

chapter 4

Dance in Prison: Narratives of the Body, Performativity, Methodology, and Criminology

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SINCE THE 1990S, RESEARCHERS have been developing new methodologies that transcend theory/method divisions, research categories, and disciplinary backgrounds. Feminist methodologies first blurred boundaries and made these transitions over thirty years ago (see Harding 1997; Harding and Norberg 2005; Reinharz 1992; Smith 1974; Stanley and Wise 1983, 1993); new, radical methodologies continue this tradition. Early feminist methods sought to reinsert women into research – as theorists, researchers, and active subjects. They changed research perspectives, moving from research “on women” to researching issues that are important to women (Harding and Norberg 2005; Smith 1974). These researchers challenged traditional knowledge – sometimes by shifting the focus of study and sometimes by employing different research methodologies. While this created challenges to their legitimacy and acceptance (see Harding 1986, 1997; Smith 1974), the techniques and topics explored forever changed the shape of academic research. Donna Haraway (1988) and others critically examined the entire research process, including the idea of an objective “truth,” noting that all truths are partial and situated in that they emerge from particular philosophical, epistemological, social, and moral positions. Feminist methodological contributions also include the situated researcher, who reflexively engages with the research and both affects and is affected by it, and active subjects, who are given agency within research. Feminist research also includes a reflexive understanding of the larger environment in which research is created, including spheres and axes of privilege and oppression. These innovations have garnered wide praise and were adopted by many researchers, generating new debates and lines of inquiry. The discipline of criminology was part of these innovations (Sraton 1990; Daly and

Chesney-Lind 1988; Frigon 2001). This chapter chronicles some of the continuing shifts and changes in methodologies by using Sylvie Frigon's research on dance with female prisoners as a lens to highlight research approaches involving corporality, performance, and mobilities.

Feminist Methodology: Old Wine in New Bottles?

Pamela Moss (2007) highlights the innovative potential of feminist research. Feminist research techniques, questions, and analyses are not peculiar to women's or gender studies; there is little, if anything, truly unique about the methods employed. It is, however, the combination of questions, perspectives, and techniques and their innovative use that creates a body of groundbreaking feminist work. Researchers can choose among four paths, combining anticipated or unanticipated questions with familiar or unfamiliar methods to create feminist research (Moss 2007). New methodologies and research approaches continue to grow in this same vein, challenging existing categories and assumptions and creating new intellectual spaces for research and inquiry. These methodologies emerge from various disciplines and perspectives that question reified knowledge and examine new directions for research, including cultural studies, postmodernism, poststructuralism, and queer, trans, and gender studies. These practices, including creative sociologies, postmodern methods, and embodied sociologies, offer an array of new and adapted theories and methodologies to guide research (see Denzin 2003; Shilling 1993; Somerville 2004). New methodologies do not emerge from a vacuum of thought. Rather, they are intimately linked to epistemology and theory. Building on this rich tradition, we discuss the innovative potential of feminist research methods, methodologies, and epistemologies by focusing on the body, corporality, performativity, and mobility in our explorations of dance in prison

Dance as an Alternative Research Tool: On the Origins of the Project

Dance and prison? Two unrelated words, or worlds? Dance can provide a space of resistance for prisoners who are, by definition, confined in a restricted, controlled, closed, and monitored space. Dance in prison can also provide a unique entry point for analyzing carceral space and questioning the discipline of criminology (Frigon 2008; Frigon and Jenny 2009, 2010).

Sylvie Frigon met Claire Jenny, contemporary dancer, choreographer, and director of the Parisian dance company Point Virgule, in 2004, when Claire contacted Sylvie about an article that she had written on self-injury, the body, and imprisoned women (see Frigon 2001). Claire came to Ottawa, and their

shared vision on empowerment and politics emerged. Point Virgule, created (with Paule Groleau) in 1989, has offered dance workshops in French prisons since 1995.² Through fifty to seventy-five hours of dance workshops, the team offers prisoners a unique opportunity to reconnect with themselves. Building on her dance experience at Fresnes Prison in 2000, Claire, accompanied by a troupe of French artists, led a project in Maison Tanguay in 2004. On 18 October 2004, dancers and prisoners performed for other prisoners and outside guests, including Sylvie. This was a fascinating moment that echoed Sylvie's work on the criminology of the body. Another performance led by Point Virgule and Les Productions C took place at Joliette Institution for Women, a federal penitentiary in Quebec. This performance took place in 2006 and involved dance students from the Université du Québec à Montréal.

This collaboration led to the qualitative research project described here; the project examined dance within prison as a form of therapy, a method of learning, a site for critical reflection, and an outlet for artistic expression. The effects – kinaesthetic, emotional, and potentially transformative – of the dance experience were recounted by some of the five prisoners, one ex-prisoner, and ten artists who participated in the workshops. To understand how dance affected the participants, seventeen ($n = 17$) interviews were conducted with choreographers, dancers, artists, actors, video and sound artists, professionals, prisoners and ex-prisoners on their experiences.³ The interviews touched on their experiences of dance within prison and how dance affected the women's identities and prison experiences. Excerpts of these interviews are used throughout this chapter. The interviews were conducted in prison (with prisoners) and in caf  s in Paris (with the artists of the dance company).

