institution, demonstrating the institutional interests prevalent in the maintenance of restricted performance repertoires. The argument develops by demonstrating that women's performances of post-incarceration stigma are constituted by the disciplinary imperative of the prison. By drawing on current feminist criminology as well as making reference to the charity Women in Prison and Clean Break's education programme, I argue that the choice between recidivism and desistance is not in a social/ economic vacuum: that women are not judged as performing as moral agents, but as defined and limited by prevailing socio-economic conditions (particularly in the current milieu of cuts to social services post 2010).[42] The chapter engages in a close reading of *This Wide Night* by Moss in order to explore the implications of a mimetic relationship to cycles of tragic containment. I argue that the collapse of selves evident in this mimetic-cathartic moment of witnessing returns women ex-prisoners to the limited spectrum

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[42] See for example Prison Reform Trust (2010); Women in Prison (2013a and 2013b).

of possibilities of victim-survivor. This critique points towards the need for other representational strategies in contemporary performance. These points collectively set the ground for a consideration of how performance of prison results in a set of performative functions post-release as an epistemological crisis of (self) representation.

CONCLUSION

Introduction

The thesis attends to what Baz Kershaw (1999) highlights as the intention of radical performance: to expose the interrelationship between structural hierarchies in theatrical representation as well as cultural, social and political reproduction of who and what women in prison are, what they mean, and how they should be punished. When Kelleher (2009: 59) points out the limitations of political theatre, he demonstrates that when the radical is invoked in relation to performance that it is necessary to unpack the limitations of what lies beyond the scope of performance. Certainly, like Kershaw, I do not propose that a performance *of* or *about* prison will dismantle the power structures and hegemonic positions such as the state vs. women in prison. Rather, this research rehearses the shift in perspective from unilateral development of meaning to incorporate the critical considerations of self-representation by women themselves.

Having spent several years making performance in prisons, and having considered this thesis an opportunity to reflect on institutions and performance in relation to one another, I propose that there is no single everyday performance that adequately resists the institution; no performance practice that sufficiently challenges the structures of power; and no theatre that authentically manifests its operations. Despite radical intentions of various performance interventions, prisons still incarcerate too many people in the UK, and the prison service still continues to fail women incarcerated in male-focussed regimes. A thesis in performance studies can hardly claim to dismantle these concerns. That state apparatus performs a function of protecting the public is inevitably not fundamentally challenged by critique from the humanities. Arguably, there is no single discipline that could present findings that challenge civic institutions. The conclusions I arrive at via performance studies are unfortunately not going to be read as convincing to policy makers, for whom criminal women are a 'problem'. In this rehearsal of the limitations of my research field, I am,

of course, aping the epistemological hierarchies of what constitutes relevant knowledge claims.

Yet, the very paradox of performance (and other arts) in criminal justice settings demands critical attention. I have demonstrated that performance provides both methodological and epistemological possibilities for disentangling the relations between power/ institution/ bodies and witnesses. In the thesis I work against a heroics epistemology that would define a taxonomy of problems. Such research can be beset by what Sedgwick calls the presumption of liberatory 'righteousness' (2003: 10). Instead, the study answers the need for developing new critical analytic models that attend to multiple perspectives on the issues. For instance, I have considered the production of women's resistant subjectivities in relation to gender, space and power. Secondly, I problematise the authenticity claims of 'the cage'; and consider that performance in and of prison replicates and perpetuates its operations – even when its manifestation is liberatory. Performance, then, is a particularly relevant mode of enquiry, accustomed as it is (in theory and practice) to navigating contradictions and conflict.

There are limitations related to the dismantling of bricks, mortar and fences of the prisons that incarcerate women. Despite the tendency of criticism to be 'pessimistic' (Sedgwick, 2003: 12) this thesis nevertheless points towards utopian possibilities. By examining performance through the imagery, spaces and experiences of prisons, I propose that performance can allow for the consideration of the problems of institutions, power, and bodies in relation to aesthetics and ethics. Furthermore, the project has stipulated that performance practices *in* and *of* prisons can promote creative possibilities for women whose adoption of coping tactics would serve them well as they transition from inside to outside the institutional frame.

Problems and Paradoxes: Prison and Performance
The broad concern answered by this thesis is 'what does performance offer to the subject of women in prison to challenge stereotypes of 'the cage'?' This is further specified by considering how prison performs its social function. In particular, I have

investigated how the dyads public/private, inside/outside become troubled by performance. By focusing on performance, I intended to concentrate on the centrality of the body in experiences of incarceration, and in particular, the relationship with gender as both constitutive of and constituting victimisation. The thesis invests in exploring what tactics women in prison perform that helps them cope with the strategic punishment of the institution. Further, its intention is to argue how performance moves towards articulating how women survive incarceration. The core of the thesis considered what precise mechanisms performance offers that challenge/ subvert/ augment/ transform the site itself. Ultimately, these questions braided together to argue that there are significant challenges related to aesthetics and ethics concerning representation in performance.

