

“Everyone Deserves a Bit of Joy”: A Case Study of the Royal New Zealand Ballet’s Prison Program

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Abstract

Art has a long and nuanced history within the context of the prison. Prisoners have utilized wall drawings, tattooing, journaling, and other forms of creative expression to break the monotony of prison life. Over time, art has evolved in the prison context and has been utilized by researchers, therapists, and teachers as a method of rehabilitation that falls outside of more conventional methods such as talk therapy, drug treatment, and anger management programs. Arts programming allows prisoners to express themselves in new and creative ways, as well as the ability to build new skills and foster better relationships with themselves and each other. A review of the literature discusses the negative effects of imprisonment on the body. As a result of the violent and incapacitating nature of being caged, prisoners become mirrors of the carceral space. Bodies become rigid, condensed, hunched, or even bulky in order to survive. Dance is an opportunity for prisoners to find freedom within the walls of a prison, as well as more tangible benefits such as improving posture, flexibility, and giving prisoners new ways to express themselves through movement. This can lead to improved self-esteem, a sense of accomplishment, and fostering better relationships with themselves and others. Using Foucault's concept of docile bodies as well as Goffman's theory dramaturgy, this research serves to fill in gaps in the literature around how dance impacts the body and emotional well-being. Through one-on-one interviews with members of the Royal New Zealand Ballet, this paper will examine dance's ability to free the body and help prisoners find a sense of belonging and identity unrelated to their criminality.

Keywords: Royal New Zealand Ballet; ballet; dance; prison dance; criminalized populations; arts-based initiatives; docile bodies; prisoners; dramaturgy

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background and Situating the Research

Prisoners have used various forms of art as a method of communication, to alleviate boredom, promote self-expression in a restricted space, and to demonstrate resistance against the carceral system (Cheloitis, 2014; Gussak & Ploumis-Devick, 2004; Johnson, 2008; Strang et al., 2000). Over the years, prisons have begun utilizing arts-based programming as a method of alternative rehabilitation for incarcerated individuals. The flexibility of arts-based programming means that it has the potential to reach every prisoner, regardless of their artistic ability, background, or education.

Programs across the globe such as Rehabilitation Through the Arts in New York; The Pros and Cons Music Program at Grand Valley Institution for Women in Ontario; William Head on Stage in Victoria; as well as Clean Break Theatre Company, and the Geese Theatre Company in the UK have provided prisoners with the opportunity to learn new creative skills, improve motivation, change attitudes and behaviours, and tell their stories through the art of performance (Harkins et al., 2011; Merrill & Frigon, 2015; Moller, 2011; Prendergast, 2016; Young, 2009). While there is significant support for arts-based programming in prisons, research on this topic remains under-developed and under-funded, particularly in the field of criminology (Hughes, 2005; van der Muelen & Omstead, 2021).

My personal interest in this topic comes from my background as an actor, where I spent six years learning and working in film, television, and theatre before coming back to academia. The ability to study acting and express myself creatively opened me up emotionally and helped me to build my communication skills as well as my relationships with those around me. Much of

my time spent working as an actor was deeply collaborative, and I cherished the opportunity to learn from others as well as the chance to form a community with other artists. The craft of acting allowed me to transform as an individual and gain confidence in myself; that transformation has deeply impacted all areas of my life. While I am no longer involved in the film industry, my personal experiences have shaped my beliefs about the accessibility of art as well as its ability to heal and transform.

I have always had a deep fascination with the ways that art and incarceration intersect, as well as how art can be used as a viable form of alternative rehabilitation in prisons. During the summer of 2019, I had the opportunity to be a part of Kwantlen Polytechnic University's Inside Out Program, where a select group of students from various disciplines travelled to Kwikwèxwelhp Healing Village, which is a minimum-security Indigenous Healing Lodge located on the territory of the Sts'ailes people. The purpose of this program was to work with a group of incarcerated men doing creative writing, improvisation, and theatre. We worked together as a group to build a small theatrical production that was performed at the end of an eight-week course for both staff and residents. Performing with the residents opened lines of communication and interaction that many of them had never experienced before. This is when I became acutely aware of the power of arts-based prison programming and how desperately it is needed within the correctional context. The Inside Out Program has left a lasting impact on me and continues to remind me of the importance and necessity of arts-based prison programming. Particularly the ways that art can be used as a healing tool, even in spaces of violence.

This thesis focuses on the physical and emotional effects of ballet in New Zealand prisons through studying the Royal New Zealand Ballet's (RNZB) prison program. Specifically, this research seeks to examine the benefits of ballet and the ways it can positively affect the

bodies and minds of prisoners, including providing prisoners with the ability to transcend their roles as prisoners. Much of the literature for this project is located in the fields of dance and art therapy. As a result, there are significant gaps when it comes to examining prison-based dance programs from a criminological perspective, particularly how dance can alter the body of the prisoner, improve self-esteem, and be used as a form of resistance and emotional transformation – including how prisoners view themselves. This thesis serves as an opportunity to fill in those gaps in the research as well as examine the RNZB's prison program and its positive impact on those who have had the opportunity to participate. My primary source of data was interviews with dance facilitators who taught eight-week workshops at five prisons in New Zealand. It is critical to note that I relied on the perspective and expertise of the dance instructors in my data analysis chapter due to their closeness with prisoners, as well as their expertise. While I was not able to interview current and former prisoners for this thesis, the perspectives and observations from the dancers gave me insight into how prisoners respond to arts-based programming, how dance can provide a sense of community, and the physical and emotional changes that occur as a result of bringing dance into the carceral space.

The Research Questions

This project seeks to expand the research on dance in prisons, as well as discuss the Royal New Zealand Ballet's prison dance program, examine the physical and emotional benefits of dance, as well as how dance is used as both a personal form of resistance and a way to test out new behaviours and roles through performance. This thesis seeks to answer the following questions:

1. *How does dance alter the bodies of incarcerated individuals?*
2. *How does dance allow prisoners to transcend their roles within the institution?*

In order to answer these questions, this thesis will take a qualitative approach to the research, interviewing dance instructors from the RNZB with questions focused on the following: the physical and emotional improvements instructors saw in participants, barriers to movement or mobility before beginning the program, and the ways in which dance may have helped prisoners to see themselves as more than their criminal label. Due to the lack of literature on this topic, the goal was to gain insight into the personal experiences of the RNZB dancers, as well as the transformations that they experienced and witnessed while they were teaching.

Much of the literature around dance and dance programming with criminalized individuals focuses on a shift in attitude and a willingness to engage actively in creative expression. However, there is little discussion on the ways in which the body becomes a reflection of the carceral space, as well as how dance can act as a direct antithesis to the restrictions and confines of prison walls. Previous research also neglects to examine how dance allows prisoners to transcend their roles within the institution and try on new “masks” or “fronts” through dance. There is the potential for prisoners to explore new behaviours and ways of communicating that may not be offered to them due to their role as a prisoner, or their social standing in the prison. By adopting Michel Foucault’s concept of docile bodies as well as Goffman’s theory of dramaturgy, this thesis allows me to explore dance in the criminological context, specifically when examining themes of power, the body, resistance, and roles in the institution.

An Overview of the Royal New Zealand Ballet’s Prison Program

The Royal New Zealand Ballet was founded in 1953 and is based in Wellington. The Ballet tours throughout New Zealand as well as internationally and presents approximately 70 performances per year. The RNZB also has an education program, which has expanded to their

prison program. The prison program operates in partnership with The New Zealand Department of Corrections. The program began in 2017 as a part of the New Zealand Department of Corrections desire to establish inclusion and accessibility initiatives in the prisons. The program's primary goal is to make dance accessible to prisoners so that they can experience this beautiful and versatile art form for themselves. Secondary goals were to improve prisoners' communication skills, as well as mental and physical health (rnzb.org, 2021). The program serves as a way to boost the confidence and self-esteem of prisoners and promote a sense of community and cooperation behind bars. The RNZB's prison program is an extension of the Ballet's Education and Community program which seeks to make dance accessible to New Zealanders of all ages and abilities. The RNZB prison program began in a women's institution in Wellington and quickly expanded to men's programs due to popularity and high demand.

The RNZB's prison program is funded through various outside agencies such as The Wellington Community Trust and sponsors who contribute money toward things like travel expenses from one island to another (Sarah, RNZB interview, 2021), rental cars, and hiring contractors who are trained in dance and can go in and teach prisoners. Funding is organized by the Education, Community, and Accessibility Manager, and is a primary factor in the program's longevity and subsequent success. The New Zealand Department of Corrections is not currently involved in funding this project (Sarah, RNZB interview, 2021). According to data provided to be by the Royal New Zealand Ballet, the program is offered to both men and women, and is currently operating out of prisons in Wellington, Christchurch, and Auckland. These prisons are: Arohata Women's Prison, Rimutaka Men's Prison, Rolleston Men's Prison, Christchurch Women's Prison, and the Auckland Region Women's Corrections Facility. In 2020, workshops were held from February to December. Many of these took place during the COVID-19

pandemic. Due to New Zealand's handling of the pandemic and keeping outbreak numbers relatively low, the dancers were still able to go into the prison to continue in-person work.

Rimutaka Prison is New Zealand's largest prison, located just north of Wellington in Upper Hutt. The prison houses minimum to high security male prisoners and was established in 1967. The prison holds over 805 male prisoners making up 8.9% of the total prison population (New Zealand Department of Corrections, 2020). The men at Rimutaka participated in three rounds of 8 workshops from February 2020 to December 2020. There were also new workshops introduced to men under the age of 25 at Rimutaka. Data provided to me by the Royal New Zealand Ballet indicates that there was also a women's dance workshop that took place at Rimutaka. Upon interviewing a member of the Royal New Zealand Ballet, I discovered that before the COVID-19 pandemic, an overflow of women from Arohata were sent to Rimutaka in order to deal with overpopulation. The Royal New Zealand Ballet was asked to work with the overflow of women. Like the other programs, there were three rounds of eight workshops for the women at Rimutaka. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and depopulation, there is no longer an overflow of women located at Rimutaka prison (Sarah, RNZB Interview 1, 2021). However, prior to this, workshops at Rimutaka were held in 2017 and 2018.

Christchurch Women's prison houses women of all security levels and was established in 1974. As for September 2020, the institution holds 90 women, making up 1% of the total prison population in New Zealand (New Zealand Department of Corrections, 2021). There were workshops held at Rolleston prison in Christchurch – a medium to minimum security men's prison, as well as Auckland Regional Women's Correctional facility. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 30-week project in Auckland was reduced to two months. Overall, it

appears that other than the program in Auckland, the workshops were not severely impacted by the pandemic.

According to a 2018 report by Sylvie Frigon titled, *Royal New Zealand Ballet Dance Workshops in Women's Prisons*, prisoners had many reasons for participating in the dance program, but this report pointed out three primary motivations for signing up: The first was to break the monotony of daily prison life and have something fun to look forward to, a love of dance and exercise as well as the opportunity to learn something new, and many of the women felt like dance would give them an opportunity to reclaim their femininity - something that is often lost behind bars (Frigon, 2018). Other motivations included: the opportunity for self-expression, the opportunity to be creative, and a place where prisoners felt like they could express themselves freely and without judgement (Frigon, 2018). Prisoners also reported wanting to feel more fit and healthy, and thought that dance would be the perfect vehicle to achieve those goals in a prison setting (Frigon, 2018). They found the instructors engaging and were excited to work with them. Prisoners also reported feeling a sense of empowerment, inspiration, hope, and felt growth, both physically and emotionally when engaging with dance (Frigon, 2018; mzb.org, 2020). Upon completion of the dance program, participants are given a certificate that recognizes their dedication and perseverance to learning dance and sticking with the program. This gives them a tangible form of recognition.

While the data discussed in this specific thesis will touch on some motivations for prisoners wanting to participate in the program, the primary focus will be on the ways in which prisoners' bodies change after participation in a dance program, and the shift in roles and attitudes that they are able to take on. The following section will outline the chapters and structure of this thesis.

Chapters and Structure

The structure of this thesis will be as follows. I will begin the next chapter with a review of the literature surrounding dance programs in prison. First, however, I will provide a brief overview of the history of art and arts-based programming in prison. This is necessary to lay the groundwork for various themes in this thesis, including that of resistance, roles, and identity. This literature review will examine themes such as teaching dance in prison, dance as therapy, rehabilitation, the body, and the importance of performance in the rehabilitative process. I will also discuss dancing in the carceral space, including the mechanisms of control that are exercised by the prison. These themes tie into the third chapter, where I will discuss Foucault's concept of docile bodies and Goffman's theory of dramaturgy. Specifically, with respect to resistance, identity, roles, and how the body responds to the trauma of the prison environment.

These frameworks will link up with my fourth chapter, which will outline and discuss the methods used in order to gain insight into the lived experiences of dancers, contractors, and prisoners who have participated in the RNZB's prison dance program. This chapter will discuss my epistemological and ontological positioning, population, recruitment, sampling, and the interview process. The fourth chapter will outline the data analysis strategies used, as well as a discussion around the ethics of this project. The fifth chapter will discuss the findings from my interviews and feedback forms. I will discuss three major themes derived from the data: Carceral Bodies and Physical Transformation, Emotional Growth, and Teaching in the Prison Environment. Finally, I will conclude with a summary of the findings, revisiting contributions to the research, and finally the limitations, recommendations (including those for the Canadian context), and closing remarks.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Prison is not thought of as an environment where creativity can be allowed to blossom. The most basic human necessities such as space, time, leisure, touch, and movement are highly regimented and restricted to discipline the mind and body (Chyle, Boehm, Imus & Ostermann, 2020; Foucault, 1977; Frigon, 2014; Frigon & Shantz, 2014; Mortimer, 2017). There is little opportunity for deep and meaningful connection as prisons are spaces filled with violence, mistrust, deprivation, and trauma (Foucault, 1977; Gussak, 2007; Lucas, 2013). Cells are frequently searched and turned over by staff with the objective of finding and removing contraband or seeking to punish those who defy these mechanisms of control (Shantz & Frigon, 2009). Yet, prisoners persevere, finding new and unique ways to express themselves and tell their stories through creative expression. Jail wall drawings, journaling, tattooing, and singing, are just some examples of forms of art that allow prisoners to resist and survive the experience of incarceration (Johnson, 2008).

Arts programming, particularly dance, has made its way into prisons across the world as an alternative form of therapy and rehabilitation. Since arts-based programming is versatile and flexible, it is particularly effective for prisoners who suffer from immense trauma and are otherwise unresponsive or resistant to other forms of treatment offered in prisons (Gussak, 2007). Dance allows for non-verbal communication and has the ability to transform the body, making prisoners feel stronger, more flexible, and healthier both physically and mentally (Frigon and Shantz, 2014; Frigon, 2014). Dance transcends language and emotional barriers to healing while confronting the stigma of criminalization and incarceration through performance and creative expression (Milliken, 2002; Milliken, 2008; Young, 2019)

I will begin this chapter by outlining the literature surrounding prison-based arts programming. This will allow me to lay the groundwork for discussions around dance in the carceral context. Next, I will discuss dance in the carceral space, including teaching dance in prison and the modalities of control that both prisoners and dance instructors experience in order to bring this art form into the prison environment. I will then explore literature that discusses the impact of dance on the body, including things like touch and rehabilitation. Finally, I will discuss the ways in which dance can allow for emotional transformation and growth through building a sense of community in prison.

Through this discussion, I will demonstrate that dance is a powerful form of resistance and rehabilitation for prisoners, but that the current research is limited in scope, particularly in the criminological context. Existing literature on dance argues that it has a profound and powerful impact on the physicality, health, and emotional well-being of prisoners. Dance provides prisoners with a non-verbal alternative to expressing complex and often overwhelming emotions linked to trauma and abuse suffered both in and outside of the prison (Frigon, 2014; Frigon & Shantz, 2014; Gussak, 2007; Milliken, 2002; Milliken, 2008). These programs are immensely helpful in assisting with rehabilitation and are just as critical to healing as more traditional forms of prison programming.

An Overview of Art in Prison

The deprivation that accompanies incarceration forces prisoners to be creative when it comes to self-expression (Williams, 2013). Prisoners have used the walls of their cells to count their time behind bars, to draw murals and they have made paint out of candy coating. (Johnson, 2008). Perhaps the most infamous form of creative expression is using instruments such as

sewing needles, bedsprings, and guitar strings in order to construct crude tattoo machines (Johnson, 2008; Strang et al., 2000; Williams, 2013). Regardless of the ways in which the correctional system has tried to prohibit it, art and creativity are part of the fabric of prison life. Prisoners have relied on creative forms of expression in order to break the monotony of their day to day existence, to display their criminal status, express emotion that cannot otherwise be verbalized, or exchange art for contraband (Cheloitis, 2014; Gussak & Ploumis-Devick, 2004; Johnson, 2008; Strang et al., 2000). Art can be deeply therapeutic, a form of currency, or it can be a quiet reclamation and resistance toward a system that mainly seeks to punish them.

In recent years, art has evolved into a tool for healing and rehabilitation within the carceral space, and prisons have slowly begun to realize its value. While it is outside the realm of more traditional prison programming such as anger management, talk therapy, or drug counseling, arts-based programming can be implemented in prisons in order to help prisoners heal from trauma. Traditional forms of therapy in prison have been blocked by mistrust of staff and a hesitancy to disclose trauma (Gussak, 2007). In women's institutions, traditional rehabilitation programs operate under a "therapeutic" paradigm, merging treatment and punishment while still viewing the prisoner through a stigmatizing lens (Pollack, 2009). Arts programming is a way to challenge that through non-verbal communication, exploring creativity, and breaking down barriers – particularly when prisoners have the opportunity to perform for a live audience. (Prendergast, 2016) It has developed into a method that can help build self-esteem and self-worth, promote further education, and foster a sense of community among prisoners and staff (Brewster, 2014; Merrill & Frigon, 2015; Moller, 2011; Halperin et al., 2012).

Arts-based programming can help to reduce recidivism by providing prisoners with the opportunity to learn new skills, manage trauma, and find better ways to communicate and repair

relationships that may have been damaged by incarceration (Chelaitis & Jordanoska, 2016). For example, Rehabilitation Through the Arts (RTA) is a prisoner-run arts-based program offered in many prisons in the U.S. and boasts a five percent recidivism rate (Hallundback, 2020; Young, 2019). There is a caveat to these programs, however. Prisoners are not permitted to participate in programs like Rehabilitation Through the Arts unless they have a stellar disciplinary record (Young, 2019). This means that, for many prisoners with mental health issues and subsequent disciplinary problems, arts-based programming is inaccessible despite the fact that they may be the ones who need it the most. This has the potential to limit the scope of research on arts-based programming as there are smaller populations to draw from when creating programs and bureaucratic barriers to getting programming out to the individuals who need it the most.