What Is Contemporary Dance?

The twentieth century saw the birth of a modernist approach to dance that emphasizes freedom, the individual, and progress. As early as the end of the nineteenth century, choreographers and dancers were exploring new ways of thinking about the movement of the body. These pioneers of what we now call contemporary dance broke away from the rules that govern classical ballet. For example, Isadora Duncan (1877–1927) freed herself from the corset and the ballerina pointes as she was inspired by the flow of movement in nature (e.g., movements of the sea, wind, etc.).

In the late nineteenth century, the West slowly opened to other cultures, sparking a renewal of artistic approaches. Industrial development in the early twentieth century and the technological innovations that mark the era also had clear impacts on the artistic processes of numerous dancers and choreographers. In a general context of transformation where the outlines of identity

are blurred, philosophers and artists question the place, and subsequently the future, of the individual. Contemporary dance develops various ways of understanding the body in motion, and these projects are often directly linked to events in recent history. Some projects cover topics that were highly political and critical at the time: in 1933, German choreographer Kurt Jooss (1901–79) created *The Green Table*, which heralds the absurdity and horror of the Second World War. More recently, the South African choreographer Robin Orlyn (b. 1955) developed a work denouncing the apartheid; in *Daddy, I've Seen this Piece Six Times before and I Still Do Not Know Why They're Hurting Each Other* (1999), a black dancer, dressed in a white tulle tutu, performs a very unique version of an excerpt from *Swan Lake* (1877), one of the most famous pieces of classical ballet. In Canada, Quebec choreographer Pierre-Paul Savoie created *Bagne* in 1992, where two dancers perform in the heart of an imposing metal structure that alludes to the prison: the prisoners seek, spy on, and stare at one another.

Unlike how classical ballet shapes the body in a perpetual quest for verticality and maximum elevation, contemporary dance plays with the multiple phenomena of gravity. Representations of imbalance, falling, and suspension are common elements of body language in modern and contemporary dance. The ground is considered a partner that draws or, instead, repels. Finally, a major characteristic of contemporary dance is the use of “ordinary” bodies. According to French researcher Marion Rousset (2006), this is an eminently political approach. Like him, many choreographers choose to use different artists: fat, thin, short, tall, young, old; dancers with heterogeneous bodies or simply amateurs with diverse backgrounds and experiences. In 2002, he reprised German choreographer Pina Bausch's (1940–2009) play *Kontakthof* (created in 1978) with amateur dancers aged fifty-eight to seventy-seven years. In Canada, Gina Gibney Dance has held dance workshops for abused women living in La Dauphinelle shelter in Montreal (Gina Gibney Dance 2010) to help them develop resilience and overcome trauma. Similarly, Point Virgule has produced several productions on and in prisons, including *Resilience* (produced in Fresnes, France, and performed in Montreal); *Cheminement* (a solo produced in Paris, France, and performed in Ottawa); *Prolongement* (performed at Maison Tanguay, Montreal); and *Dé-Tension* (performed at Joliette Institution in Joliette, Quebec).

Dance as Innovative Methodology

Dance is a fluid, dynamic means of expression that allows the researcher to take new perspectives, transcend set categories, and question existing knowledge

and practice. Within the prison, dance provides a stark contrast to the physical environment and institutional practices. How does the prison shape the dancers and the dance? How does dance reconfigure penalty? One of the goals of this research and its methodology is to provide a positive contribution, even a transformative experience, to the lives of participants as well as contributing differently, in an artistic manner, to the gendered embodied penalty.

Bodies, Corporality, and Criminology

Any social order produces and reproduces a specific corporal order. This corporal order mediates a cultural and symbolic system of any given society at a specific historical moment and in a specific political context (Frigon and Kérisit 2000; Préjean 1994). At the dawn of the twenty-first century, the body, both men's and women's, has increasingly become a central part of rethinking theory and practice in many disciplines including sociology, psychology, medicine, anthropology, geography, history, law, psychiatry, and criminology. The confined body can achieve some spaces of "freedom" through performance and temporarily reclaiming the space of confinement. The pivotal concept of the body serves as a parameter for exploring gendered bodily practices through dance. The institution's power manifests directly and indirectly through its hold on/of the body and is reinforced by practices of subjection and the *political technology of the body*. Dance as a carnal art disrupts and transcends this technological power.

The concept of the body is an important one in criminological and penal practices but is rarely theorized. However, the links between the body and crime, the body as a site of explanation of deviance, marginality, and criminality emerged well before the nineteenth century; they can be traced back to the work of early philosophers. The corporal metaphor (body-machine; body-politics) was indeed present in the works of Aristotle, Plato, Montesquieu, Bossuet, and Rousseau. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, for example, various body parts (the face, the brain) were taken as explanations and signs of deviance and criminality. From the school of physiognomy, to the development of typologies, phrenology, and the "primitive stigma" emerged a science that located evilness, badness, and wickedness in the brain (see Frigon 2003a for a more in-depth discussion).