The methodological contribution of the thesis lies in the interplay of ethnographic experiences and analysis with the theoretical modelling of the cycle of tragic containment. This was chosen in order to add to the literature in the applied theatre realm that often relies on reportage of particular practice models that often subsume the ideological positioning of the work (Prentki & Preston, 2009: 14). While compelling in their fervour, such research does not always result in critically reflexive findings. In such work, the findings tend to be normative, rather than problematised. Therefore, instead of defending a chosen practice model (which is the approach of much of the literature), my research methodology developed a dialogue between experience (praxis) and the chosen theories. It resulted in a necessarily complex approach to engaging with the field and performance manifestations that provoke critical questions about institutions and representation.

This intention to provoke and problematise the understanding of the relationship between performance tactics and the institution also led me to engage with a wide, interdisciplinary set of literature. My theoretical framework seeks to position performance in relation to both sociological and criminological analyses of space as well as the relationship between women, victimisation and crime. In particular, the theories I draw on help to position the research in an explicitly feminist project in which the women as objects of study are re-positioned through methodological

engagement as participants in the investigation. My argument highlights the implications, rewards and maintenance of the patriarchal status quo if and when theatrical representations uphold the model of victim-survivor. For this reason, I proposed the addition of the third vector in the triad – hero. The results offer an explication of a feminist structure of feeling (Aston, 2003) in relation to representations in prison culture and contemporary performance about prison.

The introduction outlined the initial context of the study as everyday performances of women in prison. The thesis progressed from the evidence that punishment limits the spectrum of performance possibilities. I demonstrated the paradox that women's crimes mean they are victimisers but often portrayed as victims. This central concern is braided throughout the argument, through a multivalent adoption of theoretical positions. Although it draws on feminist criminology, sociology and criticism of dramatic literature, the informing discourse is from performance studies. Victimhood, particularly, is exposed as a category that denies agency and political force. Thus, although I have attended to the ways women in prison are unjustly victimised, I propose that it is necessary to develop more productive categories that account for confidence, decision-making and the ability to articulate choices. This degree of performative participation is central to the concept of agency that some might argue is what is denied to women when they commit crimes and are punished. I propose that it is necessary to consider the entire journey of incarceration as one that includes release and thus that there is the need to consider how ex-prisoners are expected to relate to their social and civic roles post-release.

The journey of the thesis is argued as a series of perspectives that relate to the spatial, behavioural and spectral presence of prison's power in the lives of women currently incarcerated and/or post-release. The argument engaged with these perspectives in order to present the wide range of performance paradigms deployed by women. I have positioned these as tactics that correspond with the need for developing or adopting institutional norms and values or alternatively, to resist them. Performing (both conscious, aesthetic performance and everyday performance or habitus) I argue, becomes necessary to cope with the prison itself. The issue of 'survival' relates to

women's self-esteem, capacity to engage in imagining and planning for a future outside of prison and to remain connected to community support structures. The argument in this thesis does not explicitly state that women's performances stand in for survival, but that they point towards the meaningfulness of tactics in relation to coping with the strategic omniscience of the law in their lives.

In the first chapter, I outlined a methodological approach that sought to augment the potential of both performance and ethnographic methods. I proposed that this strategic use of performance ethnography opens up the problems and possibilities associated with 'representation' that is endemic in research on vulnerable or marginalised groups. The chapter offered a robust defence of attention to the methodological implications in the field. The largely theoretical chapter 2 introduced the core theories that I used throughout the thesis; namely Bourdieu's habitus, which I adopted for the explicitly feminist project of engaging with women's 'everyday' performances within the field of the institution. This chapter outlined a theoretical modelling of the cycle of tragic containment that was furthered in analytical chapters later on in the thesis. Chapters 3-5 explored the social performances related to performance *in* and *of* prison. Chapter 3 delineated a performance context in which the site and the staging of power of prisons were analysed *as* performance. This chapter developed a discourse of carceral performativity that is evidenced in three genealogical examples of 'transient carceral landscapes'. Having articulated the inherent political and cultural implications of prison as performance, Chapter 4 edged towards a deeper investigation into the practice of applied theatre in prisons. The chapter analysed two examples of practice in relation to theories of strategies and tactics. The subsequent section, Chapter 5, paid closer attention to the everyday performativity of prisoners by exploring prison as 'space' in relation to gender. The chapter's contribution to the thesis was to argue that carceral performances are a means of performing (for) survival. In the sixth chapter, the focus shifted from the institution as producer of performance to the ways institutions are staged in contemporary performance. This was done through close analysis of two plays in relation to resistance of both 'the cage' and domestication. This chapter forms a conceptual bridge from the 'inside' to the 'outside', as it examines narratives of

outside brought in. This is a fundamental argument for the field of scholarship relating to prison theatre. It offers an analysis of aesthetic performances, forming both an intellectual and political bridge between the preceding investigation of social performances *in* and *of* prisons and the social and aesthetic performances post-release. The final chapter provided another perspective shift on the subject, considering the ways women's (cyclical) pathways out of prison and into communities relates to the traumatic and insistent presence of prison post-release. Chapter 7 offered a final analysis of a contemporary play to explain gender norms and institutional haunting.