Through research and practice, arts-based programming has become an alternative method of working with criminalized and incarcerated individuals, many of whom experience symptoms of PTSD due to violence and trauma in and outside of prison (Chyle, Boehm, Imus, & Ostermann, 2020; Frigon, 2014; Gussak, 2007). Arts-based programming acts as an alternative way to engage and work with individuals who may be experiencing mental health issues, or who may otherwise be reluctant to participate in more traditional, classroom-based activities. Many prisoners have struggled in school and achieved low levels of education (Rosenbaum, 2019). Art is more flexible and diverse. It does not require participants to sit in desks and provides prisoners with a “basic human need for creative self-development, autonomy, and expression” (Johnson, 2008). Art teachers are viewed more as mentors and role models who are there to help as opposed to monitor and discipline prisoners. They also serve as a way to connect with the outside world as many programs in Canada are taught by correctional officers as opposed to outside educators (Pollack, 2009; Rosenbaum, 2019). In some cases, participation in the arts can

give prisoners the confidence to pursue other educational programs such as GEDs and university degrees (Halperin et al., 2012; Wilson & Logan, 2006, as cited in Caulfield, Wilkinson & Wilson, 2016). However, the literature and research on these programs, including their many benefits, remains underdeveloped. Particularly in the ways that art can help to battle the stigma of criminalization and incarceration.

Arts programming give criminalized individuals and prisoners the opportunity to take control of their own narratives, and tell their stories in the way that they want them to be told (Lazzari, Amundson & Jackson, 2005; Lu & Yuen, 2012; Merriam, 1998; Prendergast, 2016). Part of taking back these narratives and breaking stigma is through the public consumption of prisoner art. When the public engages with, or purchases, art from prisoners and criminalized people, there is an opportunity for connection, understanding, and even dialogue that may not otherwise occur (Caulfield, Wilkinson & Wilson, 2016; Lu & Yuen, 2012; Prendergast, 2016). Monica Prendergast's study of *William Head on Stage*, a theatre program for incarcerated men in Victoria, British Columbia, highlights the need for this kind of connection between incarcerated individuals and the public. After every performance at William Head Institution, both prisoners and audience members have the opportunity to engage in what are known in the program as talkbacks (Prendergast, 2016; Ridha, 2018). It is here that both prisoners and the public can build an opportunity for conversation and understanding through these question-and-answer sessions (Prendergast, 2016; Ridha, 2018)

Prendergast states that many of the questions are geared toward how the play was created and how the experience of participating in prison-based art changed them and assisted their rehabilitation (Prendergast, 2016). For the prisoners, this is an emotional experience, and they have the opportunity to express what the artistic process has meant to them, stating that it "has

been invaluable to their rehabilitation, self-confidence, and ability to face the public with pride rather than shame and fear” (Prendergast, 2016, p. 348). However, there is a danger of prisoner art veering into the “confessional”, or a desire for the public to see penance for crimes that the prisoner is already being punished for. Thus, art can evolve into a narrative surrounding their offence, rather than the person behind the label of “criminal”. This can become a pervasive theme in prisoner art that is exploitative if taken too far, or if a workshop is being led by someone who is inexperienced in working with prisoners (Berson, 2008; Lucas, 2013). In her study on a women’s art program in North Carolina, Ashley Lucas was cautious of this phenomenon, stating, “prisoners, in turn, are often characterized as the objects of their own art rather than the agents who created it, and in this light audiences perceive prisoners’ art as psychologically revelatory—as a window into the deviant soul” (Lucas, 2013, p. 135). This is a valid criticism of examinations of arts programming in prison and the consumption of art created by vulnerable populations such as criminalized people. Recompense may be part of the creative process for some prisoners, but it should not be the primary focal point.

As knowledge regarding the benefits of arts-based programming have become more widespread, more correctional facilities have begun to implement said programs for rehabilitative purposes (Brewster, 2014). It is worth noting, however, that although prisons state that their goal is rehabilitation, that the carceral system itself was built to punish, to deprive, and to cause violence to those who are marginalized and racialized (Alexander, 2010; Davis, 2003; Foucault, 1977). The correctional system is not a space of safety, and it is not a space where individuals are allowed to process trauma without the fear of violence and retribution (Frigon, 2014). Those invested in the wellbeing of prisoners must contend with the dichotomy of a space that claims to be healing while, at the same time, being a space of violence and trauma. Despite

this, arts-based programming boasts a significant number of benefits and can be a means through which rehabilitation can occur within the carceral space, including improving relationships with themselves, improving relationships with prison staff, reducing disciplinary infractions, and giving prisoners a sense of real community and camaraderie on the inside that has otherwise disappeared (Milliken, 2008; Moller, 2011; Nugent & Loucks, 2011).

Art has transformed from a means of self-expression behind bars to a way in which researchers and program developers can tap into the emotional and psychological landscape of prisoners, and use creativity to change attitudes, perceptions, and even behaviour. Arts programs have a wealth of untapped potential when they are used in conjunction with traditional correctional programming such as GED programs, talk therapy, and anger management (Gussak, 2007). The primary research goal surrounding much of the literature is to use art as an alternative method of rehabilitation and much of the current research speaks about art's capacity to heal and transform the individual, particularly in correctional settings. The current research on dance in prisons reflects this.

Navigating dance and performance within the carceral context can be a strange and unnerving experience for both instructors and prisoners. Outside visitors including instructors, therapists, program facilitators must adjust to certain mechanisms of control exercised by correctional facilities. These include searches, dealing with bureaucracy and long wait times, adhering to particular dress codes, long travel times to and from the prison, and being restricted to only bringing in certain items (Comfort, 2003; Mortimer, 2017; Seibel, 2008; Young, 2019). Operating a dance program inside of a prison presents its own challenges. The following sections will discuss the complexity of dancing in the carceral space, the reclamation of the body and of

space, and dance as a direct therapeutic response to the trauma that is experienced both in and outside of prison.

Teaching Dance in Prison

In their article on dance and incarceration, Frigon and Shantz state, “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” (Frigon & Shantz, 2014, p. 85). Within prisons, dance is a direct confrontation to confinement and becomes a way in which researchers can examine dance’s transformative power on both the body and the emotional well-being of prisoners (Frigon & Shantz, 2014). The focus of the prison is to create a body that is cooperative and docile through power relations, subjugation, and discipline (Foucault, 1977). This body is often slow moving, hunched, and a reflection of confinement (Foucault, 1977; Frigon, 2014). Dance allows prisoners to engage in “body projects” that give them the opportunity to engage in resistance (Frigon & Shantz, 2010; Frigon & Shantz, 2014; Shilling, 1993). Through dance, the body is able to break free of postures and ways of moving that have been molded by the prison environment. Bodies are able to find freedom that may not have been previously experienced.

The issue of space and control of movement is a common theme that arises in much of the literature on dance in prison, as well as Foucault’s work on docile bodies (Foucault, 1977; Frigon, 2014; Jewkes, 2013; Mortimer, 2017; Young, 2019). The very architecture and design of the prison “compresses and constrains movements in small cells with fleeting movements connecting these spaces to other areas of the prison” (Frigon, 2014, p. 10). The structure of prisons means that these institutions are ill-prepared and ill-equipped for programs that require a

great deal of physical movement. Thus, dance instructors are forced to adjust to rehearsing and teaching in cramped and poorly ventilated rooms that make large movements required for dance difficult (Frigon & Shantz, 2014; Milliken, 2002; Mortimer, 2017; Young, 2019). Dance instructors are forced to make use of these spaces as the prison is not designed for these types of programs (Young, 2019). Restriction of space and movement within a prison is one of the many ways that institutions exercise and maintain control over prisoners and outsiders (Foucault, 1977; Frigon, 2014).

Outside of prison, programs that involve dance and movement require that participants wear certain types of clothing that can stretch and move with the body as opposed to acting as a barrier to complete freedom of movement. However, prisoners often have to dance in the clothing that they wear for the majority of the day. The argument against bringing in outside materials such as costumes, props, or clothing for rehearsal is that they could be used to smuggle contraband and, thus, only certain items are permitted inside the prison (Prendergast, 2016). Anything being brought in is thoroughly inspected by prison staff before it is distributed to prisoners; for some arts programs like William Head on Stage, this process can cause an extreme amount of distress for participants (Prendergast, 2016). In her article, *Dancing at Sing Sing*, Jacqui Young described the check-in process in great detail. This process included having paperwork looked over for any equipment that she was bringing in, and being forced to wait with other facilitators for an indeterminate amount of time (Young, 2019). Sometimes, this would delay the start of the class and leave her and the prisoners frustrated (Young, 2019). This is yet another mechanism of control exercised by the carceral system, and no program facilitator entering a prison is immune to this type of bureaucracy.

Many authors who discuss their experiences around teaching art or dance in prison speak of the jarring and traumatic environment and its effects. The sound of metal clanging, bars closing, and keys jingling become familiar background noise that take a great deal of time to get used to (Jewkes, 2013; Young, 2019). Instructors must also contend with the fact that every move they make is watched via CCTV cameras and guards (Mortimer, 2017). Surveillance causes individuals to become hypervigilant of their behaviours and actions as a result of being observed and monitored (Larsen & Walby, 2012). This is one of the many mechanisms of control that visitors are forced to adjust to over time. Upon entry to the prison, all visitors are subjected to searches, and many instructors spoke of the unpredictable and controlling nature of the prison and the struggle to conform to this environment. In Kristie Mortimer's study on dance programs in New Zealand prisons, one instructor stated: "There's just gates and guards and buttons and keys everywhere. It is what it is. It's a place of incarceration and restriction. ...It's very much a regulated environment where you have to fit in with what's going on" (Mortimer, 2017, p. 126). Part of fitting in is not only adjusting to this kind of control but adjusting to a subculture that not many outsiders are privy to – this also impacts teaching dance in the carceral space.

Teaching art in prisons comes with inherent challenges. Prisoners can be resistant and reluctant to engage in a traditional classroom setting where they are forced to sit at desks, raise their hands, and answer questions. This can be due to trauma experienced within the educational system and a mistrust of authority (Gussak, 2007). In her chapter on teaching art in prison, Williams discusses the disconnect between being accustomed to teaching prisoners versus a more traditional university class. Prisoners were reluctant to learn by sitting in desks and taking notes and quickly lost interest in the lessons that were being taught. Therefore, the approach to

pedagogy had to change and adapt to the prison environment. Williams developed a teaching praxis that was informed by feminist pedagogy, which states that all students are able to contribute something to the classroom environment and that knowledge is constructed by all participants, not just the instructor (Williams, 2017). Communal teaching and learning are common themes discussed in the literature.

Being resistant to new ways of learning or to communal activities like dance is common and there is a great deal of uncertainty on both sides when dealing with an environment as restricted and closed off as a prison (Mortimer, 2017). Prisoners may be weary of the program itself, nervous about joining in, or are simply resistant to the creative process (Mortimer, 2017). This is due to the fact that the power and control exerted over prisoners by their environment may influence their level of participation. Some may be excited to something different and break the monotony of their usual prison routine while others are resistant simply because they feel that they are forced to participate (Mortimer, 2017; Young, 2019; Williams, 2017). Mortimer discusses this phenomenon briefly in her article, stating that due to the effects of the prison, prisoners will often adopt a “high school attitude” when in any kind of classroom environment (Mortimer, 2017). These attitudes impact participation levels, particularly when the prisoner displaying interest or disinterest is held in high regard by others. Therefore, challenging negative attitudes and encouraging participation becomes part of the teaching process.

The prison environment directly impacts instructors coming in from the outside will be unaware of grievances or the intricacies of personal relationships (Mortimer, 2017). When Jacqui Young taught dance to the men at Sing Sing Correctional Facility in New York, she stated that the group’s main concern was being mocked by the other men in the prison (Young, 2019). The men were concerned about their perceived masculinity in prison and saw dance as a threat to a

kind of masculinity that had been cultivated during their incarceration by adopting certain attitudes about what it meant to be a man behind bars (Young, 2019). They valued things like toughness, hypermasculinity, and a certain physical aesthetic designed to be intimidating (Jewkes, 2005). Many of Young's students spent a great deal of time working out and making themselves look overtly tough and masculine in order to survive prison and were emotionally closed off as a result of trying to survive their sentences (Young, 2019). Young states that their perception of dance "conjured up tights, tutus, and soft slippers. In one word, ballet" (Young, 2019, p. 65). Moving with grace and softness challenged their belief system. Young was then faced with the task of attempting to show the men that dance was universal and genderless.

There will be prisoners who are fully engaged in the creative process from the beginning while others take time to open up and trust the instructor and their peers (Mortimer, 2017; Young, 2019). One suggestion to avoid a lack of participation has been to approach the prisoners before the program begins and ask them what they would like to learn in order to ensure full participation and cooperation (Mortimer, 2017; Milliken, 2008; Williams, 2019). This assists prisoners in not only expressing their needs, but having those needs addressed in a way that they may not have been previously met. Dance instructors have also allowed prisoners to choose the music and the type of dance that they participate in in order to make everyone in the room comfortable with the process and provide them with the opportunity to engage in active decision-making (Mortimer, 2019). This is beneficial to prisoners as it allows them autonomy that they have been denied during incarceration and allows for cooperation and trust between the group and the dance facilitators. As prisoners become more comfortable with the collaborative learning space, they also become more comfortable in their bodies, and engage in the rehabilitative aspects of dance.

The issue of trust within dance workshops is something that is discussed in much of the literature on dance in prisons. It is common for prisoners to be mistrusting or even fearful of the instructor as well as their peers due to social dynamics, trauma, and prison subcultures (Mortimer, 2017; Milliken, 1990). Rebecca Milliken discusses the use of kinesthetic empathy in her work on dance and movement therapy with prisoners dealing with substance abuse issues. Kinesthetic empathy is “an attempt to think or feel oneself into the inner life of another person” (Milliken, 2008, p. 8). It is a non-verbal way to establish trust between instructor and dancer, or dancer and dancer and is beneficial when working with individuals who have suffered extreme trauma and isolation (Milliken, 2008). Kinesthetic empathy is extremely beneficial when working with individuals who have experienced significant trauma because it involves witnessing and responding to postures and gestures and allows the opportunity for connection beyond what can be established verbally (Milliken, 2008). It allows the individual to be fully seen and establishes a sense of trust and safety so that they feel free and safe to dance and move within the space. Kinesthetic empathy combined with dance has proven effective at decreasing violence in prisoner populations (Milliken 2008). Kinesthetic empathy allows the individual to be present in their body and practice new ways of learning and moving that Kinesthetic empathy is a way to prepare the individual for physical contact, something that prisoners are often deprived of as a result of incarceration. The following section will discuss how dance tackles issues of physical contact and vulnerability, as well as how it can become a vehicle for physical and emotional rehabilitation.

Dance, the Incarcerated Body, and Rehabilitation

Resistance

With the discussion around issues such as emotional rehabilitation, vulnerability, and the power that the prison has over an individual, it is imperative to discuss and resistance in relation to this thesis. Modern institutions serve to correct and properly train prisoners into cooperative members of society and do so by controlling every aspect of a prisoner's life (Goffman, 1961; Foucault, 1977). In his work on power, Foucault claims that where there is power, there is also resistance (Foucault, 1977). Resistance comes in many forms, particularly for prisoners. Often, it can be negative in terms of blatant disregard for prison rules and violent outbursts (DeGraaf, 2011). However, dance allows for a gentler, yet equally powerful form of personal resistance for prisoners.

Although the institution attempts to strip prisoners of much of their personal autonomy, prisoners still have agency and use it to resist prison rules (Carlen & Worrall, 2004; DeGraaf, 2011; Foucault, 1977; Shantz, Kilty & Frigon, 2009). In order to exert their own autonomy, prisoners will do things like draw on the walls of their cells, destroy property and equipment, go on hunger strikes, or use writing and tattooing as ways of negotiating autonomy and resisting the control of the institution (DeGraaf, 2011; Frigon, 2007; Johnson, 2008; Strang, Heuston & Whiteley, 2000). For the purposes of this literature review, I will be briefly operationalizing how dance encourages a kind of physical and emotional resistance within prison.

Frigon notes that instances of relaxation, joy, and camaraderie are a rare occurrence. Within a dance class, these emotions and experiences are greatly encouraged through movement, partnership (having a dance partner), and cooperation (Frigon, 2014). Frigon states that prison is often an isolating space where cooperation and camaraderie is not encouraged. However, in a dance class, the art form requires a troupe of dancers to work together toward a common goal,

including dance instructors and other performers along with prisoners (Frigon, 2014; Frigon & Shantz, 2014). Here, the lines between dance instructor and prisoner are blurred while they work on choreography, and prisoners have the chance to exert their physical and emotional autonomy as well as their agency, which is usually not allowed within the confines of the institution (Frigon, 2014; Milliken, 2008). It is within this type of creative programming that the relationships between prisoners and dancers is much less structured and rigid than relationships between prisoners and guards (Frigon, 2014; Frigon & Shantz, 2014; Ridha, 2018). These relationships will be further explored within the data analysis chapters, particularly in my discussions on emotional growth.

Symbolically, dance is a powerful form of expression against the structural confines of the prison. The graceful and fluid movements are in direct opposition to the confined space of the prison, and to dance in this space is a powerful expression of resistance. Within prison dance classes, prisoners are able to get around rules around touch (which is often seen as inappropriate) as dance involves a great deal of physical contact and trust with a dance partner. They are also able to move in new and exciting ways – leaping, turning, extending their bodies in ways that they may not otherwise be used to within this environment (Frigon & Shantz, 2014). In this way, resistance is practiced through the prisoner getting re-acquainted with the power of their own body – what it can do, what its limits are, and how it feels to move within a particular space.

Prisons also have strict rules and regulations around behaviour. A prisoner who experiences anger and outrage at their circumstances and lashes out will be disciplined by prison staff in the form of having privileges taken away, experiencing violence (Foucault, 1977; Goffman, 1961; Shantz, Kilty & Frigon, 2009). A dance class allows prisoners the emotional freedom to work through those emotions by moving their bodies to music as opposed to violent

outbursts (Milliken, 2002). In her article on dance and movement therapy with violent offenders, Rebecca Milliken outlines how dance programming can be a form of resistance and positive emotional support for prisoners by “creating a safe space in which individuals can see themselves as part of a functioning, creative group process, an experience brought about through trust in oneself, in one’s own ability to be a positive and fully functioning contributor to this process and through a new kind of trust in a group as something positive, needed not for protection but for ongoing support and understanding” (Milliken, 2002).

Dance, Prison, and the Body

Dance can be utilized as a powerful form of physical and emotional rehabilitation. It provides participants with the opportunity to communicate non-verbally, to form deep connections with dance partners, and to establish a sense of trust that may have been stripped of them due to trauma and incarceration (Frigon & Shantz, 2014; Frigon, 2014). It is also a direct response and rejection of the controlling nature of the prison environment, which has detrimental physical and psychological effect on outsiders as well as prisoners. An article written by Frigon and Shantz reported data that was part of a research project, which culminated in the book *Chairs Incarcérées: Une Exploration de la Danse en Prison*. In this article, Frigon and Shantz state that due to incarceration, bodies become rigid, inflexible, and hunched which affects their mental health and wellbeing (Frigon, 2014; Frigon and Shantz, 2014; Young, 2019). Prisons are designed to constrict, compress, and restrict movement through the use of imposing structures such as bars, concrete walls, harsh lighting, and confined spaces (Frigon, 2014). The very nature of the institution has profoundly negative psychological and emotional effects on prisoners and staff (Frigon & Shantz, 2014; Jewkes, 2013). Through teaching dance, instructors come to

understand the ways in which the environment of the prison affects the body, such as the deprivation of physical contact.