Michel Foucault (1977) has shown us that, historically, the body of the condemned was supervised, controlled, tortured, and even decapitated. However, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, punishment-as-spectacle (see van Dülmen 1990) was replaced as the transition from the *macropolitics of the spectacle* to the *microphysics of power* occurred, a transition that involved the

individual's mind being transformed through punishment transformed physical through injury. Nevertheless, certain modern elements of punishment continue to concern the body itself: rationing of food, sexual deprivation, loss of freedom, corporal punishment, solitary confinement, strip search, body cavity searches, and segregation, to name a few. The body remains, as it were, central to penalty: "it is always the body that is at issue – the body and its forces, their utility and their docility, their distribution and their submission" (Foucault 1977, 25). According to Foucault, we must analyze punishment as a complex social function and as a political tactic through which the body is invested, trained, marked, and tortured. Furthermore, in this penalty, the body becomes both a *productive* body and a *subjected* body. This is the culminating point of disciplinary normalization.

More generally, however, feminist theorists have debated the body's role in social inquiry. Historically, bodies hold a tertiary place in social research, considered only insofar as physical embodiment implicates bodies in social interactions; the mind and one's thoughts were considered far more important than one's body (Shilling 1993). While some philosophers, researchers, and theorists (e.g., Pierre Bourdieu, Norbert Elias, Michel Foucault, Erving Goffman) considered bodies, these are relatively recent developments. For some, bodies are concrete objects that are influenced by and, in turn, influence the environment. Many researchers working within positivist paradigms – as well as some early feminist theorists – essentialized the body, locating the "feminine" in a female body (without age, class, or racial attributes; the body was assumed to be white and heterosexual), using physical difference to demarcate "woman" as an analytic category. Here, "female" and "male" are binaries; one's position is determined based on chromosomes, regardless of gender identification or other categories, such as age, race, ethnicity, class, and so on (see Hill Collins 1991; Harding 1986; Ussher 2006).

In contrast, postmodernists, poststructuralists, and some third-wave feminists argue that the body is constructed through discourse, challenging its corporeal existence (Shilling 1993; Somerville 2004). Poststructuralism is more frequently concerned with theoretical, philosophical, or abstract topics such as power, resistance, freedom, language, and discourse – where bodies emerge only when research questions necessitate their existence, such as in studies of illness, pregnancy, or sexual abuse (Somerville 2004). Poststructural perspectives highlight the inherent tensions and contradictions in individual identities and often abandon the body as an analytic category. The perspective notes that reified categories – such as race or gender – are useless and meaningless. Margaret Somerville (2004) problematizes this turn away from the body, countering that bodies matter and are significant. She argues that conventional

methodologies, combined with a poststructural theoretical lens, can be transformed into poststructural methodologies:

In light of the identified need to bring the lived body into a discursive relation with contemporary theoretical formulations of the body, then, certain methodological gestures have been suggested within the context of contemporary body theories. These are: naïve accounts of experience, using the body (at the scene of work) as a strategy, and unearthing bodily and embodied experiences in memory and diary ... *While these methodological strategies are not necessarily poststructural in themselves, by bringing them into relation with contemporary body theory at the site of research, they are changed by such intersections.* (Ibid., 50; emphasis added)

Embodied sociology responds to both positivist, essentialized studies, where the body is merely a research subject like all others, and to postmodern and poststructural works that overlook bodies, focusing instead on discourses and abstractions (Inckle 2010; Shilling 1993). Instead of being *about* bodies, embodied sociology emerges *from* them, examining the complicated, messy, and contradictory nature of corporeality (Williams and Bendelow 1998). This perspective combines traditional and contemporary sociological research, integrating the body and bodily concerns with critical, postmodern, and poststructural discourses. This research takes a middle ground, acknowledging bodily existence whilst problematizing categories and hierarchies based around physical bodies. Tim Newton (2003) argues that the body is not an infinitely pliable canvas on which to act out discourses although it is affected by and affects discourses. As such, some studies acknowledge intersectionality and positionality, where bodily attributes and social discourses interact to create systems of oppression, power, and privilege that shift and vary within and between situations. In criminology, this is particularly significant (Bruckert and Frigon 2004; Frigon 2001; Frigon and Jenny 2009; Kilty 2008).

Feminist research highlights the negative discourses associated with women's bodies; women are considered different and deficient relative to men. Their bodies, even when perfectly healthy, are seen as "other" and abnormal (Koch and Mansfield 2004; Ussher 2006). Embodied sociology reconnects discourses – including idealized accounts of women's bodies, beauty standards, and media images – with women's own experiences. Laura Hurd Clarke (2001), for example, studied older women's perceptions of their bodies, contrasting others' reactions to the women's bodies with their personal feelings. Disparities between how one *looks* and *feels* created dissonance and frustration. Similarly, Debra Gimlin (2007) examines how older women in dieting groups construct

identities vis-à-vis societal beauty standards. The women negotiated their corporeal selves (including their weight, age, and capabilities), social discourses and beauty standards in relation to how they felt about their bodies. These studies connect discourse and theory with actual, physical bodies, reconnecting abstract theory and lived reality.