Impacts of this research could be understood for several target audiences. Firstly, one focus of my own interest has been with women (ex-) prisoners, who have encountered the findings related to habitus and everyday performance tactics in Women in Prison Magazine (Walsh, 2012b). The impact of dissemination and possible access to initial research findings to over 3000 women in prison means that perhaps there is more conscious awareness of the potential to 'cope', or 'survive' the banality of the cell. Women participants of the small-scale workshop I conducted at HMP Drake Hall reported greater consciousness of their own everyday tactics, as well as related outcomes that occur as a result of successfully completing a performance residency. These include satisfaction at achieving something, pride at presenting work in front of others and new (intergenerational and multicultural) connections relating to the creative communication that occurred in the sessions.

The prison service (via NOMS) had access to the report on my fieldwork, and its value for them is twofold, primarily in gaining an understanding of performance practice in prisons. Such work is ongoing in many institutions in the UK, but is not often granted access as 'research'. Therefore the findings or evaluations of prison arts work are mostly for funders rather than convincing to commissioners. This distance between qualitative research and the pressure to prove impact in the language and terms dictated by commissioners needs further attention from the arts in criminal justice sector. Secondly, the report explicitly prioritised qualitative methods and was thus a departure from most of the research granted access by NOMS. This important though

instrumental impact is related to empirical investigation, and thus forms one strand of my assessment of the research.

The relevance of the research is perhaps most evident in the value of the models I put forward. The spectrum of victim-survivor-hero is evidently useful for modelling how aesthetic representations and performance methodologies conform to or expand upon the limitations inherent to such categories. This is particularly important for applied theatre practices, in which practitioners could consider the extent to which their methods perpetuate victimhood or indeed fetishise trauma narratives.

Dramaturgically, the model of tragic containment allows for the exploration of the wider possibilities of pathways into and out of crime. As a result of the conceptual basis of this research, writers and directors would be able to engage with understanding the extent to which plays with criminal justice themes conflate 'offending' with tragic inevitability. As such, the results are a broadening of the potential narratives to reflect the ongoing difficulties of 'surviving' post-release, and the need to platform the political and social importance of community-based support. Prison would not then be seen as a discrete term or presence in the institutional frame. The cultural representations of prison would thus incorporate the effects and implications of incarceration and the reasons for criminalisation in the first instance. In other words, the implication is that prison tropes ought to be deployed more politically, rather than sensationally. This, and the subsequent points are relevant for the field of feminist criminology. The value here is in the capacity of cultural productions to engage the wider public in witnessing and responding to the debates related to criminal justice. What is noteworthy is that I aim not merely to return the tragic object to its 'rightful place', as the Aristotelian logic of tragedy would have it, but to open up debates about the insistence of the women as 'tragic', and the institution as the 'rightful place'. I am aware, however, that a single thesis, like a single performance, cannot hope to provide definitive answers, particularly in relation to the multiple fields and disciplines informing this study. Rather, interdisciplinary scholarship in arts in criminal justice is enriched by the positioning of these questions, rather than foreclosed by them.

I see this research as sitting within Conquergood's framework of radical socially engaged research in performance. This section tightens the threads of what I have found in the research and begins to point towards the potential for this approach.

The argument in the thesis explores the performance framing of the separation of 'criminal' bodies from civil society. I explore how incarceration, removal, programmes of rehabilitation and re-entry cycles perpetuate distinctions between 'us' and 'them', both in relation to psycho-social barriers, but more explicitly, in the cultural representations of prison and prisoners. I consider the staging of this distinction in relation to spatial, aesthetic and affectual relationships. By grounding the study in feminist criminology, I am offering an argument about the functions of prison that systemically contribute to a moral/ ethical and aesthetic separation of certain types of bodies. I have concentrated on the intersecting marginalities of poverty, class, and race as well as the criminalisation of foreign women. The argument is predicated on the understanding that prison's successful 'performance' demands a particular repetition of the restoration of norms. I propose that these normative presumptions relate to the assumption of a linear progression of the cycles of incarceration – modelled by the cycle of tragic containment. The rigid cycle is disrupted by agential performance. These can be either performances of resistance that are against the institution, or performances against the fixed inevitable pathways that presuppose vulnerable women would return to crime. Both views challenge assumptions about women's bodies, agency and the relationship with social and civic institutions.