One of the most common deprivations experienced in prison is that of physical touch (Houston, 2009; Frigon, 2014). Frigon and Shantz make note of the fact that the dancers that were interviewed saw that touch, even in the form of self-massage, was difficult for the women to participate in (Frigon & Shantz, 2014). This discomfort with touch and being acutely aware of one's own corporeality is a direct response to the carceral environment (Frigon & Shantz, 2014). This is often a response to trauma being experienced before and during incarceration (Houston, 2009; Frigon & Shantz, 2014; Frigon, 2014). Houston describes this aversion to touch as a form of prisonization, which consists of "unconscious responses and routines that prisoners take on, as well as particular mannerisms, attitudes, and ways of talking" (Houston, 2009, p. 98).

Dance is a direct challenge to confinement. Performers push against walls, against the ground, and find freedom within a constrictive space. It is also a form of resistance against rigid institutional practices that prohibit physical contact (Frigon, 2014; Houston, 2009). Within prisons, touch is considered taboo, and being uncomfortable with touch becomes woven into the prison subculture (Houston, 2009). By making physical contact and touch taboo, prisons are able to maintain and protect the isolating and inherently violent nature of the prison and removing, restricting, or limiting touch becomes a secondary form of punishment and these deprivations become normalized (Frigon, 2014; Houston, 2009). The removal and deprivation of physical contact ensures that there are no abnormalities or exceptions to the rules enforced; theoretically, the deprivation of touch keeps prisoners from forming deep and meaningful relationships while incarcerated (Houston, 2009).

Touch is critical in many forms of performance art, including dance (Frigon, 2014; Frigon & Shantz, 2014; Houston, 2009). It is a way for artists to express emotion, to connect and communicate non-verbally, and establish trust and safety in a setting (Houston, 2009). The reliance on touch does not disappear once dance is introduced into the carceral space. For many prisoners, dance also means reconnecting to touch and the positive feelings that it evokes in the body (Frigon & Shantz, 2014). However, prisoners may be resistant to the idea of physical contact for a variety of reasons, many of which relate to trauma experienced before or during incarceration. Almost half of prisoners in the United States report experiencing symptoms of PTSD due to physical and sexual abuse, neglect, and various other traumas (Frigon, 2014; Milliken, 2008). Due to the violent nature of prison, they may be uncomfortable with touch as it is seen as a vulnerability. For incarcerated men, touch avoidance and hypermasculinity go hand in hand (Houston, 2009). Touch in prison is often confrontational, which becomes normalized due to the prison environment (Houston, 2009). Prisoners also develop what Houston refers to as an “inmate code” – a code that influences beliefs and behaviours inside the institution (Houston, 2009). Aversion to touch is part of this code. Dance instructors must be aware of this and act accordingly.

A way for dance instructors to work with this touch aversion is to engage in what Houston calls contact improvisation. Contact improvisation can be incorporated into dance programs. Houston describes it as:

An evolving system of movement based on the communication between two moving bodies and their combined relationship to the physical laws that govern their motion – gravity, momentum and inertia. The body, in order to open to these sensations, must learn to release excess muscular tension and abandon a certain quality of wilfulness to

experience the natural flow of movement (Contact Quarterly, 2005, p. 18, as cited in Houston, 2009, p. 101).

Thus, dancers must rely on non-verbal communication, trust, touch, and eye contact in order to be successful in this venture. Those goes directly against what Houston calls “inmate code” (Houston, 2009). In prison, trust is non-existent due to a lack of privacy and the constant invasion of space by other prisoners as well as prison optics, including guards and CCTV cameras (Houston, 2009). Prisoners have to share cells with others, causing them to be protective of what little personal space they have. Contact improvisation is a confrontation of these deeply ingrained values and ways of navigating prison. The practice is more akin to the martial art, Akido than to ballet, and this may make some prisoners more likely to participate, particularly if they feel that dance is a direct threat to their masculinity (Houston, 2009). Contact improvisation allows participants to move the way that they want to and navigate the space the way that they see fit as opposed to simply mimicking the movements of the dance instructor.

Due to the fact that working with a partner is required, prisoners are also able to develop a sense of trust throughout the process. For incarcerated men, contact improvisation was a liberating experience, and one where they could experience touch without it being violent or aggressive (Houston, 2009). The process also challenged the men’s notions of what it means to be considered tough or masculine in prison (Houston, 2009). For the women who participated, their gender presentation fell away, and they felt free to dance with everyone in the room without having to act out specific gender roles or feeling awkward about intimacy (Houston, 2009). The discussion and literature around dance as a vehicle for physical transformation overlaps with the following discussion on the ways in which dance allows prisoners to grow and change on an emotional level, as dance can be a valuable therapeutic tool in prisons.

When Frigon interviewed dancers as part of a study on dance in prison, a central theme was the physical and emotional response to the architecture of the prison, and its impact on the body. Dancers discussed the level of exhaustion that they experienced as a result of being in the prison and the immense amount of emotional and physical energy that it took for them to be in that space, even if it was only for a few hours out of their day (Frigon & Shantz, 2014). Just like the prisoners, the dancers experienced a visceral physical and psychological response to the carceral space. Dancers reported their bodies feeling heavy and weighed down by the environment (Frigon & Shantz, 2014). They were exhausted by their experiences while the prisoners they were working with had experienced the more extreme effects of incarceration, particularly those who had been incarcerated for a prolonged period of time.

Prison not only changes bodies, but it changes one's experience and relationship with the body. Some individuals begin to use their bodies as a way to intimidate others while other prisoners physically deteriorate as a survival instinct and an attempt to blend in (Frigon, 2014; Frigon & Shantz, 2014; Young, 2019). This leads to a negative relationship with one's body, particularly when confronted with an art form as vulnerable as dance. The dancers that Frigon spoke to observed that prisoners carried their trauma in their bodies and observed a general heaviness to their movements as a result of the monotony and stress of their environment literally weighing them down (Frigon & Shantz, 2014). One dancer spoke of watching "sick bodies moving. They look hollow because their sternums are a little loose, their backs bent, they are looking down..." (Frigon & Shantz, 2014, p. 89). The restriction of movement, the banality of their everyday routines, and a lack of access to proper exercise affects prisoners in ways beyond the physical.

Prisoners struggle with their own body image throughout the course of the dance workshop. Their bodies had responded to the carceral space by becoming rigid and inflexible and had difficulty trusting themselves physically (Frigon, 2014; Frigon & Shantz, 2014; Young, 2019). The design of the prison combined with the trauma experienced within its walls fosters feelings of distrust, of anger, hostility, and fear that is expressed through the posture and gestures that the body makes (Frigon, 2014; Frigon & Shantz, 2014; Milliken, 2008; Young, 2019). Prisoners find it difficult to stretch, bend, or lie down due to various injuries or the stress of confinement such as slipped discs in the spine which make moving difficult (Young, 2019). They also experience a sense of mistrust about negotiating space and sharing personal space with others in the classroom. Despite all of these physical, emotional and psychological barriers, dance helps prisoners to find new ways to explore themselves and their surroundings. They feel safer and more comfortable in their own bodies, free to take up space, and established a better physical relationship with themselves through dance and non-verbal communication with their peers in the class (Frigon & Shantz, 2014; Young, 2019).

Dance and movement have been described as “a vehicle through which an individual can engage in the process of personal integration and growth” (Payne, 1992, p. 4). It is used to help alleviate and treat conditions like autism, dementia, eating disorders, Parkinson’s disease, and trauma (Lauffenburger, 2020). There are a number of roles that dance takes on when utilized as a therapy and it assists with building up a positive image of the body, accessing memories that may not be otherwise available to the conscious mind, improving non-verbal communication, and working in groups (Lauffenburger, 2020). Dance has been proven effective in prisons when working with violent offenders and individuals dealing with addiction and mental health issues (Milliken, 2002; Milliken, 2008). This art form has the ability to reduce stress, improve posture

and coordination, increase serotonin production in the brain, and develop new neural connections in the brain that are responsible for executive functioning, as well as long term memory and spatial recognition (Burzynska, Fine, Knecht & Kramer, 2017, as cited in Lauffenburger, 2020). These benefits make it popular with prisoners as dance produces a mind-body connection.

The ways in which dance is able to transcend language and foster a sense of community makes it an excellent alternative to talk therapy and group therapy (Lauffenburger, 2020). Dance allows for participants to better explore and understand their traumas and symptoms – particularly those relating to mental health – without being reliant on vague descriptors such as “anxiety”, “sadness”, “depression”, etc. (Lauffenburger, 2020). This is useful when used in combination with things like journaling as it helps to improve the mind body connection (Lauffenburger, 2020; Milliken, 2008). For many artists and dance therapists, dance is a non-verbal way to get in touch with deep and complex emotions and is particularly beneficial when rehabilitating prisoners who, otherwise, may seem to be beyond help.

In her article on a dance program in the Washington Corrections Center for Women, Jessica Berson notes that creative arts therapies like dance serve as a way for prisoners to engage with problems that they may not be able to communicate in conversation (Berson, 2008). Due to the fact that dance invites an opportunity for self-expression along with group work and cooperation, prison-based dance programs serve as an exciting way for prisoners to engage with rehabilitation and serve the prison’s goal of helping to turn prisoners into upstanding citizens (Berson, 2008). It was also a way for prisoners to be seen as more than just criminals. Through public performance, the program administrator, Pat Graney, wanted the women to be seen as mothers, daughters, sisters, and friends (Berson, 2008). This allows participants to be seen, and see themselves, as something more than just the persona that they have adopted in order to

survive incarceration and is another way in which dance can allow prisoners to reconnect with parts of themselves that they lose through deprivation and isolation.

One of the benefits of dance programming in prisons is its ability to allow prisoners to open up about their lives, their trauma, to reconnect with themselves, and engage in healing with one another. Rebecca Milliken utilized dance, journaling, and group communication in order to gain feedback on the program, and to encourage verbal communication and decompression after her dance workshops (Milliken, 2008). The journaling is a way for prisoners to write down their innermost thoughts and feelings that are too sensitive or private for a group discussion. This allows them to engage with the program facilitator privately while still engaging in the therapeutic process (Milliken, 2008). Dance is not only about healing and getting in touch with complex emotions, part of it is also a direct resistance and rebellion to what Janice Ross refers to as “the performance of obedience that the incarcerated are trained into” (Janice Ross, 2010; Stanford University, 2010). Berson takes note of the ways in which the prison monitors the body, forbidding sudden and swift movements, touch, and the ways in which these regulations are internalized by prisoners (Berson, 2008). The dance program that Berson examined used dance as a way for prisoners to confront and rebel against these restrictions, and this, in turn, can be a cathartic, freeing, and therapeutic process for prisoners to participate in (Berson, 2008).

Conclusion and Research Contributions

The arts have a rich and long history in prison, both as a form of therapy and resistance against incarceration. Dance programming has been proven to be a powerful tool in helping prisoners get in touch with their bodies, improve their health and wellbeing, confront issues of trauma and mistrust through kinesthetic empathy and partner work, and break through the stigma

of criminality through performance (Frigon & Shantz, 2014; Houston, 2009; Milliken, 2002; Milliken, 2008; Williams, 2012; Young, 2019)

Despite the benefits and ways in which dance has been proven to rehabilitate prisoners and criminalized populations, research and literature in this area remains underdeveloped (Milliken, 1990). While the literature touches on the ways in which the body is impacted and how dance can help to improve the physical and emotional wellbeing of prisoners, it is not the sole focus of the research. To address these gaps in the literature, the present study will focus primarily on two areas: first, the detrimental physical effects of prison on the incarcerated body, and second, how dance improves the body of the prisoner and acts as a form of personal resistance. This will be accomplished by interviewing dancers from the Royal New Zealand Ballet who can discuss the changes that they have witnessed in prisoners' bodies as well as shifts in their attitudes and emotional health.

Much of the literature around dance and incarceration is written by dance therapists who often gloss over the impact of incarceration on the body of the prisoner. The exception to this is Dr. Sylvie Frigon's work on dance and incarceration. There is also a lack of understanding of prisoners and the unique struggles that they face as this literature does not engage with the criminological perspective (Milliken, 1990). While the body is discussed, there is a lack of theoretical background in much of the literature on dance programming in prisons. Conducting this study through the lens of Foucault's docile bodies theory as well as Goffman's writings on dramaturgy, I will be equipped to better understand the relationship between incarceration, the body, and disciplinary power and how dance allows prisoners to transcend that, even temporarily. Working within these frameworks also allows me to explore the roles that prisoners adopt in prison and how, through dance, they can be seen as something more than the criminal

labels imposed on them. The following chapter will outline Foucault's concept of docile bodies and Goffman's theory of dramaturgy as they relate to dance in prison.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Frameworks

Introduction

The following chapter will explain and examine the two theoretical frameworks from which my data analysis will be discussed. Within this study, I am interested in how dance is used in the prison context as not only a form of healing, but a form of resistance against institutional power. I am also interested in how dance can be used as a vehicle to allow prisoners to feel a sense of freedom and emotional well-being, including the way that they view themselves and their roles. I am interested in the ways in which dance allows the incarcerated body to explore and find freedom in movement, as well as how it can improve a body that has been altered and subjugated by years of confinement.

I will begin by outlining Foucault's docile bodies theory from his book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, as well as operationalizing the concepts of power and resistance and how it relates to dance in prison within the context of this project. I will also discuss disciplinary power and surveillance to conceptualize and better understand the experiences of dancers and prisoners within the carceral space. Finally, I will outline how dance can be used as a form of resistance, and help prisoners to find a sense of both physical and emotional freedom. Following that, I will outline Goffman's theory of dramaturgy, which explores social interaction and social life as a performance. The latter half of this chapter will outline how Goffman's theory can be utilized to explore dance, as well as how dance gives prisoners the opportunity to test out new roles and identities within the confines of the institution, even if it is only for a short period of time. I will also end with a short discussion on Goffman's ideas on stigma as it directly relates to this project.

Docile Bodies

The docile bodies framework stems from Foucault's work on the prison and panopticism in his book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. His work discusses the history of punishment - specifically how it has shifted from a public spectacle to a more "gentle" form of punishment in the form of incarceration (Foucault, 1977; Mangaoang, 2013, p. 50). Punishment is no longer grotesque, focused on dismemberment and overpowering the body of the prisoner (Frigon & Shantz, 2010). Instead, public displays of torture were abandoned in favour of punishments hidden within prison walls and the focus became on depriving individuals of their freedom (Foucault, 1977; Frigon & Shantz, 2010). This kind of punishment has become a much more insidious form of control, subjugation, and domination that involves training the body and molding it into cooperation and docility (Foucault, 1977). The goal of punishment was no longer vengeance, brutality, and degradation, but became about "correcting" the prisoner (Foucault, 1977; Frigon & Shantz, 2010). Prisons reform behaviour, but in order to achieve the goal of rehabilitation and recidivism, the body must also be subjected to strict routine and discipline (Frigon & Shantz, 2010).

The idea behind the prison is "not to punish less, but to punish better" (Mangaoang, 2013, p. 50). Institutions such as prisons, churches, schools, and the military all serve a similar purpose: to control, subjugate, and mold individuals into docile bodies (Foucault, 1977). Docile bodies are "bodies that not only do what we want, but do it precisely in the way that we want" (Mangaoang, 2013, p. 50). The docile bodies framework discusses power, discipline, subjugation, and allows for an exploration of resistance within this space. I will be utilizing this framework in order to explore and examine the ways in which prison not only affects the prisoner, but the dance instructors who must contend with disciplinary power and subjugation.

Foucault traces the history of the docile body beginning with an analogy of the ideal soldier in the seventeenth century. Foucault states that the soldier's body is essential to combat and is the primary way for him to be identified. He has been molded into his current form through both structure, as well as externalized and internalized discipline. The soldier is disciplined through what Foucault refers to as modalities of control and technologies of the self. He defines modalities of control as a form of constant, uninterrupted coercion which is practised according to a specific set of rules that partition both time and space (Foucault, 1977). For the soldier, this would mean living in a barracks and a constant immersion in strict rules and regulations from the military. There is no escape from these rules and regulations, and a distinct lack of freedom other than the small freedoms that the institution permits him to have. Foucault states that the docile body is "passive and awaiting inscription" (Ridley, 2009, p. 336) which is inflicted upon the body by both the state and the institution (Foucault, 1977). Modalities of control exist within many institutions, including schools, the military, religious institutions, and prisons. Modalities of control work in tandem with technologies of the self to produce the docile body. Institutions becoming obsessed with the body as a project of docility was not new - what was new, Foucault argues, is the ways in which these projects of docility were put into practice through new modalities of control and technologies of the self.

In the case of the soldier, he becomes alert, his shoulders are broad, he possesses a certain amount of strength and agility that is required for combat. These physical traits make the soldier recognizable from afar and allows him to work toward the goals of the military institution. Bodies that are productive can be propelled toward a collective goal (Foucault, 1977). The soldier, and his body, is something that can be made - a machine that is capable of being constructed through discipline and power (Foucault, 1977). In this way, the body and the

individual will be self-maintaining and constantly internalizing discipline in order to serve the needs of the state. The better the institution can both produce and monitor the body, the more productive the institution will be. However, this can only happen through the creation of the docile body, which every institution engages in. Foucault's concept of the docile body is rooted in the way he views and discusses power - particularly disciplinary power, which is exercised throughout many institutions.

Foucault defines technologies of the self as technologies that "permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform I themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality" (Foucault, Gutman & Hutton, 1988, p. 18). In other words, these technologies are organized around the institution's objective, which in the case of prisons is punishment and retribution. Individuals then internalize that objective and, thus, effect changes on their bodies, minds, and ways of being (Foucault, Gutman & Hutton, 1988). In order to create a docile body, these technologies and disciplines must be internalized in order to be effective. This requires both the confinement and "training" of the body (Frigon & Shantz, 2010). Frigon and Shantz state that "the physical location of punishment has changed, as well as its goal, but punishments are still situated on the body, and continue to have real and lasting effects on prisoners' corporeality" (Frigon & Shantz, 2010, p. 7). Although we have moved away from corporeal punishment, the experience of incarceration is still evident on the body.

As a result of technologies of the self and modalities of control exercised over the individual, the body of the prisoner bears specific physical traits. Prisoners leave the institution with permanent or long-lasting physical marks on their bodies (Frigon & Shantz, 2009). Things

like tattoos, speech patterns or slang, physical injuries, and mental health issues stemming from incarceration are all ways in which the prison continues to punish the body (Frigon & Shantz, 2009). Healthcare in prison is often sub-par or inaccessible to many (Frigon & Shantz, 2009). This results in compounding issues that severely affect the body – things like mobility, movement, and the prison environment can often accelerate the aging process through things like poor health care, the spread of diseases, and weaken the immune system (Frigon & Shantz, 2009; Wahidin, 2004). Frigon and Shantz argue that prisoners experiencing long-term health issues due to imprisonment “limit their access to resources, services, and social interactions” (Frigon & Shantz, 2009, p. 13). This is just one of the ways that the prison attempts to create docile bodies.

Time, Space, and Control

Foucault argues that controlling time is equally essential in the creation of the docile body. Prisoners must follow strict timetables outlined by the institution which forbids them to “waste” time (Foucault, 1977). They are told when to eat, when they may have leisure time, when they are allowed to contact or visit with family. They are told when to go to sleep, when to eat, when to wake up, and when to report for certain programs, or when they are permitted in the yard (Shantz, Kilty & Frigon, 2009). However, only part of a prisoner’s day is structured like this while the rest is filled with what Shantz, Kilty, and Frigon refer to as “dead time” where prisoners are in their cells, being forced to wait for the next scheduled event (Shantz, Kilty & Frigon, 2009). To cope with this, prisoners structure this time according to their personal preference – this is often the only kind of autonomy that they are allowed within the institution (Shantz, Kilty & Frigon, 2009). By controlling space and time, the prisoner is stripped of independence, agency, and physical autonomy. Shantz, Kilty, and Frigon state that “institutional

schedules, followed daily for many years imprint themselves on prisoners' bodies as they conform to routinized discipline" (Shantz, Kilty & Frigon, 2009). Thus, prisoners become reliant on the institution and the goal of creating a body that is docile and compliant has been achieved.