Similarly, in this case study we see the participants' physical bodies as sites where their theoretical and discursive understandings of confinement, imprisonment, and the prison are explored and negotiated, causing psychological and physiological symptoms. At first, the artists were excited to meet the prisoners, but before they could describe their feelings, they expressed their concerns: "Am I able to exist in this singular context? How will I be moved emotionally? When I found myself there for the first visit, we had a tour of the cells immediately. I was not expecting it, I told myself, 'I'll never be able to.' How will I control my emotions?" (Paule Groleau, dancer). The artists also tell of the tension and fatigue experienced after the first day they spent in prison. These experiences are not merely emotional or sensory; rather, they affect one's entire body. Anita Praz, a sound artist, and Jean-Pierre Poisson, an actor, testified to the physical and moral impact of the first experience in Fresnes:

I did nothing that day, I did nothing, but I have never been as tired in my life as after that day. It left a huge impression on me. The weight, like lead, like a ... constant strain ... And I don't know, something palpable, very heavy, [sigh] terrible, when in fact nothing was happening ... It was an uneventful day, I imagine, for the women, for Claire and her team. It marked me, physically I was broken. (Anita Praz, sound artist)

Jean-Pierre Poisson recounted,

We spent the first day ... I remember ... we did the workshop where I found that people seemed to be very cooperative, that this would go more easily, quote unquote, than I had imagined. Really, the first day, it appeared to be surprisingly easy. I remember when I left, I said to Claire, "It went well and everything," and I went home. I slept for two hours. Really, I was exhausted. I wasn't aware at the time ... The energy that it took was completely unknown to me.

For the artists, the new experience of prison imprints their bodies with stress and exhaustion. In their connections with the prisoners, one sees the cumulative effects of the prison environment. While the experience physically

exhausted the artists, its prolonged effects on the prisoners were also apparent. Given the unsettling nature of the location and the prisoners' varied and tenuous relationships to their bodies, the artists' first connections with the prisoners were drawn from the context in which they live and the movements of their bodies.

The body is what translates the problems, tensions ... We see them immediately in the body. ... It's written on the body, on the face, the expression, tension, on the back, walking, the gaze ... So if the body becomes more harmonious, we can say that we are getting harmony inside as well ... That's what's better after dance, it's that things happen with the body, with the look, with sensations ... and it is more than words. And, in fact, it happens. There's something happening. (Fanny Tirel, dancer)

In the early sessions, the women's bodies reveal their suffering through movement. They bear the stigmata and damage of their life journeys and imprisonment, impeding the physical and vital needs that are essential to their well-being, their futures.

Sick bodies moving. They look hollow because their sternums are a little loose, their backs bent, they are looking down, their knees ... Their entire bodies, their motor skills are constrained as they are forced to follow the same paths, the same schedules, and then there is no projection, so obviously it has an impact on body posture. (Paule Groleau, dancer)

I remember it was very difficult. They were very sick in their bodies. They were very rigid; for others, mutilated. There were some who had struggled with body image. That is to say, they had gained weight or were not well in their bodies. Walking while looking straight ahead – it was impossible. They would look at the floor, or they would break the gaze. No balance. To touch themselves, very difficult too. To be touched. Dancing barefoot. Yes, it was very strange. (Juliette Vezat, dancer)

In the study of dance, representations and understandings of bodies are closely linked with movement. Performance and performativity are integral to both dance and individual interactions more broadly. How, then, do performance and performativity play out for prisoners within the confines of the prison?

Performances

Performances involve putting culture in motion, privileging action and experiential thought, knowledge and understanding. Performances – from everyday acts and interactions, to theatrics, to critical explorations – open spaces for critical thought, challenging categories and structures by connecting actions and events (Bell 2006). Norman Denzin (2003) notes that performance texts are multifaceted: they are cultural processes; a form of ethnographic praxis; open for interpretation (as other texts); used for scholarly thought; and used to join biography, pedagogy, and politics in acts of resistance, bridging critical Marxism and symbolic interactionism. Like Judith Butler (1990), Denzin argues that performances are unique attempts to emulate categories or ideals. With each performance, one can imitate, negotiate, re-form, or resist. These myriad opportunities to reify or challenge structures make performances both original and imitative.

Performances utilize varied media, including narratives, spoken words, physical movements, written texts, stories, and dramatic productions or plays. For example, Susanna Poole (2007) explores precariousness and migrancy through drama, as she both acts in and directs productions of plays by Marguerite Duras that feature prisoners from Italian migrancy detention centres. The plays resonate with the women's lives, highlighting the precariousness of their positions and lives in the "non-space" of the detention centre. Performance as a method of inquiry is linked to autoethnography, where autobiography and ethnography converge. Autoethnographies embrace situated researchers, dismantling their privileged positions above subjects by combining the roles; the researcher becomes the researched (Spry 2001). Like earlier feminist theories and methodologies, autoethnography situates "objectivity" and "truth" as always partial. It acknowledges a refracted self with multiple identities that may converge, diverge, or contradict, forming texts that destabilize the author and audience (*ibid.*). In practice, autoethnographies include narratives, performances, and reflexive theorizing that investigates identity, culture, and communication to create dialectic introspection and analysis.