Mapping Research Pathways
At this point in a research project it is customary to consider the potential pathways for the research. I am sure that many doctoral researchers would hope to be free of the cycles of tragic containment their work has imprisoned them within. Yet, I believe there are various possibilities that arise out of this foundational thinking. Firstly, I am committed to ensuring there is enough of a feedback loop in dissemination strategies specifically for the benefit of women in prison (even if not the few women with whom I worked directly, whose onward paths are unknowable). I intend to pursue further publications in journals and magazines since this remains an under-researched area, so

that there would be more visibility for the issues faced by women in prison (across academic disciplines).

Upon imagining a utopian project related to this research, I would investigate a queer response to prison's performance. I envisage engaging more with queering the relationship between stigma, trauma, performance tactics and representation; in particular as a means of recuperating hope, radicalism, and transgression as viable responses to imprisonment (Cvetkovich, 2003; Muñoz, 2009; and Sedgwick, 2003). This line of enquiry would tend to engage more deeply with temporality and performance to further the argument related to spatiality. I would also be interested in exploring the different performance tactics that could be found in a range of international settings. The intention would not be a cultural comparison, but may offer insight into the cultural framing of institutions in relation to women's agency.

What remains is to offer a final reflexive account on what I would have done differently with hindsight.

Prison as Pedagogy

I realised, soon after I stepped into the stinking corridors of Modderbee prison in Johannesburg's East Rand in 2002, that prison would teach me something. I couldn't have anticipated that I would spend quite so much time learning its intricate choreography of paranoia and power dynamics. At the end of this project, I am humbled by its pedagogic function. Most particularly, I am grateful for the reflexive space. At the tail end of this investigation, one thing is clear: prison still smells like regret. (Research Diary, December 2013).

In almost every prison story (and scholarly account of arts practice), there is always a sense of the 'could have' or the 'should have'. For convicted women, these promissory acknowledgements of possibility are both frustrating and rewarding. They remind of the possibility of a different 'there and then' that relates mimetically to the 'here and now'. For those strangers entering prisons as outsider researchers or arts practitioners, the regrets can relate to seemingly insignificant moments of attention.

Regret and Time
I wish I could have had enough patience to listen closely to each woman's story. I wish I could have had enough time to dedicate to learning from and with them. I wish I could have breathed and danced and clapped and sung and crafted stories for longer. I wish I had been granted access to more institutions. Since I am allowing myself a utopian moment, I hope that none of these women return to prison. I sit, steeped in regrets that are about time, making spaces through performance and awareness that creativity desire, hope and goodwill are not comfortable bedfellows with the mechanisms of crime and justice. And yet, aesthetic tactics mark time, carve out space and articulate desires, forming a counterpoint to institutional norms. Perhaps minute interventions into everyday life can suffice. That is, if they multiply and sustain themselves through onward rehearsal or repetition. (Research Diary, December 2013).

I recognise that regrets and hindsight are not entirely destructive in this instance. Just as they offer women in prison something to work through, the potential for other impacts, influences and pathways of this research offers me pause for reflection. In hindsight, I would position the radical intention much more as a public project. Instead of working through the critical distance of the academic observer, I hope to engage more in publically presenting the radical resistance to prison and its effects and implications for women. This has been done to some extent in the three publications and in conference papers[1], but perhaps working alongside public campaigns or events would have been informative and opened up the research to a wider audience.

The research has examined several concerns, beginning with the institutional field of criminal justice in the UK. It has argued that the problems of orthodoxies in applied theatre practice in prisons relate to an institutionalisation of practice. As a feminist project it has read male theorists through and against feminist performance scholars and sociological or criminological scholars. This has resulted in the detailed consideration of the effects and implications of an explicitly feminist understanding of and in performance practice by, with and for incarcerated women.

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[1] I have included full bibliographic referencing for these outcomes, also referenced in relevant chapters.

Countering Myths: Performance, Gender, and the Body

In the thesis I have deliberately avoided the simplistic juxtaposition of institution and patriarchy, even though there are obvious comparisons. For prisoners across the spectrum of genders, the institutional frame operates to foreground their gender in limiting, punitive reinforcement of heteronormative values.

I have shown that the institution is predicated on and perpetuates archived, sedimented performances from women whose sentences are constructed around rehearsal and repetition of what appears to be 'good'. The frisson in the fabric of institutions in the event of resistance, non-compliance, or improvisation is palpable. Women find they progress through the system by playing to the role of docile prisoner; and yet, contrary to the somewhat playful mockery of 'good behaviour', there are real consequences for vulnerable women whose 'successful' performances do not carve possibilities for reintegration within communities. This is because institutional norms do not map onto everyday life, although they continue to assert their dominance. While effective improvisation in prison plays to the watchful audience of officers, probation teams and security cameras, there is less chance of women's attempts to survive post-release being spectated by empathic viewers. What occurs is a self-referential, almost mythic mimetic reflection of prison/prisoner. Each reflects and refracts the injury, shame and pity of the other. Each, in its reflections, becomes weaker, more vulnerable to criticism. The very idea of prison flickers. Its ideological dominance and certainty is as unmistakeable as patriarchy.