The control of both space and time is essential to creating the docile body (Foucault, 1977). The purpose of the prison is not to rehabilitate, but to isolate and punish individuals who have broken the law by confining them to small spaces and regulating their bodies and behavior in an effort to correct them (Bosworth, 2016). Munn discusses "rituals and ceremonies" that surround conviction and incarceration (Munn, 2009). The process of entering a prison is a ritual in dehumanization. Incoming prisoners are separated from the rest of society and taken to prisons that are located outside of city limits. Once they enter, they are strip-searched, given a number, stripped of their civilian clothing in favour of a jumpsuit, and are sent to a cramped cell to serve their sentence (Lawston, 2008). During their incarceration, prisoners must also internalize discipline and rules that include the self-monitoring of behaviour due to "the panoptic gaze" (Munn, 2009, p. 59-60). The concept of panopticism will be explored further in this chapter.

The prison environment is layered with meaning (Jewkes, 2017). Cells are small and cramped, certain spaces are off limits to prisoners, and there are spaces that can only be occupied during certain times of the day such as visiting areas and recreation areas (Jewkes, 2017). The architecture of the prison is designed to feel intimidating, punishing, and imposing (Jewkes, 2017). Both the limited space in the cell as well as the restriction of space within the institution itself have profound psychological, emotional, and physical effects on prisoners and all those who enter the institution (Foucault, 1977; Jewkes, 2017; Shantz, Kilty & Frigon, 2009). For prisoners, the limited space and restrictions affect them physically.

In Yvonne Jewkes' article on the aesthetics and an-aesthetics of prison architecture, one prisoner compares their time in confinement to living inside of a bomb shelter with a concrete bed (Jewkes, 2017). The architecture of the prison is designed to be punishing on both the body and the mind, and to create a body that is "as unexpressive, conservative, packaged, normative, and erased as possible" (Anonymous, 2012, p. 11). As a result of confinement, bodies change shape (Frigon & Shantz, 2014; Frigon, 2014; Kilty, Shantz & Frigon, 2009). Several studies have discussed the ways in which the body becomes contorted and changed as a reaction to the carceral space (Frigon & Shantz, 2014; Kilty, Shantz & Frigon, 2009; Young, 2019). Their walk may change, as well as the way that they hold their bodies (Frigon & Shantz, 2014; Kilty, Shantz & Frigon, 2009). Prisoners either strive to make themselves invisible, or mold themselves into a body that is intimidating in an effort to keep others away (Young, 2019). For some, this may be their only way to exercise control over their bodies in a space that has taken so much from them. However, this kind of control over bodies extends beyond prisoners.

Outsiders coming into the prison also experience subjugation and mechanisms of control in the form of searches, restrictions on what materials can be brought into the prison, long wait times, clothing restrictions, and unwritten rules that people are only made aware of after they have broken them (Comfort, 2005; Mortimer, 2017; Young, 2019). Dance instructors have to fill out specific paperwork in order to bring in equipment and be restricted to travelling in certain areas of the prison (Mortimer, 2017; Young, 2019). This is something that was made clear through a review of the literature as well as discussions with participants in this study. The prison environment is jarring and strange for outsiders who are entering it for the first time. Jacqui Young describes her experience with this kind of disciplinary power at Sing Sing in the following quote:

During the processing, you had to partially disrobe while being checked for any contraband. Then, my teaching materials had to be checked against a clearance list. If there were any conflicts they had to be resolved. Then, when all the facilitators had been checked in, the van to take us to the classroom would be summoned, sometimes arriving late. (Young, 2019)

Outsiders also experience the harsh reality of the prison architecture and the consequences of confinement for the duration of their visit. The result of this is visitors experiencing the prison in their bodies. There is evidence of this located within Frigon and Shantz's article on dance in prison. The dancers described their experiences in the prison as making them exhausted, drained, and slower moving as a result of this confined and violent space (Frigon & Shantz, 2014). This is a prime example of the power of the institution taking its toll on the bodies of both prisoners and outsiders.

Power and Surveillance

When examining power through a Foucauldian lens, it can be seen as a medium, or vehicle of change rather than a tangible thing that can be located within the ruling class (Heller, 1996). Foucault argues that "the body is a site of social control and power" (Ridley, 2009, p. 336), and that power does not always manifest in domination, but it is realized "through the free will of active subjects" (Shantz, Kilty & Frigon, 2009). In a modern prison, organizations like Correctional Services Canada exercise disciplinary power to promote rehabilitation and prosocial connections, as well as ensure public safety. However, this "rehabilitation" is conducted in a space of violence and isolation (Jewkes, 2005; Lawston, 2008). Exercising disciplinary power allows wardens and staff to change the rules whenever they see fit, thus constantly keeping prisoners on edge and allowing prisons to become "riddled with contradictions" (Bosworth,

2016, p. 41; Lawston, 2008). In prison, power is exercised in a multitude of ways, both subtle and overt. The prison system “deploy[s] an array of technologies that render bodies productive in the service of capital” (Lawston, 2008, p. 8). In this way, the body becomes an “investment” and a tool for economic use (Lawston, 2008). Prisoners work for low wages to become “productive” working members of society while at the same time, allowing corporations to profit off of their labour (Lawston, 2008).

It is critical to note that while space and time are restricted, prisoners are also kept under constant surveillance. Technologies such as surveillance serve to mark, discipline, and correct the body (Lawston, 2008). Lawston uses the example of strip searches as a primary and humiliating form of disciplinary power, arguing that “stripping a person’s body naked, compelling that person to bend over in a prone and entirely exposed position, is in fact a state ritual that symbolizes complete subjection of the prisoner’s body to the vigilant eye of the state” (Lawston, 2008, p. 8). Surveillance is modality of control that ensures that prisoners remain docile and compliant with prison rules and is then internalized by prisoners who are highly aware that they are being monitored at all times (Foucault, 1977; Frigon & Shantz, Lawston, 2008). Surveillance is a form of disciplinary power that changes the ways in which prisoners behave, but it is also extremely invasive and detrimental to the prisoners’ psychology and physical body.

Under disciplinary power, power is rendered invisible while the objects of power become visible (Foucault, 1977). This is due to the repressive nature of the prison. Bosworth points out that “penal regimes strive to curtail disorder through the enforcement of a strict regulation of time and space and by encouraging the constant policing of behaviour by the officers” (Bosworth, 1996, p. 9; Frigon, 2007). Within the prison, the prisoner’s life is constantly controlled by repetitive actions, methods of ensuring compliance, and behaviours (Lawston,

2008). This constant policing of behaviours includes surveillance, and it is particularly evident in Foucault's discussion of panopticism and the panopticon, which was created by Jeremy Bentham (Foucault, 1977). Bentham's architectural idea was a prison with a singular watchtower that could see into every cell (Foucault, 1977). This allowed a single guard to monitor the behaviour and actions of every prisoner within the institution without the prisoners knowing that they were being watched at any given moment. As with mechanisms of control and technologies of the self, this surveillance becomes internalized. The goal of the panopticon was to create a system where prisoners could police themselves and continue to follow the rules of the institution (Foucault, 1977).

Foucault used the idea of the panopticon to demonstrate how disciplinary power functions to maintain order and control (Foucault, 1977). In his writings, Bentham believed that this kind of prison would negate the need for physical punishment and direct violence, Foucault believed that the panopticon represented structural violence (Foucault, 1977). The panopticon and its ability to monitor every single prisoner is coercive and subjugates the prisoner simply by existing (Foucault, 1977). Rather than guards enforcing rules through violent punishment, prisoners must adhere to rules and endure what they believe is constant observation. This, in turn, will change their behaviour and allow them to monitor themselves even when there is no guard present. By using the panopticon as a symbol, Foucault could discuss and elaborate on his ideas around disciplinary power and mechanisms of control that exist within the prison (Foucault, 1977). The principles and ideas that Foucault discusses around panopticism are still very much alive within the modern prison.

In a modern prison, there are various forms of surveillance in order to monitor prisoners and exert disciplinary power. CCTV and regular cell inspections account for the primary forms

of surveillance used to exert disciplinary power and control over prisoners. The prison itself becomes a “vehicle of power” through technologies such as surveillance, assessment, prisoner classification or categorization (Callero, 2003; Frigon & Shantz, 2010; Lawston, 2008; Munn, 2009; Shantz, Kilty & Frigon, 2009). Surveillance is seen as a vehicle toward rehabilitation and a way to maintain safety (Allard, Wortley & Stewart, 2006). It is argued by government bodies and corrections that CCTV is utilized to protect the safety of both prisoners, visitors and staff by monitoring the prison for behaviours such as bringing in contraband, self-harming behaviours, riots, or potential escapes (Allard, Wortley & Stewart, 2006).

Frigon and Shantz have identified what they refer to as static and dynamic forms of surveillance (Frigon & Shantz, 2010). A static form of surveillance refers to “cameras, restraint equipment, building designs, and other environmental aspects promoting security” (Frigon & Shantz, 2010, p 9). Dynamic forms of surveillance refer to direct interaction between staff and prisoners, as well as forms of surveillance that are used to gather information, such as cell inspections and inspections of prisoners’ bodies (Frigon & Shantz, 2010). This type of surveillance becomes normalized and internalized by both prisoners and staff (Foucault, 1977; Frigon & Shantz, 2010). As a result of constant observation, prisoners begin to behave and move differently, and in ways that adhere to the rules of the institution (Foucault, 1977; Frigon & Shantz, 2010). Things like touch and swift, rapid movements become prohibited as a result of both surveillance, stigma, and power in the institution (Houston, 2009). Technologies like surveillance are essential in the creation and shaping of the docile body in the prison space (Lawston, 2008). While surveillance and other technologies are viewed as vehicles of rehabilitation, prevention, safety, and protection for the public, Foucault and other scholars argue that they are actually forms of domination designed to force prisoners into compliance through

disciplinary power (Callero, 2003; Foucault, 1977; Frigon & Shantz, 2010; Lawston, 2008; Munn, 2009; Shantz, Kilty & Frigon, 2010). The incarcerated body is molded over time using disciplinary power and technologies of the self. Prisons act as machines for exercising power and transforming individuals physically, emotionally, and psychologically (Foucault, 1977; Garland, 1990; Shantz, Kilty & Frigon, 2010). While the docile bodies framework explores the consequences of disciplinary power, it also provides an avenue to investigate how dance can be used as a form of resistance.

Dance as Resistance in the Carceral Space

Foucault states that as soon as a power relation emerges, there is opportunity for resistance (Foucault, 1977). Feminist scholars have expanded on this, stating that as power transforms, it also spawns new forms of subjectivity and resistance (Bordo, 2003). This is evident in the carceral space as rules and technologies change and prisoners continually find alternative ways to resist and challenge those changes (Hassine, 2009). For example, Victor Hassine's description of prisoners "playing the opposites" in order to resist the prison's restrictions on food and contraband (Hassine, 2009). This becomes a power play in order for prisoners to get what they want (Hassine, 2009). Traditionally, prisoners engage in behaviors such as body modification, self-harm, and finding ways to express their resistance through makeup and clothing; this resistance against the institution almost always involves the body and can have negative impacts on physical and mental health (Frigon & Shantz, 2010). Shilling describes this kind of modification of the body's aesthetic and movement as "body projects" (Atkinson, 2002; Shilling, 1993; Shilling, 1997). Dance can be a way for the prisoner engage in these body projects and resist the power of the institution in a way that does not harm the body,

and in fact, can provide physical and mental benefits for prisoners while allowing them to form positive relationships with those around them (Frigon, 2014; Milliken, 2008; Young, 2009).

In prison, dance is a direct challenge to certain forms of disciplinary power and the modalities of control within prison. Dance embodies a specific type of resistance and even a form of rebellion against rules around touch, communication, and forms of expression that would not otherwise be permitted (Houston, 2009; Frigon, 2014; Frigon & Shantz, 2014). Through dance, the body and mind have an opportunity to expand beyond the walls of the institution, and prisoners are provided with the chance to tell their stories with their bodies. When a performance element is added, such as a showcase with the Royal New Zealand Ballet's prison program, the audience has the opportunity to bear witness to the changes in a prisoners' bodies and see them as more than just prisoners.

Like all other forms of art, dance is another way for individuals to control their own narratives without the input of the institution. This can be both incredibly freeing and anxiety-inducing for prisoners who rarely get to experience this type of freedom of expression (Milliken, 2008). Dance as a form of resistance can provide prisoners the opportunity to get in touch with their bodies and their emotions, and even a sense of play and joy that is non-existent in the carceral space (Frigon & Shantz, 2014; Frigon, 2014; Houston, 2009; Milliken, 2008). Rebecca Milliken discusses her experiences teaching dance in a violence prevention program in prison, stating:

I am also impressed and almost shocked in these moments, at this group's ability to create a movement experience that transcends the ordinary, somewhat grim reality they live in, at their willingness to put aside normal, 'tough' ways of relating and to remember

themselves in a world which felt different, safer, freer and for a moment open to great possibility for them (Milliken, 2008, p. 205).

Milliken describes prisoners feeling a sense of excitement and liberation as a result of dancing in prison (Milliken, 2008). There were shifts in their behaviour, their willingness to be more open, and there was a desire to relate to both the dance instructor and their fellow prisoners on a more emotional level (Frigon & Shantz, 2014; Milliken, 2008; Young, 2019). Even physically, their bodies may begin to resist the institution and the effects that being incarcerated has had on their wellbeing (Milliken, 2008; Young, 2019).

As dance, particularly ballet, concerns itself with grace and fluidity of movement, it is only natural that prisoners learn how to stretch and move in ways that may not be comfortable for them. As discussed in the literature review chapter, stretching, jumping, and moving with fluidity can be extremely difficult, but that challenge often gives way to an immense sense of freedom and improves self-esteem (Frigon & Shantz, 2014; Milliken, 2008; Young, 2019). After these kinds of breakthroughs, prisoners are able to celebrate themselves and their accomplishments - this often comes in the form of performance (Young, 2019). Performance, particularly for members of the public, allows the prisoner the opportunity to defy and challenge the very notion of the institution: to keep the criminalized individual away from the rest of society. Foucault's concept of docile bodies allows for the opportunity to explore dance as resistance to the disciplinary power of the institution through examination of the ways in which dance allows the body to achieve a sense of freedom - as well as the freedom that prisoners experience by having control over their own stories and narratives. During performance, their bodies are no longer supervised in the same way that they were previously.

The symbol of resistance is a powerful one, and one that must be discussed and examined when discussing the docile bodies framework. Art can be a vehicle for rehabilitation and reform as well as a direct challenge to power and subjugation. This kind of resistance can give prisoners the courage to tell their stories and to benefit from dance programming by moving and stretching their bodies in ways that would otherwise be restricted. However, it is critical in this project that the symbol of resistance does not overtake the possibility to enact real change in terms of prison programming and a serious examination of the benefits of dance in prison.

Critics of postmodernity have questioned its role in perpetuating a celebration of deviance (Presdee, 2002). The concern about art as a celebration of deviance is one that must be discussed when exploring the docile bodies framework as there is the potential to lean too far into the exploration of resistance and veer toward the celebration of deviance and transgressing prison regulations. Leaning too far into the symbol of resistance could result in the cutting of funding for prison programming. There is a fine line that must be drawn between celebrating the freedom that dance offers with the realization that the prison environment is still very much a reality. The institution still holds a tremendous amount of power over both prisoners, staff, and outsiders wanting to come in and provide prisoners with rehabilitative programming such as dance. Within postmodernity, discussions around power and its relationship to resistance are important. However, when the symbol of resistance becomes more important than implementing political and positive change, it can be difficult to engage with this theoretical framework because individuals are subjects of discourse (Callero, 2003; Presdee, 2002).

Goffman and Dramaturgy

Erving Goffman's theory of dramaturgy builds on George Herbert Mead's concept of the self. Mead viewed the self as emerging through intersubjective communication and engaging in

reflexivity (Callero, 2003). These are crucial elements that Goffman has borrowed and expanded upon for his dramaturgical framework. Through dramaturgy, Goffman is able to expand upon Mead's concept of the self by analogizing life to a never-ending play in which we are merely actors (Callero, 2003; Goffman, 1959). Goffman is a social constructionist who, like other social constructionists, believe that the self does not reside within the individual, but rather is established through a social process such as socialization and social interaction (Goffman, 1959; Bordo, 2003; Schulman, 2017; Tseelon, 1992). Within the dramaturgical framework, "a persona is a character, mask, or social role that people display in the theater to play a part, and in social life, as part of everyday activities" (Schulman, 2017, p. 3)

Goffman's theory of dramaturgy comes from his book, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. In this text, he presents dramaturgy as a theatrical metaphor that defines the methods through which human beings present themselves to one another based on cultural values, norms, and beliefs (Goffman, 1959). Thus, these identities are not stable, but rather, are constantly remade depending on who we interact with - and interaction is a performance shaped by both environment and audience (Goffman, 1959; Hogan, 2010). Goffman argues that individuals are constantly playing a role depending on the time, space, and audience and must adjust that role accordingly (Goffman, 1959). This front is the identity that an individual portrays to a specific audience – again depending on time and space. Therefore, the front requires "constant adjustment of self-presentation based on the presence of others" (Hogan, 2010, p. 378). Within the dramaturgical framework, the self is a dramatic effect emerging from the immediate scene being presented (Goffman, 1959). In order for an individual to successfully engage in dramaturgy, there must be seven elements of performance, which Goffman outlines in great detail.

The Seven Elements of Performance

The first is belief, which is the belief in the part being played. Goffman states that belief is critical, even if it cannot be judged by others (Goffman, 1959). The audience can only guess if the performance is sincere or not (Goffman, 1959). The second element is the front or “the mask”. This is a technique that allows the performer to be able to control how the audience sees them and can be changed depending on the audience that the performer plays to. The front is part of the front stage self, which will be examined in further detail later on in this chapter. Third, is dramatic realization. This is where the performer portrays their most positive aspects, or aspects of themselves (or their mask) that they want the audience to see. Dramatic realization and idealization go hand in hand. Idealization is when a performer presents an idealized view of the situation or themselves in order to avoid misrepresentation or to strengthen other elements of the performance (Goffman, 1959). Idealization occurs because the audience may have an idea of what a performance should look like, and thus performers will attempt to execute the performance according to the audience’s ideal (Goffman, 1959).

The next element is the maintenance of expressive control. Goffman defines this as the need to stay in character throughout the entire performance (Goffman, 1959). The performer has to ensure that they are sending the right message, while simultaneously silencing any signals that may distract from the performance (Goffman, 1959). Should any of these distractions enter the performance arena, there is the risk of misrepresentation. Goffman presents this as something to be avoided by the performer at all costs. Misrepresentation is defined as the danger of conveying the wrong message to the audience (Goffman, 1959). According to Goffman, the audience views performances as sincere or false, and performers will attempt to avoid not being believed by their audience regardless of whether the performance is true (Goffman, 1959). Goffman states,

“whether an honest performer wishes to convey the truth or whether a dishonest performer wishes to convey a falsehood, both must take care to enliven their performances with appropriate expressions, exclude from their performances expressions that might discredit the impression being fostered, and take care lest the audience impute unintended meanings” (Goffman, 1959, p. 66).