Maarit Ylonen (2003) merges performativity (creation through doing) and autoethnography, examining meanings and narratives in dance. She is both observer and participant, watching the dance ritual from a distance, then dancing herself and constructing meaning with the dancers. Similarly, Sondra Fraleigh (2000) studies dance through phenomenology and autoethnography, exploring both the dance and her engagement with it. Both authors build on Deidre Sklar's (1991, 2000) work on dance ethnography, which uses a kinesthetic language to describe the dance process. In parallel with the methods, goals, and perspectives associated with performativity and performance

research, Rebecca Coleman (2008) borrows from philosophy (see Bergson 1999 [1912]), examining the research method of intuition, where the researcher attempts to know an object by entering into it instead of examining it from a distance. Coleman (2008, 106) explains further:

Intimacy is not to be found *in* an area of research and neither is intimacy *inherent to* a particular research topic. Rather, understood as and through intuition, intimacy is a research *relation*, a method, in the most open sense of the term. As such, a method of intuition does not “uncover” intimacies but *invents* ways of becoming intimate with objects of research.

She emphasizes ties between the researcher and researched, subjects and objects, bodies and images. Her work bridges ethnography and autoethnography and places participants on an even footing with the researcher, who also participates. By fully involving the researcher, this method destabilizes power relations, engaging the researcher reflexively and corporeally in the work.

Through creative workshops in contemporary dance, artists discover the unique context of imprisonment. The prison permeates them; their postures and artistic works explore their feelings and emotions. Within the prison, the dancers begin to question the distance between their experiences and the realities of everyday life in and outside of prison, relationships with others, time, space, sound, and sensuality. In prison, particularly in detention (remand) centres, the time passes strangely. There is little space to stand or to breathe. Between the obsessive waiting for an unknown tomorrow and the unchanging pace of the daily routines, instability and insecurity set in: “What also struck me is the relationship with time. In prison, I had no idea that everything is so rigid, that one could only work from this time to that time. Then the women would have to leave. Then they would come back. So, the slightest movement ... The rhythms are very overwhelming” (Pierre Cottreau, video artist). This singular relationship to time, the uncertainty, the inability to anchor oneself somewhere, even in the most mundane acts, contributes to the heavy tension that prisoners feel corporeally.

While the environment is undoubtedly destabilizing and disorienting, dance can reinvest the sensations of balance and being anchored. One of the fundamentals of modern dance lies in the notions of body weight and transferring support. In prison, it is hard to let go of weight. Given the restrictive nature of the space, the body is often unable to rest or settle, and any step or movement from one foot to the other while balancing on one leg can be difficult. For many women, this difficulty was present before incarceration given their lifestyles, marginalization, and exclusion. Their bodies were, for

many, in a poor physical state. For some women, imprisonment can be a time for reconstruction; a warm place to stay, regular meals, medical care, and safety can make prison a relatively attractive option compared to street life (Robert, Frigon, and Belzile 2007). The search for a sense of balance and calm may be experienced through supporting one's body with the ground. In the various movements developed with the help of Nathalie Schulmann, a contemporary dancer and professor, there are exercises that will help the prisoner to reconnect with the joy of feeling relaxed or even feel a sense of abandonment. At the beginning of each session, the troupe and the women prisoners share a time where they do self-massage and massage others – hence, a moment to share perceptual explorations. Sometimes, these exercises are part of the final performance. These movements seek to ease the uncertainty and vulnerability of the body and the movement of one's feet on the ground. When interviewed, women who participated commented on their experiences:

With dance, I don't know how to say this, I leave everything that's inside. And then when I've finished the dance, it is quiet. I feel calm. (Rosa, Joliette)

At the time, I was in a period where it was a bit critical, where I was always having problems with this and that, so obviously it helps you to breathe a little. You're no longer in this constant struggle that feeds on you inside and that you have with you all the time. It's a permanent tension, really. (Audrey, Fresnes)

As these quotes suggest, dance permits the woman to reveal herself without baring too much, to propose another understanding of herself, to exist differently in the eyes of others:

I learned that I was beautiful. I realized that your weight didn't matter. There are plenty of things you can do. I also learned that I liked being with other people and creating friendships and learning to know them. I also learned to be happy as a woman. I feel fine. I feel strong. (Tessie, Joliette, our translation)

It's really good because it shows the good side of our fellow prisoners. Because, here, we're not friends. We don't know each other, so everyone judges each other. But after the show, they greet us – “you did a good job” – everything positive, you know. (Lany, Joliette, our translation)

The artistic process generates other perceptions of self, a reconnection with one's emotions, one's interiority. It allows some expression of intimacy:

I lived in a pretty negative way: it was sometimes revenge, sometimes self-destruction. So, stuff like that. And if today I managed to move forward, to do what I love, it's tied to that. It stirs things. I didn't feel good about my body. I was expressing myself with words, and that made me want to write. It has given me back that little inner voice and my emotions ... Dance, it really connects you with your childhood emotions. Because, this freedom of movement, you have it when you aren't just being judged – that social judgment, a corset. You just let yourself go. (Audrey, Fresnes)

Through performance, the prisoners and artists gain new connections to themselves and their bodies, and to one another. While the actual workshops can provide only a temporary diversion from the prison, the prisoners report being moved and changed by it. In fact, their descriptions evoke theoretical approaches to the broader meanings and significance of movement.