I have positioned this mythic, mimetic chimera of prison as a construct, and argued that in order for its mechanisms to be questioned, research and practice must attend to the position of the body. Performance, then, reasserts embodied affect into the reckoning of power, institution and society. There ought to be no excuse for replicating lazy tropes in contemporary performance. Prison, the performance of prisoners and the representations of carceral subjectivities in contemporary performance ought to be inflected with the complexities, contradictions and quandaries that are shown to be playing out daily behind walls, perimeter fences and electric gates.

APPENDIX A: ETHICS FORM

THE UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHAMPTON
School of The Arts

ETHICS FORM SUBMISSION:

Summary:

Since the research is designed as participatory ethnography, it is necessary for ongoing reflection on the researcher/participant relationship. The claim the research can make is not necessarily to empower marginalized participants to overcome power imbalances, but rather to develop a sense of self worth and efficacy through the act of participating. In particular, conducting process-based workshops as a means of data collection requires the awareness of the dual roles of practitioner/ researcher, and the implications of such for the informed consent of participants. The need for full awareness of professional and research boundaries is understood, as is the potential blurring of roles between practice and research. However, since this interrelationship itself features as an aim of the research, the ongoing negotiation of such roles will be documented and managed through supervision.

1. Introduction:

Regarding the ethical approach to designing and conducting research, I have examined whether the proposed project is developed in relation to the guidelines put forward by the ESRC framework for research ethics. Specifically, I will need to assess (in advance, as well as throughout the research period) whether, and to what extent the following principles are adhered to: Integrity and quality; Fully informed researchers and participants; Confidentiality and anonymity; Voluntary participation; Avoiding harm; Independence and impartiality.[1]

2. Context:

Within the context of criminal justice research, there is the need for consistency, and rigorous ethical measures in order to assess the benefit/ burden package and the potential impacts of the research. The analysis of the benefits and burdens of the research require ongoing reflection, and will form an important part of the researcher's analysis.

2.1 Ethical Sensitivity

Any research project in criminal justice settings demands specific understanding of - and strategy for dealing with - a wide range of contextual issues, including 'victim awareness', mental health issues, and substance abuse issues. Also relevant are the specific and constantly changing personal circumstances of participants (relating to family, sentence plans, release dates, etc). At regular periods, ethical sensitivity will be assessed according to local, institutional guidelines, informed by national and international policies and conventions.

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[1] These principles are taken from the 'Research Ethics Guidebook'
http://www.ethicsguidebook.ac.uk/EthicsPrinciples accessed on 9 May 2011.

2.2 Institutional approach:

I am aware of the need to frame the project in terms that would be valued by the institution; therefore all processes will develop the terminologies according to those used by the criminal justice system. Whilst I will be overtly concerned with issues of performing identities as a means of performing survival, the specific interest in sexual identities and gender performances may be covert. In other words, since freedoms of sexuality are limited for carceral bodies, it would be counter-intuitive to make my specific interest obvious. Rather, I will gather information in a more creative way, designed not to ask direct questions, nor to expose the limitations of the system directly, but to encounter in a targeted space, the women's own experiences.

Developing the research project in close co-operation with the institution will mean that all research objectives will be transparent to the psychology or education departments within the institution. I will ensure that ethical approval is granted in writing before launching the process based work.
Preparatory work with the institution will include discussions about:
1. Choosing participants (advertising, security checks, timetabling)
2. Venue (appropriacy, availability, privacy)
3. Security (undertaking additional training, co-facilitators)

2.3 Participant Anonymity:

In criminal justice contexts and in immigration detention, participants may face legal and personal conflicts regarding names and biographical information. This is relevant particularly when connected to the notion of victim awareness. Thus any mention of crime, profits from crime or disclosure about criminal or illegal activities ought not to be reflected in the research findings. Finally, though, since autobiographical details may be disclosed in creative arts workshops, every effort will be made through the local institutional frameworks, to assess their appropriacy, decency and legitimacy for the research.

While some research approaches in social science may anonymise resulting data, I am aware that as a creative process that relies on personal and autobiographical transparency, the data that results within workshops may identify participants. However, since I do not aim to make use of the data in its raw form, I do not feel that participants will be further identified by specific examples. Specifically, my approach uses biographical detail as a starting point for developing imagined characters. Thus, any resulting character might bear resemblance, but not be an actual representation of specific persons. In particular, I am aware of the need to avoid 're-victimisation'.
This awareness is employed both during process workshops and in developing the data for analysis and performance.

Confidentiality/Anonymity: Regarding the coding of participant contributions, Social Science has developed participant coding strategies which will be of use. I will use a system of coding which details establishment, then a random set of numbers to file all contributions. E.g.: Participant 1, A.M Walsh, from HMP Foston Hall becomes coded as FH 2791. All documents, notes and participant-generated material from workshops will be filed after each session. At the end of the residency, the initial template connecting persons' names and details with the code-name will be destroyed. For the writing

stage, I will re-code the numbers into randomized names, to avoid using a letter/number code that resembles prison numbers.