Avoiding misrepresentation is entirely up to the performer and how skilled they are at conveying the right message. This is intertwined with what Goffman refers to as mystification, or the act of hiding certain pieces of information from the intended audience. Mystification is done in order to either increase audience interest in the performer or to avoid divulging potentially damaging information that could disrupt or ruin the performance entirely (Goffman, 1959). Goffman states that whether we are aware of it or not, we all engage in these elements of performance in every aspect of our lives. While these elements are crucial to Goffman’s theory, there are two other elements that are also of great importance. Goffman states that human beings have two “stages” that are required in a performance: The front stage and backstage self. These concepts will be explored in the following sections.

The Front Stage and Back Stage Self

Goffman defines our front stage self as everything that we do in front of others. He states, “Front, then, is the expressive equipment of a standard kind intentionally or unwittingly employed by the individual during his performance” (Goffman, 1959, p. 22). We spend the majority of our time performing for others and engaging in this front stage self. In many situations, people are able to switch fronts with relative ease as we interact with familiar audiences and settings throughout the majority of our lives. In fact, we are often unaware that we are changing masks in front of family, friends, acquaintances, and colleagues.

Goffman outlines what he refers to as the “standard parts of front” (Branaman, 1997; Goffman, 1959, p. 22). The front is composed of both the setting and the personal front. Both are necessary in order for the performance to occur, and for the audience to embrace and believe the performer. Goffman refers to the setting as props that help to enhance or establish the performance (Goffman, 1959). Furniture, physical layout, and decor may also be parts of the setting. However, “a setting tends to stay put, geographically speaking, so that those who would use a particular setting as part of their performance cannot begin their act until they have brought themselves to the appropriate place and must terminate their performance once they leave it” (Goffman, 1959, p. 22).

The backstage is the place we retreat to where we no longer feel the pressure to perform (Goffman, 1959). The backstage gives individuals the opportunity to adjust a performance or switch masks and prepare for another (Goffman, 1959). The backstage self is who we “really are” - this means that we are free to engage in behaviours that the audience would not normally see (Goffman, 1959). Backstage, we are free of the norms and pressures of performance, and thus more likely to let our guard down. This is a place that is free from the audience and where audience members are not permitted (Goffman, 1959). In prison, however, Goffman’s framework looks slightly different as the front stage and backstage areas are often blurred due to strict rules, surveillance, and overcrowding. Thus, prisoners are forced to adjust their front and backstage selves in order to acclimate to their surroundings.

Impression Management and Dramaturgy in Prisons

In her study on dance in prisons, Mortimer notes that the social organization and interactions within prison is much different, and often at odds with the outside world (Mortimer, 2017). However, that does not mean that prisoners do not engage in dramaturgy. Prisoners form

cliques and relationships behind bars and adjust their front stage self to the prison environment. Their behaviours and relationships reflect the way in which they present themselves. Due to the restrictive nature of the institution, surveillance, lack of space and personal autonomy, and the inability to adjust their settings, it can be challenging for prisoners to engage in dramaturgy.

Their settings are often fixed, or cycle between the following areas: their cells, the cafeteria, the yard, and the visiting area. Constant surveillance by both the institution, guards, and other prisoners means that prisoners are constantly performing and there is little to no opportunity to engage with the backstage self. However, prisoners are able to engage in impression management, which is the desire to manipulate the way that others see them (Goffman, 1959). Impression management is one area where prisoners can maintain their agency and autonomy (Goffman, 1959; Mortimer, 2017). The ability to adjust a constant performance and manipulate the way others perceive them implies a sense of agency, which Foucault's framework lacks. When engaging in impression management, a prisoner can alter their appearance with tattoos or adopt slang and ways of speaking in order to fit in with a particular clique for protection or intimidation (Goffman, 1959).

Some dramaturgical scholars discuss the idea of dual fronts and the conflict that they produce within the individual (Hogan, 2010; Ling, 2008). This idea of dual fronts primarily exists within the realm of identity construction in the digital age (Hogan, 2010; Ling, 2008). However, it can be translated to the prison environment as prisoners have to contend with constructing an identity that can be managed inside of prison and managing multiple identities to manage meetings with case managers, therapists, family, and prison staff. Goffman argues that impression management can be used to manipulate staff, as prisoners can adopt a cooperative

persona or attitude in order to avoid punishment or gain access to certain privileges (Goffman, 1959).

The seven elements of performance are still in play in prison. Prisoners must maintain expressive control, avoid being misrepresented, and hide certain information from their intended audience. Since prisoners do not interact with many new people throughout the course of their day, there are a limited number of fronts to switch between. This, along with adherence to prison rules, limits things like agency, self-expression, and creativity. Prisoners do not have the opportunity to test out new roles and identities within the institution because of their criminal status, which often has to be maintained in their interactions with others for protection or purposes of intimidation. This is where dance can be used as a way for prisoners to try out new roles without fear of being disbelieved by an audience and exercise agency over themselves and their bodies.

Dramaturgy and Dance in Prison

While using Foucault's theory of docile bodies, I framed dance as a method of resistance. With Goffman's framework, I would like to use it to explore how dance can be used as an exploration of emotional transformation, including the way prisoners see themselves before and after participating in a dance program. Much of the literature on dance in prison has discussed how this art form can be used as a way for prisoners to get in touch with parts of themselves and their identities that have been repressed, abandoned, or stripped from them during the process of incarceration. As previously stated, prisoners often adopt new roles in prison for the purposes of survival. They understand that being viewed and labelled as a prisoner comes with a certain amount of stigma and it can be difficult for them to break free of that and be seen as a human being. Like every other member of society, prisoners have fulfilled various roles, such as a

parent, a sibling, a worker, a friend, a spouse, or working in a specific occupation. Dance allows prisoners to reconnect with these roles even behind bars on both an individual and group level. Sometimes that reconnection can come in the form of group work after the dance class has been completed, where prisoners share their emotional journeys and parts of themselves with a group (Milliken, 2008). Dance also allows prisoners to test out new behaviours and ways of processing and reacting to situations, both physically and emotionally.

Milliken states that when working with prisoners with addiction issues and violent tendencies, introducing dance and movement therapy allowed participants to “try on and practice new, more adaptive behaviors and explore alternative methods of coping with feelings that have been intolerable” (Milliken, 2008). Through dance, prisoners are able to reconnect with and gain control over their bodies as well as regulate their emotions. Dance and movement therapy is often about releasing tension in the body as well as movements that focus on impulse control and self-regulation through controlled movement (Milliken, 2008).

Goffman discusses the concept of teams. A team is a group of individuals who cooperate with one another and engage in impression management through cooperation (Goffman, 1959). He describes the team as behaving somewhat like a secret society, where the individuals in the team have inside knowledge about one another and take on specific roles in order to enhance or shape the role of the group as a whole (Goffman, 1959). Team members must share information with one another as any mistakes reflect on the group as a whole as opposed to the individual members (Goffman, 1959). Team members are also not able to keep up individual fronts as the others will not be fooled by an individual’s performance and often have a “director” whose duty it is to drive the performance (Goffman 1959). In cases of employees of a company, for example,

the employees all take on specific roles in order to maintain a collective front and the manager is in charge of directing said performance (Goffman, 1959).

Normally, in a ballet class, there would be two “teams” identified: the students, and the teacher (Whiteside, 2016). The students portray themselves as authentic dancers to the teacher as well as each other, and teacher and students portraying the front of a ballet class (Whiteside, 2016). However, in a prison-based dance program, this looks different. There are prisoners portraying themselves as dancers to the instructors, the outside world, and prison staff, and engaging in impression management to maintain that front. The teacher must engage in holding up the front of running a dance class even within the confines of prison. In this case, the teacher takes on the role of the director. Prisoners take on specific roles within the team that are outside their regular roles as prisoners. They must also cooperate with one another in order to achieve the goal of completing a successful performance and being seen by the wider audience as more than their criminal labels. In this study, many of the facilitators spoke of a team-like effort from prisoners, where everyone had a specific role to play and a job to do within the group in terms of working toward perfecting choreography and elements of the Christmas performance that was put on by some of the women. This team dynamic will be discussed more in the data analysis chapter.

Dance and Stigma

Prisoners, like anyone else, want to feel a sense of belonging with the outside world. However, due to their status as offenders, they are cast out and stigmatized – not only literally, as most prisons are geographically isolated from nearby cities, but also socially as their status impacts how they are seen and treated by the wider community. According to Goffman, stigma relates to spoiled identity, and he identifies three main types of stigma. The first is stigma of

character traits, which are things like imprisonment, mental illness, addiction issues, employment status, etc. The second is physical stigma, which is often attached to visible disabilities, scars, or race (Goffman, 1963). Finally, there is the stigma of group identity, or what Goffman refers to as “tribal stigma” (Goffman, 1963). This relates to ethnicity, religion, and national origin (Goffman, 1963).

Prisoners may experience a combination of these stigmas, as many grapple with mental health issues, addiction, disability, and experience stigma from being part of a marginalized group that is overrepresented and targeted by the justice system, such as Indigenous prisoners in the Canadian correctional system (Goffman, 1963; Zinger, 2020). This stigma of being labelled as an offender makes it difficult for prisoners to re-integrate and become involved members of their communities as they have difficulty finding housing, gaining meaningful employment, and forming social bonds with others (Leblonde, 2020; Shantz & Frigon, 2010; Wacquant, 2009).

Dance is not a cure for stigma; however, I believe that it can help prisoners to break through certain public perceptions through public performance. A public dance performance allows prisoners to be seen as something more than their criminal label, if only for a short period of time. To see them engaging in the creative process and expressing their stories and emotions through performance is powerful. Art allows us the opportunity to confront our own personal biases and engage in reflexivity. It is one of the reasons why I believe it is such a powerful tool to use in prisons. Ridha and Prendergast discuss the “talk-backs” that are a part of William Head on Stage where prisoners get the opportunity to directly interact with the audience on a much more personal level (Prendergast, 2016; Ridha, 2018). It is here that prisoners have the opportunity to tell their stories, discuss their background if they wish, and allow the audience to see them as much more than just a prisoner. I believe that the public performance, combined with

these question-and-answer periods, can help the public humanize prisoners - especially in a dehumanizing space like a prison - and, thus, help to reduce stigma.

Conclusion

This thesis aims to explore how dance can be used as a rehabilitative tool as well as a way for prisoners to resist the carceral space while exploring parts of their identity that were stripped of them due to incarceration. Within criminological literature, arts-based programming is discussed with the goal of reducing recidivism often at the forefront of much of the research (van der Muelen & Omstead, 2021). What is lacking is an exploration of how these programs can provide meaningful engagement and joy for prisoners, as well as how dance can offer a reconnection to identity and the body, and thus a sense of freedom. The prison environment is a restrictive microclimate that is devoid of warmth and human connection, and all of it has a tremendously negative impact on prisoner's bodies as well as the way that they internalize their own roles within the institution. Dance can not only help to free the body from the crushing and restrictive nature of the prison, but it also helps prisoners to transcend these roles, and find joy and freedom in the carceral space.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Introduction

Due to the lack of criminological literature on this topic, it was decided that this case study would be exploratory in nature. This involved conducting interviews with dance educators from the RNZB prison program. Originally, the goal was to interview prisoners, but due to the pandemic, this was not possible. The dance educators taught the eight-week workshops at five prisons across New Zealand. The interviews that were conducted provided a deeper insight on how the program operates, as well as how dance impacts and affects prisoners' bodies along with their emotional and psychological wellbeing. The following chapter provides a description of the research methodology used in this project. I will begin by discussing my epistemological and ontological positioning. Next, I will outline and explain the research design process, which includes the population, recruitment, and the interview process. I will then describe the data analysis techniques used to make sense of the data. Finally, I will discuss and address reflexivity, my ethical concerns, and issues with this project, as well as providing a profile of the participants who were interviewed for this project.

Positioning: Epistemology and Ontology

Before a methodology can be constructed, the researcher must first examine the paradigm through which they choose to conduct their research (Guba & Lincoln, 2004). A paradigm includes taking an epistemological and ontological position, which is what we know about the nature of reality, and what the relationship is between the researcher and reality (Guba & Lincoln, 2004). In order to make sense of the data and include the lived experiences of the dancers teaching the RNZB prison program, I chose to adopt a relativist ontological position and

a constructivist epistemological position. These two paradigms go hand in hand, and merge with the theoretical lenses that I have chosen for this research.

I am approaching this study from a relativist ontological perspective, meaning that beliefs are context-dependent (Guba & Lincoln, 2004). There is no absolute, objective truth, which means that multiple truths exist simultaneously through social interactions (Guba & Lincoln, 2004). Relativism states that truth is relative to the individual, and therefore, anyone's truth claim is valid because truth and reality are unique to personal experiences that cannot be known by anyone other than the individual experiencing them (Guba & Lincoln, 2004). The downside to this perspective is that it can be used to justify harmful perspectives and even harm against individuals and groups. However, I do not view this as a concern for this project as I am approaching this position from a methodological perspective rather than a moralistic or political one.

I chose to engage with a relativist ontology as I am seeking to understand how dance impacts the body and how it can help prisoners to find a sense of freedom even within the confines of prison. I am also exploring how dance allows prisoners to discover new social roles and identities that are not otherwise offered in a carceral environment - or to reconnect with roles that have been lost due to incarceration. Since the prison environment and the programs that exist within it mean different things to different individuals, it is imperative to engage with differing perspectives and experiences in order to paint a complete picture of dance programming in prisons. Therefore, I must rely on consulting multiple participants, all with differing experiences, values, and ways of understanding the world. The participants have their own individual motivations for participating in the program, all of which are important to the ontological positioning of this thesis. A relativist ontology provides a richer understanding of multiple truths

and realities, as opposed to a more positivist positioning, which argues that there is only one objective reality (Guba & Lincoln, 2004). As a researcher, I do not believe that complete objectivity is possible and therefore, research and knowledge is subjective and created by both the researcher and the participant. The relativist perspective integrates with a constructivist paradigm, which seeks to create understanding and reconstruction of constructs and values that people hold about certain issues, institutions, etc. (Guba & Lincoln, 2004).

I have chosen to take a constructivist epistemological position because I believe that knowledge is created through the research process with participants, as opposed to the researcher taking on the role as expert. Guba and Lincoln describe constructivist epistemologies as transactional and subjectivist, meaning that the researcher and the participants are linked through interaction. They also state that knowledge is created by both parties (Guba & Lincoln, 2004). This is because this paradigm allows for the findings to be created as the research process progresses, and both the beliefs and values of the researcher as well as the participants are critical in the creation of knowledge (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

The constructivist position aims to understand and improve the research topic that is under examination. In the case of this study, the aim is to create a richer understanding of the ways in which the body responds to the carceral space, as well as how dance can act as a form of resistance to the prison itself and the roles that prisoners are forced to adopt within it. This study also aims to explore and understand how researchers, artists, and prisoners, can use dance to help free the body, engage in resistance against the prison, and allow prisoners to explore different roles and behaviours. To understand this, knowledge must be constructed throughout the entirety of the research process.

The constructivist paradigm discusses a subjectivist approach to knowledge creation. This means that the beliefs of both the researcher and participants will influence and impact the results of this study. In this paradigm, multiple knowledges can co-exist and these knowledges depend on factors such as personal politics, social interaction, culture, as well as economic factors and the gender of researcher and participant. However, I am also cognizant of the fact that, as the researcher, I am the one interpreting and reporting on the data, and therefore must ensure that these truths and realities are not lost when the data is analyzed and the findings are reported, even if they contradict one another. The constructivist paradigm relies on a hermeneutical and dialectical approach to the creation and interpretation of knowledge. In keeping with this paradigm, the next section will outline some definitions of terms that will be used throughout the course of this project.

Definition of Terms

Prisoners

It is critical to discuss why I decided to use the term prisoner in this study and why I did not choose to use an alternative term, such as “offender”, “criminal”, or “inmate”. While these terms are commonly used within criminological literature, I chose not to use them because of their stigmatizing and othering capabilities. These terms could also be considered derogatory and harmful to individuals attempting to rebuild their lives after incarceration, as they carry with them harmful stereotypes that prevent individuals from moving forward with their lives. While I am not engaging with currently or formerly incarcerated people for the purposes of this study, my activist background and knowledge of the harmful nature of the criminal justice system keeps me from using these terms in my own research.

The term prisoner aligns with my relativist and constructivist paradigms as it also has many meanings and connotations, depending on who is using the term. The term prisoner could refer to a political prisoner, an individual being indefinitely caged such as individuals in a detention centre awaiting trial, or a person experiencing the carceral system after their conviction. I choose to use this word to describe a state of being or location, and as a descriptor for someone experiencing imprisonment. My work is not focused on the criminal records or histories of prisoners, so I felt that this word and definition was the most appropriate to use. I also use this term in line with Foucault's work and writings on prisons and prisoners, whose bodies and minds are subjugated by an oppressive and life-altering system that seeks to punish rather than rehabilitate.

Movement Phrase

I chose to include this term in this section as it came up quite frequently in my interviews with the dancers and dance teachers. It is a common phrase used in the dance world, but one that I found myself unfamiliar with as I do not come from a dance background. A dance phrase can be defined as a sequence of movements that "can be likened to a sentence formed when speaking" (Human Kinetics, 2021). In dance, this refers to a series of steps, arm movements, and body movements that are all put into sequence and flow together to create said phrase. When it came to phrases taught to some of the participants in the RNZB prison program, some of the dancers would teach the prisoners a phrase from a ballet that the RNZB was currently performing. In this case, the phrases were to not only teach prisoners how to dance, but also allowed them to have a small connection with the company itself and maintain repertoire between the prison program and the RNZB's more traditional classical ballet program.

Research Design: Interviews

Population

Many of the participants interviewed had been involved with the program since its inception in 2017. Initially, this study was scheduled to take place in person in prisons in Wellington and Christchurch and involved potential interviews with prisoners. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, both myself and my supervisor were forced to alter the course of the study. I applied for ethics in September of 2020 and was approved in January of 2021 after some revisions. I chose to interview dancers and dance teachers due to their experience and familiarity with the way bodies move during dance, their familiarity with the program, as well as their experience working with prisoners. This population of experienced dance teachers would give me the best insight into the program, its history, its benefits, and the various experiences that each dancer had while teaching.

Recruitment and Sampling

Initially, I had intended to travel to New Zealand for this research project and conduct in-person interviews with both dancers and prisoners, as well as observe the ballet program in action. However, with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, travel was restricted, and my methods were forced to shift in order to keep both myself and the participants safe. Thus, I focused on conducting interviews via Zoom.

My inclusion and exclusion criteria were straightforward. I only wanted to interview dancer educators who were connected with the RNZB's prison program, as gaining access to current and former prisoners would have been impossible. The dance educators were recruited via email. Initially, I was put into contact with a senior member of the Royal New Zealand Ballet through my supervisor, Dr. Sylvie Frigon. Once I was put in touch with this senior member, I

discussed the purpose of the study and what I hoped to achieve from the interview process. I was then provided with a list of names of potential participants that could be interviewed. The senior member contacted them and put them in touch with me to send out recruitment emails, which can be found in Appendix A. In the case of this study, both purposive sampling and snowball sampling were used to gain access to the other interview participants. Once we agreed on a date and time for the interview, the data collection process began in April of 2021.