Mobility and Space

Monika Büscher and John Urry (2009) examine the mobility paradigm, which explores various flows – of people, objects, ideas, and time. Mobility studies combine quantitative and qualitative methods, merging movement data with information about *why* and *how* these movements occur. As Jean-Louis Pan Ké Shon (2007) indicates, census data offer significant detail on local populations. Over time, these data allow us to track mobilities, demographic trends, and population characteristics by following groups or examining who passes through a space – whether a country, city, or neighbourhood (see Statistics Canada 2006). Although these quantitative data are only collected every few years and largely consist of vital statistics (e.g., age, sex, ancestry, occupation, income, etc.), they provide valuable longitudinal insights on mobility (Pan Ké Shon 2007). To answer *why* and *how* questions about movements, one turns to qualitative inquiry.

While qualitative research usually focuses on people, spaces, or events, mobility research examines movement, potential movements, and blocked movements (Büscher and Urry 2009). It examines fleeting phenomena such as sensory inputs, including smell, taste, or sight; emotions, which vary between contexts and in response to events; and the kinaesthetic, the results and consequences of movements and actions (Law and Urry 2004). Mobility research may follow movements (e.g., moving ethnographies, research on commuting),

analyze mobile communication (e.g., blogs, text messages, etc.), involve time-space diaries, or examine how people traverse and use public space (e.g., airports, shopping centres, etc.).

It is noteworthy that the theorization of space and mobility is a recent addition to criminological inquiry. Studies on homeless women's presence in and use of public spaces from which they are normally excluded (Casey, Goudie, and Reeve 2008), the criminalization and regulation of public and private spaces (Kilty and DeVellis 2010; Moore, Freeman, and Krawczyk 2011), and male ex-prisoners' efforts to resettle and develop networks and belonging within their new communities (Munn 2009) all draw on the concept of emotional geographies. These themes also appear in this case study. Given the newness of this area of inquiry, we draw upon Andrew Gorman-Murray (2009), who links feelings and geography by examining migration and queer identity. He states, "In this new work on emotional geographies, emotions, feelings and senses are posited as the connective tissue between the embodied self and place" (443-44). Bridging mobility studies and more traditional studies of identity and belongingness, he describes journeys from participants' familial homes to their current locations.

The prison, with its imposing physical structure, regimented movements, and monotonous days, brings space, mobility, and time into sharp focus (see Foucault 1977; Wahidin and Moss 2004). These forces are intertwined and blurred; the space remains constant, yet its rhythms and the motions and movements it contains ebb and flow, and time appears to stand still or wildly accelerate. In French prisons in particular, there are empty spaces, vast spaces, and crowded, confined spaces. This gives the strange feeling of dizziness and spinning. Pierre Cottreau, video artist, eloquently described the prison space:

Fresnes is a very old prison, very old. It is very impressive to see the controls, doors, locks. And, finally, the little spaces that are reserved for each prisoner. And that's very striking. There is a huge central hall, which is always empty. And there are tiny cells, which are very decrepit. So the conditions are quite terrible ... The show took place in the corridor, what they call the corridor, a kind of huge space in the middle, like a vessel, like that. There is a huge gap in the middle where there is never anyone.

Pierre highlights how the prison shapes and constrains the mobilities of its occupants; its physical structure compresses and constrains movements in small cells and fleeting movements connect these spaces to other areas of the

prison. Linked to the space, there is a universe of sound that both creates and mediates the extreme tension of the prison. The ever-present noises of the prison provide a soundtrack to the space, making it come alive and echo within the consciousness of the prisoners and artists. The mobilities of this sound – echoing, piercing, and pervasive – shape the corporal experience behind the walls. Anita Praz indicated that the impact of reverberation and the silence of that aural universe still bother her:

[It is] extremely reverberant, a very, very long reverberation. There is a lot of noise, impact sound, and something which constantly resonates. Nothing dull, nothing soothing, of course. Something like silence, always perturbed, always mixed with a hard echo, metallic, on metal, on hard materials ... The carceral space always echoed. It never left us in peace. This marked me. (Anita, sound artist)

It is not insignificant that the artistic creation combines artists and prisoners. In this regard, the choice of the company is always very clear: “Go where it’s not easy to go” (Agnes Fréjabue, actress). By entering these difficult, confined, and forbidding spaces, the artists attempt to conjure an alternative space, free of the constraints of the prison. Dancing encourages the women to utilize and own the space, reclaiming the institutional space as their own. How, though, can one create an imaginary space beyond the prison’s walls when you know that often, in France, it is forbidden to look a guard in the eye? On this, dancer Fanny Tirel reflected: “So it was on ... initially, the gaze. Watch the horizon; look away. But also to have space. Even in a small room. How can you begin to take space without having 200 square metres?” (Fanny Tirel). Our focus in the prison was partly on how women’s mobilities become restricted, as does their vision and the movement of their gaze. To relax and improve their horizontal vision, the prisoners explored dancing and performing two by two, eye to eye, studying the movements and travel released by their desires and the direction of their gazes. Here, prisoners examine their own mobility to relearn seemingly simple actions as well as to gain new understandings of themselves.