2.4 Participant Safety (i.e.: benefit/ harm analysis):
- Participants will volunteer for workshops, and have the opportunity to refuse to enter or withdraw at any time.
- Participants will be screened for suitability by wing officers or relevant staff both for participants who may benefit from the process, and ensuring the sample is both representative and safe (i.e.: the construction of the group avoids pre-existing tensions or known vulnerable persons).
- Participants will be informed about all physical activities, and have the opportunity to adapt for specific personal needs.
- The practitioner/researcher will undertake a detailed risk assessment of the space, all physical activities and the use of props and objects in workshop sessions.
- The risk assessment will consider the potential for confidentiality, the need for availability of additional counseling support (eg: Listeners, psychology staff, wing staff) after and during sessions concerned with personal material.
- Each session will include an introductory reminder of ground rules established by the group in the first session (and informed by specific recommendations made by site staff).

2.5 Practitioner/ Researcher Safety:
Whilst aware of and accustomed to the security awareness within institutions, I have also attempted to engage with the ethical and emotional demands on myself as a researcher/ practitioner in the prison setting. Thus, the project will include systematic supervision from a member of staff within the institution (forming a valuable and rich dialogue as well as a new seam of data) in addition to my academic supervisors. This level of support and reflection will be important for my analysis of process-based sessions, providing an insight into how the creative work sits alongside and within institutional and interpersonal dynamics which may be less accessible for an external researcher.

3. Specific background of the researcher and skills relevant to the ethical research conduct:
- The researcher is well aware of the differing needs of males and females in detention; and mindful of the need for additional information in terms of health issues, risk of harm, etc when dealing with female prisoners.
- The researcher draws on 10 years of experience of using creative arts processes in criminal justice. This background is used to reflect on the group and individual safety of participants in workshops, interviews and discussions.
- The researcher has completed staff training in 2 institutions (maximum security and open settings), and is well aware of protocols for dealing with keys, security breaches, sensitive information, and the potential for 'conditioning'. Adequate supervision sessions will be built in with both university supervisors and an internal member of staff to debrief about any issues arising.

- The researcher will prepare adequately in advance, ensuring that communication is thorough about resources, space, times and lists of participants and will ensure that staff are aware of the procedures at all times. She will be accompanied by an internal member of staff at all times.
- The researcher is accustomed to working alone in prisons (having been a staff member with training), but will adhere to any restrictions regarding staffing, supervision, or security as laid out by the prison/ institution management.

4. Practical Considerations that impact on Ethics:
4.1 Insurance:
Insurance cover is provided by the university, provided the university is aware of the activities being conducted. In this case, process based activities are 3 hour drama-based workshops conducted in a residency within prison institutions. Some of the activities will be physical, and in such cases, staff will be notified in advance, a wellbeing check conducted prior to the workshop, and participants may opt-out at any time. The final product is as yet uncertain, and if necessary, the researcher will apply for further ethics approval.

4.2 Incentives (financial benefits etc):
In some prison settings, participants attending a focus group workshop will be paid as if they were attending any other education or work session. This serves not as an incentive on the behalf of the researcher, but as a means of ensuring participation where otherwise participants may lose a session's wages.

If financial benefits are to be made by the researcher developing a performative work, this will be made transparent through disclosing financial support and collaborators in all reports and publications.

4.3 Incidental findings or unintended consequences:
In the criminal justice context, incidental findings are always going to be useful and valuable sources of data. While research processes (data collection methods) might be focused towards my main research questions, the nature of the emergent research methods of practice as research means that the research model can adapt and include new avenues relevant to the study.

However, ethical considerations may arise in the criminal justice setting where participation itself may effect consequences, such as vulnerability through recalled memories, for example. It is thus important that the group sessions acknowledge and respond to such unexpected consequences in a sensitive and informed manner, with the support of the institution.

4.4 Conflicts of interest:
The researcher has worked in these settings extensively, and has strong professional relations with existing companies. Where possible, these relationships will form the basis of entry into institutions, but will not form the basis of analysis, so that there is no conflict of interest.

4.5 Relevant papers and documentation:
In order to enter the prisons, I will need to present the following documentation, which is already prepared: ID, Prison ID, enhanced CRB certificate, as well as any further forms to be submitted to each institution in advance.

4.6 Access to participants/ institutions
Although I have every confidence that the networks and professional relationships I have already formed will assist in the set up of fieldwork process workshops, I have also considered the contingency plans that form a second level of access to data sources. Should there be unforeseeable circumstances that mean one specific residency cannot be completed, I will have further options for conducting workshops in collaboration with probation services (ie: in the community), or arrange for another institution to host the workshops. I feel the research design of three distinct sites (2 prison, one community-based) allows for flexibility in order to be certain that data can be accessed.