The Interview Guide

The interview guide for this thesis can be found in Appendix B. This guide was an outline for me as a researcher so that I could keep the interview on track as well as ask questions that directly pertained to my major research questions. The interview guide also provided the Research Ethics Board with information on the kinds of questions that I would be asking, as conducting research on prisons can be an emotional and sometimes traumatizing process for those involved. My goal was to keep the guide semi-structured and semi-directed so that participants could help to guide the interview and discuss the points that they felt were the most important. This was all done while staying within the general themes of my project. Allowing these interviews to be constructed by both myself and the participants aided in the co-creation of knowledge and allowed me to ask follow-up questions that I may not have initially included in the guide. At the end of the interview, I presented participants with an open-ended question so that they could bring up anything that they felt I may have overlooked during the interview or discuss something in relation to the research that was important to them. I believe that including this question in the guide assisted with knowledge creation and tapping into the lived experiences of participants, thus incorporating my epistemological and ontological positions.

Interview Process

Participants were contacted via email through snowball sampling. Once contact was made and the participant agreed to be interviewed, they were provided with an informed consent form (found in Appendix C), which outlined and explained the following: The purpose and nature of the study, procedures, benefits, potential risks, confidentiality, and the ability to withdraw at any point during the course of the study - even after the interview has already been completed. Participants were also notified that they could choose not to answer any questions, for any reason, without repercussions. They were also assured that the only individuals who would have access to the data would be myself and my supervisor. Two copies of the consent form were signed digitally so that the participant could retain a copy and I would be able to keep a copy for my records.

My interview guide was semi-structured. This allowed the participant to manage the direction of the interview and bring up topics that I may not have considered while writing the original guide. I had prepared follow-up questions for the purpose of getting the interviewee back on track, but these were rarely used. I chose to take a semi-directive approach to the interview and follow the lead of the participant as they were the experts on how the RNZB program operates and functions. This approach is based on Carl Rogers' nondirective interview techniques.

The nondirective approach was first introduced by Rogers in 1945 as a way to give therapy clients control over their sessions (Rogers, 1945). This technique has been adopted by researchers as a way to gather more data, and to give the participant more control over the interview process. It also teaches the interviewer to value repetition of certain phrases or

elaborating on parts of an answer that may be unclear, or hold more meaning when expounded upon (Rogers, 1945). I chose to partially incorporate the nondirective technique in the form of a semi-structured interview because it aligned with the constructivist paradigm that ensures that participants are co-creators of knowledge along with the researcher. This technique also gave me the opportunity to ask questions about locations and definitions that I was unfamiliar with as I do not come from a dance background. Therefore, some of the questions that I asked were sometimes instinctual and not contained within my interview guide. This was something that I was prepared for as a researcher - and it is where my background in theatre and improvisation came in handy. Some of the questions and clarifying statements were different from interview to interview, which allowed me to have more insight into the participant's unique experience when teaching dance in prison.

Most of my interviews were conducted and recorded via Zoom with only one telephone interview. I took handwritten notes during each interview in order to make note of points that participants emphasized, as well as dance terminology that was unfamiliar to me. I made note of things like facial expressions of participants when divulging information or being asked certain questions, or when information was brought to light that I found interesting or could be explored during the analysis process. I also made notes about any points that were made during the conversation that I wanted to jump back to for further clarification after the participant had completed the initial answer. These notes were critical in my analysis and gave context to some answers that may have been confusing if I had not gone back for further clarification.

Setting is critical for the interview process. It can help to make participants more comfortable and allow for ease of communication. As I could not interview the participants in person and due to the COVID-19 pandemic, digital interviews were conducted in my home

office via Zoom and phone. I was initially concerned that the digital format of the interview would impact the answers and data I received, but the ability to communicate face to face - even through a screen - was helpful to providing a deeper level of understanding through the ability to read facial expressions and reactions to certain questions. The fact that participants could be interviewed from the comfort of their own homes was a benefit to this study as they were already comfortable in their surroundings. While I recognize that there is a sense of awkwardness or discomfort to being interviewed via Zoom, participants appeared to be very comfortable with the process. Being able to watch the interview back during the transcription process also provided me with a deeper understanding of the data. I was able to spot reactions that I had missed due to looking down at my notebook and was able to expand upon the notes that I had made in the initial interview. One issue that I realized would be difficult through digital interviews is the process of rapport. Having conducted face to face interviews previously, I much prefer them to more detached methods like telephone or email interviews where sometimes information can be misconstrued, or the original meaning lost due to the lack of face-to-face contact. Rapport will be discussed later in this chapter when I describe the interview process.

Data Analysis Techniques

After the interviews were conducted, the first step in my data analysis process was transcription. The interviews were transcribed with a program called InqScribe. During the transcription process, participants' names were removed and replaced with initials in order to protect their identities. I made notes during the transcription process as listening to the interview again brought up new questions, observations, and themes that I felt were arising in some of the answers. These notes were helpful for reflexivity, and they allowed me to link certain experiences and statements with other interviews that I had already conducted. As a result, I

compared notes and wrote down my own reflections about these connections. After the transcription process was complete, I compared these notes to my interview notes to examine and compare observations that were missed in the initial interview.

To re-familiarize myself with the content of the interviews and make better notes for reflexivity, I chose to listen through each interview once before I began the transcription process. I chose not to transcribe the interviews verbatim as it was not necessary for the goals of this project. Transcribing the interviews verbatim would not provide me with a deeper understanding of the data, as I had my own notes to consult. During the transcription process, I made notes of things like long pauses where the participant stopped to think about an answer or wait for me to ask a follow-up question. I also made note of the fact that my decision to engage in active listening during my first interview - i.e. using affirmative statements such as “okay”, “mmhmm”, etc. actually impacted the interview audio due to the interview being held over Zoom. In the past, I have typically engaged in active listening during interviews. However, I noted that it impacted the transcription process as it cut off portions of certain answers. Therefore, I pulled back my verbal active listening approach for consecutive interviews and resorted to non-verbal cues such as nodding or smiling to indicate that I was indeed taking in everything that the participant was saying. My interview notes also made note of vocal tone and inflection, which assisted in the transcription and analysis process. I was able to tell through visual and auditory cues when a participant was uncomfortable with a question, or hesitant to give an answer.

The interview transcripts were coded in NVivo. The coding process was inductive as this study is exploratory in nature, and I was not certain of the exact themes that were going to emerge from the data set. I had some idea of themes I wanted to explore, based on my theoretical frameworks, my research questions, as well as the questions in the interview guide. However, I

made certain to keep myself open to the possibility of new themes emerging from the data that I had not previously considered. The nondirective interview technique served a valuable purpose, giving me the opportunity to explore and expand on certain themes that I could already see coming out of the data during the interview. Once the transcription process was complete, I began to thematically code the data.

Braun and Clarke posit that “thematic analysis offers an accessible and theoretically flexible approach to analyzing qualitative data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 77). This method is largely inductive and is considered a bottom-up approach as the themes themselves are derived from the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As this project is exploratory in nature due to the lack of research on dance in prison in the criminological context, I decided that thematic analysis was the best approach to take as it is flexible, inductive, and allows for a deep exploration of the realities and experiences of participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is a versatile method that, when paired with my epistemological and ontological positioning, allowed me to discuss and examine the differing truths and realities of my participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This method of analysis allows the researcher to reveal certain realities and truths that may not have otherwise been noticed (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

A critical issue in thematic analysis is the question of what counts as a theme. Braun and Clarke note that a theme “captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). Thematic analysis is not always quantifiable, but it is up to the researcher to decide whether it is considered a theme in the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). When coding my own data, I often coded in large blocks so that I was able to keep the context of the answer contained within the code. In order to align with an inductive and exploratory approach, I did not

code with my research questions in mind, but rather allowed codes to emerge from the data that would then later be categorized into themes and sub-themes that I could then link to my research questions. During the interviews, I began to notice patterns emerging. As a result, I made notes on connecting themes between respondents' answers to questions, or themes that I felt were beginning to emerge during the course of the interview itself.

By the end of the coding process, I had approximately 30 different codes that I was then able to organize into themes. I achieved this by grouping certain codes together if I found that they related to one another but were slightly too different to belong to the same code during the initial coding process. Deciding which codes would become themes and which would not was a difficult process. I chose specific themes that would link with my theoretical frameworks, my research questions, as well as my epistemological and ontological positions. The main themes that I was able to locate within the data were *Carceral Bodies and Physical Transformation*. Within this theme were two sub-themes: *Barriers to Movement* and *Gender*. The second theme was *Emotional Growth*, also with two sub-themes: *Humanization and Role Shifts*, and *Camaraderie and Building Relationships*. My last theme was *The Prison Environment*, also with two sub-themes of *Corrections Support* and *Adjusting to the Prison Environment*. These themes will be further discussed in my data analysis chapter.

Reflexivity

As a researcher, I recognize that I bring my own experiences, knowledge, and beliefs into my work. Reflexivity is critical in research as it allows us to reflect on how different parts of the research process - everything from the setting to the procedures - influence each other as well as the project itself (Glesne, 2016). Berger defines reflexivity as “the process of a continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation of researcher’s positionality as well as active

acknowledgement and explicit recognition that this position may affect the research process and outcome” (Berger, 2015, p. 220). Reflexivity is an ongoing process and one that I have been involved in since the beginning of this project.

I am aware that the beliefs, knowledge, and politics that I carry with me influence every aspect of my work. I also recognize that my upbringing as a white Canadian woman in higher education brings with it certain attitudes and beliefs that will, undoubtedly, affect the research process - from the questions that I ask during the interview process to the way I process and analyze the data. I identify as a critical criminologist who has experience working with criminalized individuals as well as personal experience seeing the impact that incarceration can have on individuals and families. I view prisons as spaces of violence and understand that many individuals within the correctional system face severe trauma, mental health issues, and that the odds are often stacked against them. I also understand that while I may position myself as an abolitionist, I may not see the destruction of prisons within my lifetime. I understand that art can be a catalyst for change, resistance, and exploration of the self and believe that it should be accessible to all. Therefore, the goal of my work is to provide prisoners with access to art so that they can reclaim parts of their identities that have been lost due to incarceration and experience the joy of creating something that is unique to them and their experiences.

Additionally, I chose to engage in this work due to my background and training as an actor and my love for the arts. While I am not specifically familiar with ballet and dance, my background in the arts allowed me to position myself as someone who shared the experience of the participants. I was concerned about feeling like an outsider, but the knowledge that I carried with me from my theatre background was able to assist me in coming up with interview questions and even understanding certain terms that were brought up during the interview. I was

open with the participants about my background as an artist, which made them more comfortable with me, and thus, more willing to disclose information. In this case, my background in the arts was not a hindrance to this project and I knew that, from the start, I could use it as an asset for both knowledge production and connecting with my participants. After all, it is the very thing that brought me to this work in the first place.

Due to my epistemological and ontological positioning, I do not see myself as an expert, but rather as a co-creator of knowledge along with my participants (Guba & Lincoln, 2004). I viewed the participants as experts in their own lives and experiences with the RNZB prison program, which is why I sought out their voices for the purpose of this research. The goal of the interview process was two-fold: first, to discover information and knowledge about this program, and two, to build knowledge with my participants. Therefore, I chose to write this thesis in first person in order to reflect my epistemological and ontological beliefs.

It was my desire to engage with the postmodern belief that there are multiple perspectives, realities, and truths that exist, including my own. While I believe that objectivity is an important issue to be discussed in research, I am also very aware that each of my participants brings with them their own experiences, beliefs, biases, and knowledge to the interview process. This is something that I cannot and did not wish to ignore, which is why the interview guide that I designed contained open-ended questions and jumping off points for further discussion and elaboration so that both myself and the participants could engage in this framework. Therefore, I am engaging with multiple truths and realities as experienced with my participants and there is no single, objective truth. I did not feel the need to participate in what Grbich refers to as the “death of the author” (Grbich, 2011) and remove myself and my voice entirely from the writing process because this research is a collaborative process between myself and my participants.

Their voices are essential to providing knowledge in the arena of dance and dancing with prisoners, while my knowledge assists in bringing the research into the criminological context.

In order to better engage with the reflexivity process, I kept a journal that included my thoughts, feelings, experiences, and biases. I also kept a record of the decisions that I had made and why I had made them. This journal included notes and jottings that I had made during interviews, as well as the data analysis process. Not only was this journal extremely helpful in organizing my thoughts and feelings, but it also allowed me to view themes and issues that emerged that I may have otherwise been unaware or ignorant of. The process of reflexivity, as well as keeping a research journal to document my feelings, thoughts, and decisions was critical in establishing internal validity, external validity, as well as reliability in this project.

Validity and Reliability

Qualitative research is often accused of having various threats to both validity and reliability, particularly when compared to more positivist approaches to research (Wainwright, 1997). Adopting a reflexive practice and approach is critical in order to combat this (Wainwright, 1997). Both Wainwright and Chenail discuss the validity and reliability of qualitative research, as well as the importance of being open with readers about the choices that were made during the course of the study as well as why those choices were made (Chenail, 1995; Wainwright, 1997). Often, qualitative researchers are accused of not sharing detailed portions of their methodological choices and “are criticized for leaving the reader ‘in the dark’” (Chenail, 1995, p. 1). In other words, qualitative researchers often excel at providing thick descriptions of the data, but our failure often lies in the transparency of the research process itself.

Keeping these issues in mind, I have kept a research journal throughout my journey that contains thoughts and feelings on ethical issues, concerns, choices that I made about

methodological techniques and why I made those decisions. The journal also contained my thoughts, feelings, and observations during the data collection and analysis process. Had I not kept this journal, it would be far more difficult for me to justify my choices and to engage in the kind of openness that Chenail encourages (Chenail, 1995). My decisions are integral to the research process as well as its outcome. Therefore, keeping a journal has allowed me to better reflect and understand those decisions and I am able to visually track my journey. This method of engaging in internal validity ensures that I am engaging in a constructivist ontological approach as well as a relativist epistemology. My research journal was also key in engaging with reflexivity as well as discovering my own positioning and voice in this project. Chenail states that researchers should be just as concerned with the backstage information of the research as they are with presenting the data itself (Chenail, 1995). While a research journal is beneficial in aiding in the internal validity of the project, it is also critical to discuss the ways in which external validity can be achieved.

External validity was a concern going into this research process. One of the ways that this can be achieved in quantitative research is through random sampling. However, this was not achievable within this study as there were a limited number of participants who had taught these workshops. However, I was able to demonstrate validity through what Wainwright refers to as “thick descriptions” in the analytical process (Wainwright, 1997). I made extensive notes during the data analysis portion in order to best engage with this practice and make extensive notes of my observations, thoughts, and feelings about the themes and experiences that were emerging from the data.

Ethical Safeguards and Issues

Ethical concerns and considerations must be addressed when conducting research with human participants. In October of 2020, I submitted an ethics application to the University of Ottawa's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board (REB). Initially, this application included the possibility of conducting interviews with former prisoners. However, due to COVID-19 and the lack of ability to guarantee that I could recruit this population, I chose to remove former prisoners as potential interview participants. I received full ethics approval in January 2021. Prior to this, my supervisor had obtained permission and full cooperation from the RNZB to conduct this research. While these formal ethics issues were easy for me to navigate, there were other issues that I knew that I had to be mindful of during the interview process.

As a researcher, I always have to keep in mind that there is always a possibility of harm - whether emotional or psychological - that could come to a participant when they agree to be a part of a study. Obtaining the informed consent of participants was not only critical to the ethics process, but also to me as a researcher. The informed consent forms contained information about the study, potential risks of harm and how those risks could be alleviated or prevented. Participants also had the opportunity to pass on any questions during the interview if they felt uncomfortable. Participants were also verbally informed of the nature of my research during the interview itself.

I was deeply aware of the fact that art programming in prisons can conjure up strong emotions for participants. However, the focus of my questions was on the ways in which dance can help individuals find a sense of physical and emotional freedom. I was not interested in asking questions regarding a prisoner's offending history, history of violence, or any deeply personal information pertaining to why they were incarcerated. My participants noted that they were also not made aware of a particular participant's offending history due to the rules and

regulations outlined by New Zealand Corrections. They were simply there to teach a dance class. Therefore, my focus as a researcher was on attempting to explore and investigate what the dancer's experiences were, as well as what they saw on a week to week basis teaching the workshops. Despite this fact, I remained conscious of the fact that strong emotions may come up. As a result, participants were provided with the contact information for counselling services in their informed consent forms and were also made aware of the fact that they could withdraw from the study at any point in time, even after the interview had been completed.

Rapport was important to establish early in the interview process. I wanted participants to feel comfortable and safe with me I also wanted them to feel like I was someone that they could listen to and trust with the information and expertise that they were going to share with me. I came to the interview not as an expert, but as a listener and willing to learn about their lived experiences teaching this program. Rapport was established via email before the interviews as well as during the interviews before I began asking questions. I found the participants to be excited to speak to me and eager to start the interview process, which helped our overall relationship during the interview itself. During the interview, I was able to find ways to relate to the participants' experiences by relating my own experiences in doing theatre with prisoners. I believe that this connection helped to foster a sense of trust and understanding.

While I considered this study to be minimal risk, I took precautions to protect the identity of participants by providing them with initials. Participants were made aware that their connection with the RNZB, and specifically with this program, could make them easier to identify upon publication of results. However, I still attempted to take every precaution that I could in order to keep participants anonymous by removing any personal identifying information

from the transcripts before I began the coding process. The following section outlines the participant roles in the RNZB as well as their pseudonym for the purpose of this research.

Participant Profiles

The following section will introduce the seven RNZB participants who were interviewed for this study. Pseudonyms were used in order to protect their identities, and the descriptions of the participants' training and duties below are limited. However, these descriptions are still able to provide the reader with a general outline of what each of their roles are in the RNZB prison project.

Sarah. Sarah is involved with education, community, and accessibility management with the RNZB. She has been involved with the RNZB since 2014 and with the prison program since its inception in 2017.

Catherine. Catherine is a ballet dancer who served as the assistant to Sophia in 2018 and 2019. She was the main dance tutor in 2020 and taught workshops out of Rimutaka and Arohata prisons, working with both the men and the women.

Jacqueline. Jacqueline was contracted by the RNZB as a dance assistant in 2020 for their prison program.

Georgia. Georgia is a dance and movement therapist who worked as a dance assistant at Auckland women's prison.

Samantha. Samantha is a former RNZB Dance Educator who was contracted for the role of main tutor at Auckland Region Women's Corrections Facility in 2020.

Sharon. Sharon is the RNZB Dance Educator, who has previously worked out of prisons in Christchurch and Rimutaka teaching both men and women. Currently, she is the main dance tutor for both Wellington and Christchurch prisons.

Sophia. Sophia has been involved with the RNZB prison program since its inception in 2017, and taught some of the first workshops in both Wellington and Auckland.

Chapter 5: Data Analysis

Introduction

The following chapter presents my research findings as a thematic analysis. For the purpose of this research, I have broken down the themes into three major themes. Some of these themes will have sub-themes, and many of the themes that I discuss will be inextricably linked with one another. My findings also relate to my theoretical frameworks which relate to the body, physical transformation, emotional transformation, and roles.