In many cases, including this case study, traditional methodologies and techniques – such as interviews, ethnography, hermeneutics, and content analysis – are coupled with theories that require researchers to examine movement and mobility (and its absence). Mobility research blurs the divisions between static moments and dynamic processes, acknowledging that social actors are not confined to one place, space, or time, and instead interact in myriad places and media.

The Body in Criminology, the Body in Dance

Women's bodies in prison are often betrayed and abused, leaving women with a negative self-image. The phenomenon of self-injury is also very present (Frigon 2001; Kilty 2008). Dance offers a way to reappropriate the body by allowing victimized women to reassert ownership of their bodies (see Gina Gibney Dance 2010). Dance in prison is subversive: working from a denied space to reclaimed space. Through space, rhythm, contraction, release, fall, recovery, rebound, the women find a balance: holding in place, straightening one's back, looking up, going toward the other, being in themselves, recapturing a sense of self. Sylvie, one of the women at Maison Tanguay, the provincial prison in Montreal recounted,

And I was dancing, turning, twirling among other dancers who were
also turning, twirling.
And like them, I was floating in the air, turning on the ground
I was occupying the space, all the space
The light was inundating me, the music was filling me
The rhythm was transporting me to the standing ovation of the public
Of which the screams and applause still nourish me of the joy that was
ours. (Bordeleau 2005, 15)

The dancer's body (skin, muscles), the choreography (solos and trios), the sounds (clanking keys, slamming doors, screams), and the music bring us to the prison setting, highlighting the mechanisms and logic of confinement, control, and resistance. The act of dancing, in juxtaposition to the prison structures, demonstrates dance's potential for resistance and individual transformation. As Paule Groleau (dancer) remarked, "When we come with contemporary dance and all this improvisational study and all that physical work, it questions the organization, justice, the guards, and the prisoners. It requires a letting go, and that, that can only be done by professional artists and creators." For example, one of the difficult concepts in creative work in prison is in the often passionate and sometimes conflicting relational phenomena between dance and prison. A dance piece involves a number of people (performers and creators) in a troupe, which is particularly important in prison dance projects as it allows prisoners to work as equals with dancers, experiencing autonomy and agency, both of which are absent from much of their lives. For example, an intimate male-female relationship was constituted and performed at Maison Tanguay, where the only male artist of the dance company danced with a female prisoner. She had asked to dance a waltz in a flowered

dress, like a princess. Jean-Pierre remembered, “And the first time was incredible, I don’t know, sensual but at the same time not sexual. We had a blast. It moved me enormously because it just added so much. Completely.” For this prisoner, the dance had a very strong meaning: the thirty-second duration of the waltz marked the first time a man had treated her so well. Jean-Pierre reflected on the dynamic with his dance partner:

What connection could I make with women who never see men? What does this put into play? What is assumed? And how to behave, with what attitude? In fact, it wasn’t planned. Modesty worked to protect us. You could have gotten away with anything, really. I didn’t have to say, “Careful ... I shouldn’t touch you like that. Don’t —” I could give her what she wanted. There was no risk.

The depth of the workshops with the prisoners caused some artists to contemplate their own paths as people and as artists. Three positions were expressed: the first referred to a relative confusion of roles, the second to a sense of confinement, and the third to the proximity of the prisoners’ suffering, which became a mirror of confinement that allowed the women to release or reveal their vulnerability. As an actress and not a dancer, Agnes reflected on this experience:

Me, I was really aware of my own confinement. And, well, reflection follows that. Being in prison does not make someone more imprisoned than someone who has had a difficult life. Ultimately, I was maybe, in my movements, closer to being trapped than some people we met in prison. But this difference is not a construction; this difference is a fact. And for a performer, it’s hard to accept this fact.

This game of reflection can also change one’s vision and perspective on the construction of the other and the permeability of space(s) through mobility and corporality/corporeality. As Juliette Vezat, a dancer, suggested, “I no longer have the same outlook on people. And what I also realize is that I could very well go to jail. I feel a bit borderline, too, not far from the edge. There is a fine boundary between being inside and out.” There is also the question of how to become reacquainted through touch (self and other). In prison, the rare moments of relaxation and intimate connection with the senses are experienced intensely. Each of the project sessions began with massage. This experience is quite novel for incarcerated women, given that many have only had violent contact with others through victimization and serious

assault (see Comack 1996; Comack and Brickey 2007; Frigon 2001, 2003b). Audrey, a prisoner at Fresnes, observed, "It's so serious, the relationship with the body in prison, among girls who were violated or others who sold their bodies. I think that dance proposes linking oneself, body and spirit, one's sensitivity, to reestablish contact. Simply learning to live. To no longer have this suspicion, to let go a little." Prisoners must move from touching themselves (arms, face, etc.) to touching the other (the other's face and torso, etc.), from the mildest to the most intimate. For some, it is extremely pleasurable to regain contact with the skin, but at the same time extremely disturbing. It is a journey for them to realize that touch is not always serious, dangerous, or deviant. These body-to-body relationships develop knowledge of the self and other. Incarcerated women live in extreme restraint, but in the processes implicated in supporting the other dancers, they learn to project confidence and respect. Also, by being supported by others, they are able to explore sensations of floating or flight:

Yes, yes, you can climb on my back. Don't worry. I'm used to carrying people. She said to me, "But I'm too heavy." Weight is very important. It was a problem for her. I told her, "Well, no, no. Me, I can carry you. It's not a problem." The moment where she ended up on my back, I felt there was a fullness, as if she really began to fly. And then she started to close her eyes and take her time, to look. (Fanny Tirel, dancer)

The intensity of the ephemeral highlights both the challenges of reconnecting with oneself and dance as a potentially transformative tool for both public perceptions and the prisoners themselves. Although the sessions do not have a therapeutic goal, some women have made this link as it offers a different vision of the future, as evidenced by Vanessa and Rosa:

This project has touched me as much as seeing the shrink. It makes you discover things about yourself. It makes you keep in touch with your inner self, your child. (Vanessa, Joliette)

I took out a lot of things that I knew that I had inside. I expressed myself a lot. And I think if I could do that, I can do more now. With this show, I said, "I can do that. I can do anything I want." (Rosa, Joliette)

In prison, many women build a shell to protect themselves. Many described dance as a therapeutic way to free themselves from that shell.

You anesthetize your senses. You really blind your spirit. Your body, it must also be armoured. Because every time you must win. (Audrey, Fresnes)

When we discuss touch, these self-protections are especially felt by the artists. This can harden you, create a shell. You can sense it through touch. It is perhaps more obvious through touch than sight. But at the same time, it is a protection system. I think it can provide a lot of protection, when you're in there. (Agnès Fréjabue, actress)=

This questioning can be very destabilizing because it contrasts two experiences: one with the artists in the troupe and the other that is regularly suffered in prison.

The fact that there, one has to speak with one's body while one usually always represses ... Here, it's the opposite movement, so obviously it's difficult. And, yes, that warmth and authenticity that you can find in working with these groups ... After the evening, I had a difficult relationship with the guards for sure: they searched us all the time. They slammed the doors in our faces, small pettinesses. The contrast was even greater. It further brought us back to the inhumanity of the guards, in any case. (Audrey, Fresnes)

Thus, female prisoners can be very vulnerable during sensory exploration and improvisational dance, as their sensitivity is again requested: "It awakens the things I feel at times. Well, being listened to, being watched, working on the body, it awakens things that may be hidden, and they can sometimes be painful things" (Pierre Cottreau, video creator). The violence of these states, even their onset, can destabilize the women. The ephemeral dimension of the projects allow women to experience, express, and transform their "violence" during the limited time the artists are among them, something normally inconceivable in this setting. Therefore, dance transforms the environment as well as prisoners' understandings of it, allowing them to transcend their self-conceptions, roles, and the space.

Conclusion

Dance not only brings us to a new way of understanding imprisonment and its effects. It also contributes to methodological innovation, as the dancers –

prisoners and professionals – learn about themselves, one another, and the carceral environment through the dance project. Inserting dance into criminology moves beyond the dyads of crime and punishment or offender and offence to explore the spaces in which punishments are carried out and to alter our understandings of those who are criminalized. Dance methodologies build on the multidisciplinary nature of criminology, offering a different way to explore carceral institutions and create meaning.

In prison, dance is a therapy, a method of inquiry, a way of analyzing one's experiences, and a conduit for critically examining the carceral space as women reconnect with their bodies and the environment through movement. In an environment that is often perceived as cold, violent, and oppressive, dance serves as a conduit to bring humanity to the space and agency to its inhabitants. As such, it represents a methodology that can provide a positive contribution, even a transformative experience, to the lives of participants as well as meeting the researcher's goal to contribute differently to penality. Dance is a gendered performative that uses choreography to highlight various aspects of the prison and through which we may explore the production and use of space, movement, bodies, and sound.

Dance studies expand the contours of the discipline of criminology, serving as a kinesthetic and transformative experience, for the researcher and the research participants. Specifically, dance enables the researcher to insert women with different mobilities, bodies, and identities into research designs and choreography frameworks. Connecting the artistic and the carceral provides a new lens of analysis in which movements, emotions, and visceral reactions become the texts for interpretation, changing our conceptions about punishment, detention, and prisoners by translating *choreographic* propositions into *criminological* propositions. Thus, dance has the power to subvert traditional ways of conceptualizing prison and prisoners and fractures the discipline's often narrow boundaries and its potential methodological straightjacket. Dance, and art more generally, breathes new life into our academic and feminist journeys.

Notes

- 1 We borrow from Loraine Gelsthorpe's (1990) title "Feminist Methodologies in Criminology: A New Approach or Old Wine in New Bottles?"
- 2 The company has always worked with and for children, with imprisoned men, and with urban French youth who are considered "difficult" by others.
- 3 Access to prisoners for this research was facilitated by a professional working within Joliette institution. No difficulties were experienced in gaining access. I believe this was because this was seen as a very positive project and did not represent any threat to the prison.

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