5. Good Practice:
5.1 Data protection
All documentation will be anonymous, collected in a group; thus not attributed to individuals.
The research method is voluntary participation, and participants have the right to withdraw. The methodology is dialogic, and thus participants are assured of anonymity through 'member checking' during the fieldwork process. Data protection questions will form a large part of the institutional supervision, where staff can advise on any specific details.

Data regarding participation take up and retention will be held by the prison (according to their documentation requirements) for the duration of the residency, and final information anonymously shared with the researcher, with any identifying information deleted.

At no point will participants' records be examined (criminal records, psychological assessments, wing reports, etc.), as these details do not form the basis of the study.

5.2 Images
Since images of prisoners are protected, there will be no release of images for the sake of the study. Should prisoners develop artworks, they will be cleared for release by an appropriate staff member and, if requested, returned to the prison within an appropriate timeframe. (Since prisoners are often moved between institutions, it would not be possible to guarantee return of the artwork directly to themselves, unless that is specifically requested, and a forwarding address is provided).

5.3 Informed Consent
Part of the compact between researcher and participants is the right to withdraw. This will be explained during the initial 'taster session', where all participants receive an information sheet, a copy of which will also be posted up in the institution 'wings' along with advertisements of the residency. Consent forms will be completed in the first session (example of consent form). In addition, participants will be able to

withdraw consent for partial or total inclusion in the performance work (which is what Silverman calls 'process consent') (2010, 158).

I am cognizant of the suspicion participants may have about consent forms, having been subjected to paperwork routinely as part of incarceration. However, in order to ensure participants' literacy levels, cultural background, and institutional suspicions are acknowledged, I will endeavour to explain the form verbally in the first session, and be available for questions before participants are asked to sign. One strategy may be 'delayed consent', whereby participants can complete both the taster session and the first session without signing the form. (This suggestion is drawn from Silverman, 2010: 169).

Feedback options:
Participants will need to work through the prison contact person if they wish to give feedback to the researcher as there is to be no personal contact information shared. This also allows for anonymous feedback, so that there will be no undue researcher bias, affecting their participation in this research or other activities.

Informed Consent forms (institutional)
The institutional consent forms will be necessary for the release of documentation. This will be formed of the standard prison release form and must be signed by uniformed staff.

Informed Consent forms (personal)
(example included as appendix B)

5.4 Data collection methods
- Session documentation by researcher and participants (written notes, stories, images, maps, etc.).
- Photographs (if permission is granted).
- Interviews and transcription (If interviews are held outside prison, they will be recorded and transcribed by the researcher. If inside prison, they will be notated by the researcher and notes confirmed with interviewees).
- Practitioner Reflexive diary.
- Process based artefacts (objects, artworks)

Data Analysis method:
- Performative work resulting from collaborative artworks, stories, etc.

Ethical considerations regarding disclosure of sensitive information will be considered in internal supervision sessions. The researcher will need to ensure that information about crimes, proceeds of crime and any information that is *sub judice* is excluded from data.

5.5 Security Strategy:
Each session will begin with a reminder of confidentiality to participants, and should any sensitive information be understood (either explicitly or implicitly), it may need to be shared with security staff for the protection of participants and others through the Security Incident Report (S.I.R.) system.

6. Access to research findings:
6.1 Dissemination
Any conference papers, publications or performance events will deal with data in a valid and sensitive manner, ensuring that dissemination plans enhance the awareness of women in prisons. As such the findings will be shared with institutions, with participants, and with specialist organizations dealing with arts in prisons and third sector organizations responsible for women in prisons such as Women in Prison, the Griffin Society, and the Fawcett Society, amongst others. Any dissemination will be checked against the policy agendas of the Ministry of Justice, and the local institution.

6.2 Impact Agenda
The researcher is aware of the need to balance the research Impact Agenda with social policy surrounding criminal justice contexts. In particular, the Decency Agenda (Arts Alliance, Clinks, Ministry of Justice), and its predecessor Prison Service Order 150, which control the public perception of prisons and prisoners by carefully choosing accessibility to stories, images and personal details of prisoners for the protection of victims, and in order to maintain the security of the prison estate.

7. Further ethical considerations:
Intellectual property rights will need to be determined in advance with the institution such that work may be attributed where appropriate, or anonymous where appropriate. (eg.: prisons may wish to be named if work is presented in specific for a, but anonymised for the research study reports).

APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM

THE UNIVERSITY OF
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Personal Consent Form:

Study Title: Performing (for) Survival

Purpose of the research/study:
This research is to find out about women's experiences before prison and in prison and how you cope. The study aims to analyse your personal stories and create a performance piece about those experiences. The idea is that the research will help the public better understand these stories and experiences.

Who the researcher is:
The researcher is Ally Walsh, a theatre director and practitioner who has worked in prisons for more than 10 years, and makes theatre in communities in different countries across the world. She is also a researcher, interested in sharing your stories.