The first theme is *Carceral Bodies and Physical Transformation*. This theme focuses on the ways in which prisoners' bodies change over the course of the eight-week ballet workshop. One of the most prominent sub-themes that emerged from the data analysis was *Barriers to Movement*. Many of these barriers were mental blocks and the prisoners' lack of belief in their ability to learn choreography, which then impacted their movement as well as their willingness to learn. A surprising sub-theme that emerged from the questions as well as the thematic analysis was the theme of *Bodies and Gender*. Specifically, there was discussion around body image, fitness level, how incarceration changes the body, and how men and women dealt with those physical changes differently. This theme connects with Foucault's docile bodies framework as much of the data that I collected from the interviews focused on the struggle that prisoners faced when dancing with a body that they did not feel comfortable in or did not feel like it belonged to them due to the overwhelming influence of the carceral space on their bodies.

The second theme is *Emotional Growth*, that will examine the emotional shifts witnessed by dance teachers throughout the course of the program. This theme connects with Goffman's theory of dramaturgy and discusses how dance and performance can allow prisoners to see themselves as something more than their criminal or incarcerated status. Within this theme, the

sub-theme of *Humanization and Role Shifts* and *Camaraderie and Building Relationships* have emerged, which relates to Goffman's discussion of fronts and teams within the dramaturgical framework. This over-arching theme connects to Foucault's work on the prison and docile bodies by challenging the isolating and restrictive nature of the prison environment and examines how dance can help individuals to create a sense of community and belonging, even in the most isolating of spaces.

The third theme is *Teaching in the Prison Environment*. This theme links with both of my theoretical frameworks and examines the ways in which the system exercises control over everyone and everything within it. Within this theme, I have created two sub-themes, which are: *Adjusting to the Prison Environment* and *Corrections Support*. This theme and its sub-themes will discuss how dance teachers have to adjust to the mechanisms of control, rules, and regulations of the institution and how that impacts their teaching styles as well as their emotional connection with prisoners.

As previously mentioned in chapter one, The Royal New Zealand Ballet's prison program runs for eight weeks out of the following prisons: Arohata Women's Prison, Rimutaka Men's Prison, Rolleston Men's Prison, Christchurch Women's Prison, and the Auckland Region Women's Corrections Facility. The workshops are run by dance educators and dance assistants who are contracted by the RNZB. Many of these dancers come from a ballet or dance education background and were interested in working with prisoners in order to help to improve their self-confidence and build a sense of community within prison walls. Each class begins with a physical warm-up consisting of stretches, cardiovascular exercises, as well as strength movements such as push-ups and sit-ups to prepare the body for the dance choreography, as well as build strength and flexibility. The prisoners then learn a phrase from a previous RNZB show,

or new choreography that was conceived specifically for the prison workshop. The goal of the RNZB's prison program is to make dance accessible to individuals from all walks of life, as well as enhance the self-esteem, self-confidence, and physical fitness of prisoners.

At the end of each workshop, prisoners are awarded a certificate to signify that they have successfully completed the program. However, in some prisons, such as Arohata Women's Prison, the women put on a Christmas concert. The goal of this concert was to show prison staff, funding organizations, and some members of the public what the women had learned over the course of the workshop. The RNZB's prison program has been received positively by both corrections staff and the New Zealand Department of Corrections.

The following data analysis chapter will examine three major themes that arose during my interviews with the dancers. It is critical to note that this data and the experiences, views, and opinions discussed in this chapter are from the perspective of the dance instructors. As previously stated, I chose to interview dance instructors due to their physical and emotional proximity to the prisoners during the course of the workshops, as well as their expertise on teaching dance and how dance helps to impact the body and emotional well-being.

Theme 1: Carceral Bodies and Physical Transformation

Barriers to Movement

Since I am using docile bodies as a framework, many of the interview questions were focused on incarceration's impact on the body, as well as the impact of dance on physicality, posture, and movement. The RNZB's prison program provides prisoners with access to an art form that many of them have been denied due to their upbringing. The program also offers them a way to reconnect with their bodies in the form of ballet and stepping out of their comfort zones

to move in a way that incarceration has prevented. However, many of the dancers noted that prisoners had difficulty stepping outside of these comfort zones at the start of the workshop. While there were some physical barriers to movement, the dancers expressed that mental barriers were the biggest factor in a reluctance to participate when the workshops first began. Prisoners were not confident in themselves or their ability to learn new choreography. Thus, providing them with encouragement and boosting their self-confidence also became a part of the classroom dynamic.

Sophia, a dancer who ran some of the first workshops for the RNZB, described the attitude in class as “...just a general apathy in a way, a lethargy.” This would occasionally prevent prisoners from learning certain movements, phrases, or engaging with the physical fitness portion of the warm-up. Other dancers noted that some prisoners did not believe that their bodies could move with grace and fluidity, thus resulting in frustration and resistance to learning the rest of the choreography. The lethargy and apathy that Sophia describes reflects Foucault’s docile bodies framework and the prison’s impact on the body. Prisoners are so used to being confined to cells, to having a specific routine that is dictated to them, and they are used to moving in a certain way within the prison (Foucault, 1977). These movements are often small, perhaps even careful as to not break any rules or be noticed by prison staff.

The prison environment and architecture create physical and mental patterns of discipline and subjugation to exercise as much control over the body as possible that change both the body and the emotional state of the prisoner (Foucault, 1977; Frigon & Shantz, 2014; Shantz, Kilty & Frigon, 2009). This includes producing feelings of apathy and exhaustion that become difficult to resist the longer an individual is incarcerated. Therefore, using the body to create the long, delicate lines that ballet aesthetically demands can be frustrating and challenging for prisoners to

learn. Bodies become accustomed to modalities of control and discipline through technologies of the self (Foucault, 1977; Foucault, 1988). Thus, moving freely in an open space is challenging and frustrating when an individual is accustomed to staying in a cell with minimal contact with the outside world and only a few hours of recreation time per week (Frigon & Shantz, 2014; Young, 2019). Some of these modalities of control were discussed in interviews with participants. There were discussions around surveillance by corrections officers in the form of a two-way mirror where staff could see into the gym space, but the prisoners and dancers could not see out. This made the dancers very aware that every movement was being closely monitored by the institution. While this kind of surveillance was psychologically intrusive, it did not disrupt the class. There were, however, other modalities of control that caused severe interruptions. One of these being what the dancers referred to as “master lockdowns”.

During these master lockdowns, prisoners were not let out of their cells for an indeterminate amount of time, thus resulting in missing a large majority of the class. The system is therefore able to exercise its power over not only the bodies of prisoners, but how they are forced to spend their time. Master lockdowns would occasionally add to the frustration that prisoners felt around the dance class, as missing classes resulted in some individuals being further behind in the choreography than others. Jacqueline went into detail about the impact that the master lockdowns had on her class with the women at Arohata. “The girls wouldn’t actually be allowed out to – where the whole prison was in lockdown, or just the prisoners. So, they had to do a master roll count. So, we had that come up a few times, which was unfortunate, so sometimes they would come, and we would only have half an hour, or not even that with the girls” (Jacqueline, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021). These lockdowns not only took time away from class, but they also impacted prisoners’ self-esteem and their confidence in their ability to

learn the phrases and choreography. These modalities of control represent the subjugation that prisoners experience daily and will be further elaborated on in my discussion around teaching in the prison environment.

Ballet is an unfamiliar art form to many prisoners, who, often due to their circumstances, did not have access to it until they came to prison. Many of the dancers discussed prisoners' lack of access to ballet as a motivation for wanting to teach in the carceral space. Catherine, a former dance assistant stated:

I felt really privileged to be able to have all that growing up and that this is something I could love in my adulthood even though I wasn't really doing it anymore. And I just thought so many of these women and then later on, the men, just never had the access. It wasn't easy for them to see that, so they didn't know if they liked it or not. They didn't know if it was something they could love. (Catherine, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021, 2021)

There is a privilege when it comes to accessing art forms like ballet. Often, prisoners come from difficult circumstances, including poverty, abuse, and addiction (Frigon, 2014). Many have never had the chance to experience participating in an art form like dance because they have spent the majority of their lives just trying to survive these circumstances. This unfamiliarity with ballet can produce feelings of fear and anxiety, particularly for incarcerated men who have spent decades embracing activities that would be considered more masculine (Young, 2019). Ballet can present a challenge to the hypermasculine persona that incarcerated men have worked for decades to build on the inside – everything from the way that these men move to their attitudes about dance in general (Young, 2019). This will be explored further in my sub-theme of gender.

These physical and mental barriers to movement were often temporary as prisoners learned choreography and their confidence was built week by week. However, there were certain groups that required classes to be adjusted for their physical ability level. Sharon, a dance instructor who worked at Rolleston prison with men between the ages of 60 and 70 remembers that they were far more interested and engaged in the stretching aspect of the ballet classes rather than improving their dance skills. Many of them were interested in learning stretches that they could do in their cells when they were not in class. Since these men had serious mobility issues, their classes were altered to fit their physical needs and interests. Sharon states:

I did quite a bit of stretching with them, because they... yeah, they really kind of were engaged in the stretching a lot more than dancing around as much. And they actually asked, because I said to them, “What do you guys want? Is there anything in particular you want to learn?” And they asked me in particular to do stuff on the spot so that they could then do it in their cell. (Sharon, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021)

Other than the men’s classes at Rolleston, the ballet classes were specifically built around gradual progression and building on both choreography and physical fitness so that the prisoners would be able to move more freely and have confidence in their bodies. Sophia, one of the dance instructors, describes the warm up as “One song length and more of an aerobic type of bit of mobilization, bit of, you know... and then after the warm-up exercise, we’d sometimes do some extra mobilizing, or we’d do a couple of like standing centre warm-up exercises, sort of like stretching back of legs and back, but all done within the dance context, so I teach them the exercise, put music on, we’d do it with the music” (Sophia, Dance Instructor, 2021). These physical warm-ups would help to build prisoners’ endurance and improve their overall fitness, and by the end of the workshop, the prisoners had made significant improvements.

Dance instructors made note of “turning points” which happened a few weeks into the program.

When they got to the end, and they realized they had done something that they never thought they could do. Like, not even specifically about dance necessarily. Although, I think that helped them to feel comfortable in their body and just have that like spatial awareness and things, but I think just kind of being able to tackle steps that they saw us do and thought ‘I’ll never be able to do that.’ (Catherine, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021)

During these turning points, prisoners progressed quickly, and their coordination improved as a result of getting fitter and the slow progression of adding choreography and working toward moving in time with the music. It is important to note that some dance instructors did not notice specific physical changes to things like posture and gait when prisoners were not dancing, but others did. This is most likely due to individual responses to the classes, differing levels in physical fitness and body composition, and the fact that many of the workshops only ran for eight weeks and occurred once a week with each group. However, some dancers did notice that the prisoners began to carry themselves differently when they were dancing. Sharon observed the following:

If we’re about to do a phrase, I’d be like, “Okay, stand ready!” And they would stand with a bit more projection. And we talk a bit about how a lot of them look at the floor if we’re doing travelling stuff across the ground. I often talked about just making them look up and out, and actually one guy said the cutest thing to me once -- he goes, “I just feel so elated when I do that!” (Sharon, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021)

Physical confidence, and the ability to hold one’s head up high can feel unusual in the carceral space. Frigon’s study on dance in prison discussed how dancers saw “sick bodies moving”

(Frigon & Shantz, 2014). Their knees were bent, backs were hunched, and their chests were hollow, as a reflection of the trauma that they had endured before and during their incarceration (Frigon, 2014; Frigon & Shantz, 2014). As previously discussed in chapter three, prisoners who respond to the confining nature of the prison space by hiding will make themselves as small as possible, their posture is often hunched and bound with their eyes cast on the floor. Foucault's framework argues that this is a physical embodiment of subjugation and the disciplinary power that is being inflicted on bodies in prison (Foucault, 1977). It is also a reflection of the small spaces that their bodies are forced into (Foucault, 1977). Similar to Frigon's study, this project also demonstrated that dance teachers were able to observe these types of physical changes in prisoners' bodies over the course of the workshop as their movement vocabulary increased.

The RNZB instructors stated that prisoners improved in small ways such as an increase in eye contact due to gaining confidence in their dance skills and their bodies. Prisoners also engaged in more open physical communication with one another, helping each other learn certain steps if another member of the troupe was struggling or falling behind. Their movements also gradually became larger, and they began to feel like they were allowed take up more space in the classroom. At first, accomplishing this drastic change in the size of their movements was difficult. Sophia, one of the dancers, states:

...Their movements would be quite small to start with. But when I teach, I say things like "This is going to feel weird. Please laugh if you need to laugh, it's going to feel weird, but I'm doing it and I don't care if you laugh at me." But I think as well when I teach, I make things as massive as I can. I'm quite small, I'm only about 5'3", I'm quite little, but I make things as massive as I can hoping that by osmosis, the people in the class will catch it. (Sophia, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021, 2021)

Part of the dance instructors' job was ensuring that the prisoners felt like this was a safe space to make these kinds of movements and use their bodies in a way that they were not otherwise allowed to use them while in prison. This type of physical change speaks to the docile bodies framework, particularly dance's ability to transgress the disciplinary power of prison and allow prisoners to find more confidence and freedom of movement within a confined space. These improvements demonstrate resistance against a system that has worked tirelessly to shape the carceral body through modalities of control. This is evidenced by their shift in posture, the way that they held themselves while dancing, and the ability to take greater physical risks in the classroom as a result of encouragement and instruction from dance teachers. Dance also challenges the pre-existing technologies of the self that prisoners have developed over the course of their sentence – these small movements that prisoners started with that eventually grew into larger and larger physical expressions, reflect the prison environment. This includes being confined to a small cell for most of the day, as well as constant surveillance within the institution. This is not to say that the dance class itself is free of these modalities of control, but what the space provides is the ability for prisoners to explore new movements that allow them to reconnect with a movement vocabulary that is not permitted anywhere else in the prison environment.

Bodies and Gender

A surprising sub-theme that emerged from the data was the discussion around gender and the differences between the ways the men and women navigated and improved during the ballet workshops. The discussions around gender in the interviews revolved around engagement in the class, as well as how prisoners viewed their bodies. The men, particularly the younger men at

Rimutaka, were much more playful and engaged during classes. The under 25 group started to skeptical or saw the classes as a chance to have fun and joke around but quickly began to take the classes seriously. The men embraced the physical fitness aspect as well as the choreography. Catherine stated that she gave the men more masculine choreography to work with that was still able to challenge their bodies and allow them stretch and move in the long, graceful lines that ballet demands. She saw dramatic changes in their movement, with many of them being able to perform more advanced choreography, stating,

“At one point, we were doing things like *tour en l’air*, and stuff like that, and they were really good at it. Yeah, just ended up doing like *grand jetes* and going really high and having these like beautiful pointy feet, so some of them really surprised us with how good they were” (Catherine, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021, 2021).

This kind of enthusiasm, skill, and physical confidence took much longer to build with the women’s classes due to various barriers.

The women seemed to have more mental barriers, because they could see themselves struggling in the mirrors and felt discouraged for the first few classes. Much of this disengagement in dancing revolved around their body image. The dancers noted that the women had gained weight after being incarcerated and “they had a body they weren’t used to” (Sophia, RNZB interview, 2021). Catherine remarked that some of the weight gain was due to halting habitual drug use and eating “shitty prison food” (Catherine, RNZB Interview 2, 2021). Prisoners are often sedentary, confined to their cells, and existing in a building that is designed to destroy their emotional and psychological well-being (Foucault, 1977; Frigon, 2014; Jewkes, 2018). This causes the body to change in ways that may be undesirable to prisoners. The dance instructors expressed that ballet made the women feel exposed, as they were comparing the current shape

and mobility of their bodies to the way that they used to look and move before they entered prison. While weight gain does not affect dance, it has an impact on self-esteem, and thus the women's movements were smaller and less confident.

Participants reported that the women were much less fit than the men, and therefore, less confident in their movements. Each class started with an aerobic warm-up as well as a short strength component, consisting of push-ups and crunches. The men did not have much trouble with the fitness warm-ups because many of them were already working out in prison. They had access to a gym and weights, and some of the men would play tennis outside in the yard. Conversely, some of the women struggled with an apathy toward physical fitness and working out before the start of the ballet workouts. Sharon stated that the women hated the physical fitness component of the warm-up so much because it led to frustration and a lack of interest in the rest of the class. As a result, they lost motivation to participate in the rest of the class. Sharon states that she stopped the push-ups and sit-ups at the beginning of each class, instead preferring to focus on the choreography so that the women would not lose interest due to their frustration with their own lack of physical fitness.

Despite difficulties with keeping the women motivated, they were still able to successfully complete the workshops, and dance teachers witnessed physical improvements. Sophia noted that one of the most marked ways that the women improved was the way that they viewed their bodies. Part of Sophia's job was to expand their movement vocabulary.

...Because they're feeling self-conscious because they know that physically they're not at their best – sometimes, their movements would be quite small to start with. But when I teach, I say things like “This is going to feel weird. Please laugh if you need to laugh, it's

going to feel weird, but I'm doing it and I don't care if you laugh at me." (Sophia, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021)

One woman stated that she felt as though she moved in a much more feminine, graceful way after the workshop was completed. Gender expression, particularly expressions of femininity is something that is often stripped of women once they are incarcerated. Yet again, it is a modality of control and an extension of disciplinary power. Incarcerated women are not permitted to wear makeup. They have to wear specific, baggy uniforms and have little to no access to cosmetics, clothing, accessories, and things that could make them feel more in touch with their femininity. Through dance, some women discovered that they could reconnect with that part of themselves that perhaps had been lost through years of incarceration. One of the most fascinating things that was discussed during my interview with Sophia was a discussion that centered around the way that the women viewed and used their bodies before and after the ballet workshop. She states:

I could see in the way they moved they were using their bodies as a sexual tool with some of the dance movements. And that's also because they were feeling insecure, their only way of knowing their body was as a sexual thing... (Sophia, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021)

According to interview participants, one of the biggest differences between the men's classes versus the women's were differences in movement. During my interview with Sophia, she noted that in order to combat their insecurities around ballet and dancing with a body that they were not used to, some of the women compensated by moving and using their bodies in a much more sexual way than what the choreography or the phrase required. Sophia told me that she believed that this was their "default setting" to maintain their confidence in an unfamiliar setting and an unfamiliar way of moving. Dance gave them a larger movement vocabulary, and over the course

of the eight weeks that Sophia worked with the women, Sophia states, “I noticed was as they went further in, they stopped. That wasn’t their default setting anymore, because they had some other movement vocab to use” (Sophia, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021). As the classes progressed and the women were able to expand their movement vocabulary, and there was a shift in confidence. This shift in confidence and change in movement was also noted in my interview with Georgia, another dance instructor who worked with the women.

During my interview with Georgia, I was able to see some of the docile bodies framework reflected in her observations of the women when they first came into the class versus when they completed the workshop. She described their process as something akin to flowers in bloom:

The ladies’ posture was totally different, like from the beginning when the ladies moved into the gym through the gradation bay, I saw slouched posture, like mid-level movements, so no extended movements, no big movements. Very small. They had very, very small, tiny movements, and then they gradually opened up, and they became more playful, and more confident. I described in my report, like a blooming heart – for me it was like blooming flowers watching those ladies, step by step. (Georgia, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021, 2021)

Evidence of the impact of incarceration was visible from the first day of class, and the transformation that she was able to witness reflects Foucauldian themes of resistance against an oppressive power structure such as prison. Georgia states:

I’ve witnessed those expanded movements. The [increased] movement, increased self-awareness, and also communication on a non-verbal level. They used more than the verbal level – like body language, and eye connection was really brilliant after a couple

of sessions. At the very beginning, it wasn't there." (Georgia, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021, 2021).