What the study involves:
The researcher will conduct regular participatory workshops, to make a performance together. The study is about your experiences and reactions, and there are no incorrect answers. It may include additional interviews. The final performance will be a collaboration.

What will happen to me if I take part?
You will be part of a group to develop a performance. All the sessions will work towards making a show. We will use some drama writing, some singing and group creative processes to make a collective performance.

What are the risks?
You may feel a bit vulnerable and the need to be open and trusting may be risky. However, every activity will be voluntary, and you will have all the support necessary to engage with activities. After the sessions there will be access to Listeners, Psychology or wing staff should you find things difficult.

You may choose not to continue at any time, though your perseverance will be worth it. Together, we will create something of which you can be proud, and we can learn from each other.

What will happen to the information?
Any data that is personal or identifying information (eg: name, age, where you come from, etc) will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the prison. The identity of each participant (you) will remain anonymous throughout the research process and in the report. We will do this by assigning a nickname for your views. From then on you will be known only by your nickname. In any public performance, you will be acknowledged by your nickname. Once the research is completed, the information will be destroyed. When I write any report of the study, it will not be possible to identify you or anyone else who participated in the study.

The creative work we make together will be kept by the researcher and may be used in a final performance piece. You will have the right to agree to something being in the work or not. The work will not be for profit, but forms the basis of this research project. If you wish your original material to be returned to you, please ensure the researcher has a forwarding address.

The information you give will be for research purposes only. It will not be given to any other party. There will be no media contact about the project.

Do I have to take part?
If you do not want to participate, that is fine; you have the right not to participate. You can also stop at any time if you do not want to finish the study; just let us know when you are ready to stop.

Contact Ally:
Please contact the researcher through the prison contact person (*name*), by sending a request application (anonymously or with your name and wing number), and indicate if you would like to receive a response.

Who has checked this research?
This research has been checked by the University of Northampton, and agreed to by the prison (*name) (specific staff member*).

Thank you for your interest and support. If you would like to participate in the research, please complete and return the consent form.

First Name: _____ Surname: _____
I consent to taking part in the research.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX C: RISK ASSESSMENT

Perceived Risks	Research Phase	Low	Med	High	Contingency plans
preparing detailed research plan and timeframes	Scoping and evaluation design	X			working with the institution partners to develop a timeframe that is suitable for all stakeholders. Communication with all.
understanding impact of the project	Scoping and evaluation design	X			Developing terminologies and measures of success through critical conversations with stakeholders.
developing surveys: ensuring baseline information is gathered	Scoping and evaluation design	X			using captured data initially alongside contextual information to develop succinct questionnaires.
sufficient sample size: ensuring data sets are sufficient for reliable reporting	Charting the Field		X		sample size contingent on other purposeful activity, release dates and retention.
schedules: ensuring advance scheduling of all focus groups/ workshops/ interviews	Charting the Field		X		scheduling to be determined in advance, with support from institution to ensure realistic expectations. If necessary, follow up workshops can be arranged. Contingency plans to be in place.
stakeholder time burdens	fieldwork	X			ensure timeframes are realistic and achievable; that meetings are timeous and requests for information are valid and in advance.
participant safety & confidentiality	fieldwork		X		The best practice of participant safety ensures women respondents are

					safe, feel assured that responses are confidential and able to respond honestly and without fear of exposure. (see note * below)
participant data protection	fieldwork				all data to be anonymised and coded to ensure safety. All participants to sign a release/ consent form with confidentiality clauses.
participant opt-out	fieldwork				all participants will be assured that they may opt out of specific questions/ activities without fear of jeopardising the structures
engaging in feedback and supervision to ensure quality of surveys, focus group plans and methods.	ongoing				working with supervisors and the institution contact person the researcher will engage in reflexive method design for quality assurance purposes.
Perceived Risks	**Research Phase**	**Low**	**Med**	**High**	**Contingency plans**
risks to institution: project feedback	Landmarks				All data will be processed externally, and any feedback that may impact the institutions will be handled with care and processed in relevant progress meetings, rather than in public reporting.
allowance for 'research fatigue'	ongoing				all requests for involvement in the evaluation procedure will be realistic in terms of time demands. Researchers will avoid heavy impositions on institutions and participants.

need to ensure data is sufficient	Landmarks				close collaboration with a range of departments, with the understanding that such data may be difficult to assess in a short timeframe. Researcher will endeavour to include comprehensive information in the scoping and planning phases, in order to assess the project impact.
researcher safety	ongoing				developing a comprehensive plan for research site visits, including an internal team member who will verify proceedings.
timeous delivery of interim and final reports	Mapping the Issues				ongoing communication, regular update meetings and the willingness to share information when requested.
Conflict of interests	ongoing				researcher independence assured through regular supervision meetings, teamwork roles clearly signposted. Transparency about interests to be declared.

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