Prisoners engaged in eye contact more frequently as the classes progressed and became more open and communicative with one another. As the women's self-confidence increased, they were able to break those barriers and shift their body language toward one another.

This shift in confidence and increase in self-esteem due to giving prisoners access to different and new ways of moving was a common observation among all of the dancers that I spoke to. Throughout the course of my interviews, it became clear to me that ballet provided prisoners with a way to celebrate themselves. This is not the celebration of deviance that some critics of Foucault and postmodernism have discussed. Instead, it is a celebration of how the body can improve and how it can resist the confining and restrictive nature of the institution that has forced it to move in a certain way through disciplinary power. For many prisoners, ballet becomes a way of finding themselves and, as Sophia, stated, prisoners began to own the choreography.

So just seeing the confidence, seeing the ownership change as well, so like definitely the women that owned the choreography like it belonged to them. So, when you learn something, it's not just something that you're repeating. It became their dance. It became theirs and their performance. (Sophia, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021, 2021)

These interviews also demonstrated how dance can teach individuals what the body is capable of when prisoners are given access to it. Not only does dance help to change the way that people move and express themselves through longer lines and movements, but it also allows for an emotional shift and a way for prisoners to see themselves as something more than their incarcerated status. Georgia told me, "We strongly believe that if we change the movement, or

there is a change in posture, it can shift your way of thinking, so the emotional state. And I think it worked well” (Georgia, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021, 2021). This connection between dance and confidence will be further explored in my theme of *Emotional Growth*, where I will be discussing how dance allowed the attitudes and self-esteem of prisoners to change throughout the course of the program.

Theme 2: Emotional Growth

Humanization and Role Shifts

One of the guys at the end said, “That was really awesome, just coming to these classes and being treated like a human.” And that was quite like, “What do you get treated like usually?” That was kind of a big part of why I think they’re great, those classes.

(Catherine, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021, 2021)

One of the most prominent themes that came out of my interviews with the dancers was emotional growth, as well as the sub-theme of humanization and role shifts. All of the dance instructors that I spoke to discuss this theme of humanization and emotional growth as a result of their relationships with prisoners throughout the course of the workshop. While I was not able to get the experiences of prisoners, I believe that the closeness and strong relationships forged between the dance instructors and the prisoners can shed some light on this theme and contribute to the discussion. The dance instructors told me that during their conversations with prisoners, the prisoners expressed to them that the classes made them feel like they were not in a prison.

This is a similar experience noted by Frigon in her discussion of prison writing workshops where prisoners also noted that the workshops provided them with a sense of freedom and made them feel like they were not prisoners for a short period of time (Frigon, 2014). This

not only speaks to the power of arts-based programming as a means of escapism, but, as the participants in this study note, drastically improve self-worth. Sophia recalls:

I had quite a few men say to me, “Thank you so much. This makes me feel like I’m not in prison. All of our feedback forms – because we give out the feedback forms – most of them comment on saying, “It was like I wasn’t in prison for an hour of that week.” And I had a couple of the men just say to me... I remember one guy just said to me, “Thank you so much for treating us like people because it doesn’t happen often.” So, yeah. I think that’s a huge draw card for them because they feel really shit about themselves and they do get that mental kind of state. So, to come and dance and move their bodies and be spoken to like normal people, I think that’s a huge thing. (Sharon, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021, 2021)

Through these interviews, it became clear that physical confidence bleeds into emotional confidence and transformation. Many participants spoke of the fact that both the dance classes and the performance element allowed prisoners to not only embody the role of a dancer, but that others saw them as dancers as well. This links with Goffman’s dramaturgical framework and his discussion around the elements of performance. Dance class provides prisoners with the opportunity to experiment with new front stage selves, as well as embody new roles and behaviours in a safe and judgment-free environment (Goffman, 1959; Milliken, 2008).

Within Goffman’s dramaturgical framework, three elements must be in place and often interconnect: the setting, the personal front of the performer, and the collective front, which is the way in which the performer wishes to be perceived (Goffman, 1959). However, many of these elements are lacking within the prison environment. There is a distinct lack of control of the setting, the lack of a backstage self to regroup and be able to shift personal fronts, and

prisoners often see the same individuals every day. Therefore, individuals can become trapped, performing a limited number of roles, including that of the “inmate”, often lacking in healthy interactions with others. Dance presents prisoners with the opportunity to interact with others in a different setting, as well as a different, more vulnerable way than they had previously. The group camaraderie allows for a deep emotional shift that can assist in altering how prisoners view themselves and one another. The dance instructors witnessed these emotional shifts as well as a sense of community that was beginning to blossom as the weeks went on.

The instructors and the camaraderie enjoyed by the group provides a setting provides prisoners with the safety and security to drop the fronts or masks that they have developed over years of incarceration and engage in new roles through physical and interpersonal communication. Perhaps the class could offer prisoners access to a backstage self that has been denied to them in prison, allowing them to display and express their emotions through dance. Catherine discussed that many of the men that she taught were affiliated with gangs. These men were large and intimidating. She referred to them as “staunch mobsters”. However, by the end of the class, prisoners’ perceptions of themselves and each other had shifted. As a result of the dance program, the men became softer and more willing to engage in vulnerability due to their engagement with ballet.

We were able to have a bit of a graduation and give certificates out signed by Patricia Barker from the Royal New Zealand Ballet, and that was quite special. Some of them actually got emotional and you know, that was quite like... and I’m thinking “Who knew you would care so much about ballet?” These, big staunch mobsters shedding a tear over getting their ballet certificate. That was... I think just, a) completing it and b) doing

something they never thought they would do. That was pretty cool. (Catherine, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021, 2021)

While elements of Goffman's framework suggest that these instances could be seen as tactics of manipulation, I believe – based on the interviews conducted – that these ballet classes are an opportunity for emotional exploration for prisoners. They are also a chance to engage in genuine vulnerability. Since the prison environment has a severe impact on self-esteem and promotes the need for survival in a violent space, ballet can become a reprieve where prisoners can find joy, as well as reconnecting with themselves and improving their self-esteem and finding self-worth in accomplishing something they never thought was possible. Sharon recalls one man becoming deeply emotional while performing the choreography he had learned to music:

...A lot of them get really emotional. We did a little dance, and the music gives you the feels a bit - and it's kind of like wafty movement that sort of gets you a bit emotional, and one of them was crying and stuff, which was really – yeah... he just got all emotional, but he was so invested in what he was doing. The movement and the music had really taken him somewhere. (Sharon, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021, 2021)

The safety and trust that is built within these classes allows for these deep, emotional breakthroughs. Dance class becomes a space where prisoners can not only put on new fronts and test new ways of behaving, but they can also access parts of themselves that have had to be hidden for the sake of survival. The emotional support and rapport built within the class allows prisoners to view themselves as something more (Milliken, 2008).

Rapport and emotional support from the dance instructors are critical to emotional transformation and the ability for prisoners to see themselves as more than their criminal label. The dance instructors provided encouragement, as well as a non-judgmental environment while

at the same time, challenging prisoners to achieve things that they never thought that they could do. Some of the dance instructors were also able to challenge notions of masculinity and femininity, which was important for some of the men who had come in with the idea that ballet was purely a feminine art form. Catherine expressed that some of the men joined, initially, because they thought that they could make fun of the program. She told me, “The men I think were super skeptical. I think initially they joined because they thought it would be a bit of a laugh” (Catherine, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021). Others were concerned about joining the class due to preconceived notions around ballet being something that was not seen as inherently masculine. Thus, they were afraid that they would be laughed at. Therefore, the dance instructors had to create a sense of trust in the room in order to teach the class. Catherine recalls:

I think as they realized not only that it was fun and that we weren’t going to laugh at them, and that both [Sharon] and I could... like we were pretty jokey and we’re not like super strict or like straight up. We’re pretty open to having a bit of laugh, and I think once they realized that, the difference was insane between the first week and the last week. So much more confident. And I think that is to do with that rapport that is part of that. (Catherine, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021, 2021)

Giving the men positive reinforcement and emotional support allowed them to take bigger risks in the classroom. As previously stated, many of the younger men began to embrace ballet and perform graceful, highly skilled choreography. They felt confident in themselves and their abilities as dancers, which translated to their emotional growth. This is where Goffman’s dramaturgical framework can intersect with the docile bodies framework. As the men begin to open up physically, discover new ways of movement and physical freedom, their attitudes and emotions begin to shift. Dance provides prisoners with a way to reconnect to those emotions as

well rediscovering previous roles and relationships that they took on outside of prison, such as being a parent, a son, a daughter, a sibling.

Catherine expressed that many of the men began to open up emotionally as a result of the classes, talking about their families and relationships outside of prison. Ballet also provided them with something else to talk about with their loved ones during visitations and phone calls. The dance classes allowed prisoners to have normal communication and conversations with the dancers, which assists in feeling like they are viewed as whole human beings as opposed to just a prisoner. One of the biggest things that helped with this role shift was the element of a live performance for the women.

The most prominent performance discussed by the dance instructors was a Christmas show that was put on by the women for prison staff at Arohata prison in Wellington. A link to the final show can be found in Appendix E. The show was a tangible goal for the women to work toward, as well as a performance to show funding organizations and prison staff the benefits of the program. For the women, this was an opportunity to not only showcase what they had learned, but to truly take on the role of a dancer in front of people outside of the dance class. The performance was important for the women for many reasons. The women were permitted to wear costumes, style their hair and wear makeup for the show, something that they had not had access to in a long time. Being able to have access to things like makeup and costumes assists in feeling physically transformed and engage with a part of themselves that perhaps has been lost or abandoned due to incarceration. Jacqueline states:

I think it gave them a little sense of significance, you know? In having to be a performer in that moment. And they were so excited. They kept talking – because some of them had done the program the year before, but I wasn't a teacher in that one, but they were so

excited that they were going to have their photo taken, and for them to dress up a little bit, and some of them came with a little bit of makeup, and you know? Just that sense of pride and something that was out of the reality of being an inmate that I think was a big deal for them. (Jacqueline, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021)

Prison renders people invisible. Prisons are built outside of cities and towns and separated from communities under the guise of public safety and protection. Prisoners are ripped from their communities, their families, and largely forgotten about for the duration of their incarceration. They also rarely have the opportunity to engage with the outside world. For the women at Arohata, the Christmas performance was a chance to show outsiders that they were more than just their criminal label, and to be seen as human beings as incarceration renders prisoners invisible to much of the outside world, and that by giving prisoners a chance to perform, they are made visible (Merrill & Frigon, 2015). All of the dancers spoke of the performance as a positive, tangible way for prisoners to do something that was outside of the normal structure of their day and engage in something that was not connected to their parole, or other programming. It was a chance to experience joy through dance and express that to outsiders. As Catherine told me, “Sometimes it can just be about... everyone deserves a bit of joy, and everyone deserves a bit of happiness and fun” (Catherine, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021). For many of the prisoners, that joy also came through in the form of camaraderie and building relationships with their peers as well as the dance instructors.

Camaraderie and Building Relationships

An increase in self-esteem, confidence, and camaraderie was another primary observation from all the participants. However, it took time for the dancers to develop their relationships with

the prisoners. Prisoners were often suspicious and reluctant to participate at first, with many of them lingering in the back of class and even attempting to hide so that they did not stand out. This can be seen as a reflection of dramaturgy wherein prisoners have adopted a particular front to survive in prison that they do not necessarily have the luxury of changing due to the lack of a backstage self and a constant invasion of privacy from other prisoners and prison staff (Goffman, 1959). Due to this survivalist nature, some of them are stuck in roles of intimidation, hypermasculinity, or they are simply trying to serve their sentences without incident or conflict with other prisoners, and thus make themselves as small as possible (Jewkes, 2005). In this way, their bodies reflect the roles or fronts that they are portraying to an audience, often other prisoners, and prison staff. Teaching and allowing prisoners to move differently allows for this shift to begin to happen, but there is another element that must be in place in order for this role shift to occur.

Part of the emotional growth that was observed has to do with establishing relationships and rapport with outsiders coming into the prison. Since dramaturgy is a social constructivist framework, communication and relationships are a critical part of said framework. Some of the dancer instructors spoke of prisoners feeling mistrusting of outsiders coming in and teaching something as foreign to them as ballet. They did not know what to expect from the dancers or the class in general, and some of that anxiety manifested itself as resistance. Samantha describes the change in the dancers' relationships with prisoners from the beginning of the workshop to the end:

Until you've formed that relationship, people [don't] let you in. So, at the start, maybe they were more guarded some of them weren't as comfortable in terms of just speaking to us. Normally, a little bit more held back, untrusting, and then towards the end more

trusting. It's like as they'd almost accepted us as part of their little crew. That we'd

become a little crew as a collective. (Samantha, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021, 2021)

They were aloof and suspicious at first, but the dance instructors began to notice dramatic shifts in communication over the course of the workshop. Prisoners began to open up about their lives, their circumstances, and their families, wanting to share those stories with the dance instructors. Dance challenges these roles and attitudes, promoting a space that is inviting and more creative than the ones prisoners are typically used to. Within Goffman's dramaturgical framework, being able to have a backstage self is critical to shifting roles and interacting with different individuals (Goffman, 1959). Therefore, creating a safe environment where prisoners can feel free to communicate and move without judgement or worry is important to their humanization and their role shift from viewing themselves as dancers, and not prisoners.

Camaraderie is important in a dance class. Often, the group must work together toward a performance or some other kind of tangible goal. They must move together as a cohesive unit, which involves a great deal of cooperation. This can be difficult in a prison setting as there are pre-existing tensions, relationships, and cliques that outsiders may not be aware of when they first enter the prison (Mortimer, 2017). Prison is an isolating space where forming camaraderie and close relationships with others can present significant vulnerabilities and dangers in an environment that is already filled with tension (Houston, 2008). Many of the dance teachers described the prison as its own microclimate that they had to take time adjusting to. This included assessing pre-existing tensions and relationships in the classroom.

The dance instructors that I spoke to stated that many prisoners already had pre-existing, primarily positive relationships with one another, and that aside from some minor tensions and one major incident, prisoners were generally cooperative with each other. Many of the men came

from the same unit and participated in other programs together that involved emotional connectedness that was only strengthened during the dance program. Sharon expressed that under 25 group that she worked with at Rimutaka came to think of themselves as a team and referred to the group as such as the weeks went on and the men became more invested in the class as a whole.

The under 25 unit were very supportive of the group. They would always refer to themselves as “the team”, like they’re a team, and even it kind of got a little bit tense at times because they’d get in lines and would be like going down the room in lines, and they would – if someone left without their line, they’d get really like “You left without your team! What do you mean?!” And I’d be like “Oh my God, it’s okay! They just went a few counts early.” But they were really supportive of each other, and if someone would come into the program... We had quite a few people start later, because they hadn’t been in the unit, and [the men] would pull them to the side and give them extra help. They’d be like, “Oh yeah bro, this is how you do it” and they’d teach them so that that person didn’t feel out of it. (Sharon, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021, 2021)

The connection between this type of camaraderie and viewing the collective as a team can be viewed as a reflection of Goffman’s discussion on teams and engaging in impression management. As previously discussed in chapter three, a team works toward a collective goal to maintain a collective front for a performance. Prisoners use this opportunity to come together as a team in order to be seen and taken seriously as dancers, by not only themselves, but their other team members, the prison staff, and the dance instructors. Instructors then assume a directorial position, ensuring that classroom dynamics are functioning properly, that choreography is being learned at the right pace in preparation for a graduation ceremony, or a final performance, as was

the case for the women. If prisoners feel like a team member is missing or failing to engage in their role, the risk of the collective front slipping can become stressful, hence the strong reaction when choreography is missed and the support and camaraderie that the Sharon and other dance instructors witnessed. There is such little opportunity for prisoners to make meaningful connections behind bars. Dance allows prisoners to come together to create something powerful and meaningful in the carceral space.

Sophia discussed her surprise at how the women she taught were able to bond during the eight-week program:

One of the other things that we noticed in the first group of women, which is really unusual, was they suddenly became very caring as a group and it's really interesting because a lot of the women, you could just tell from their stories and from the way they were, that they potentially never cared for another human other than maybe if they'd had a child. Because they'd come from very abusive situations, or very isolated situations, so to suddenly have them taking care of another peer in their group, that was one of the biggest kind of shifts in a mindset. (Sophia, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021, 2021)

While prisons are now touted as spaces of rehabilitation, this is a false narrative that has been constructed due to neoliberal ideology and prison reform merely reconstructed as further punishment and isolation (Foucault, 1977; van der Muelen & Omstead, 2021). It can be difficult for prisoners to form meaningful relationships and prosocial connections behind bars due to the trauma that many prisoners have experienced both in and out of prison (Frigon & Shantz, 2014; Houston, 2008). They are often cut off from family members and friendships, which only adds to the isolation and trauma being experienced due to incarceration. Throughout the course of these interviews, it was demonstrated to me that the opportunity for prisoners to engage in something

fun and challenging allows them to break significant emotional barriers as well as barriers to forming connections with others.

Theme 3: Teaching Dance in Prison

Adjusting to the Prison Environment

It's important to us, and it's a huge part of the work, but at the end of the day, it's just one small part of these women's weeks, and I think we've got to keep reality with that. It might be a positive thing, but it's not all or everything. There are so many aspects to their everyday life, and we're working with big, ingrained systems from years and years, like Western Eurocentric constructs, and you know, very colonial constructs... (Samantha, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021, 2021)

All of the dance instructors that I spoke with discussed having to work within the correctional system and work with what the system needs. They recognized that while they found the workshops to be transformative and beneficial to the needs of prisoners, the system is unlikely to see them as a priority when there are so many facets to a prisoner's day, such as counseling, meetings with case managers, and other programming that is deemed essential to rehabilitation. The ballet classes were scheduled around the prisoner's day, so the date and time of each class could not be determined by the dancers and had to be approved by the prison.

Cooperating within these systems was paramount to the success of the workshop, and some of the dance instructors found the modalities of control that Foucault discusses in his docile bodies framework to be quite apparent. Sharon found the architecture of the prison to be intimidating, and despite the fact that she taught in the prison gym, she was made acutely aware that she was always in a prison when teaching.

I would even say that just the whole structure of it [is] so intimidating. You just know you're in a prison. The doors to get to everything... These big, silver hard – even hard to open – [doors] - they're so heavy. Even their outdoor area has this roof on it that's silver with tiny little holes to let sunlight in, but that's still not being outside. They're always have got something over them...

Prison architecture is an extension of discipline (Foucault, 1977; Jewkes, 2013; Shantz, Kilty & Frigon, 2009). Prisons are separated into specific spaces and areas that require permission or assistance to enter. There are spaces within the institution that are restricted to both prisoners and outsiders and the structure itself is meant to appear intimidating and punishing (Foucault, 1977). For prisoners, the structure of the prison is internalized and reflected in the way that they carry their bodies and react to their environment. Prison architecture is designed to intimidate and limit movement (Foucault, 1977; Frigon, 2014; Frigon & Shantz, 2014; Jewkes, 2017).

Sophia discussed having to arrive early in order to go through necessary security checks that included confirming identification as well as having specific forms that needed filling out or signing when bringing in equipment such as iPads or radios for music. Sophia stated that every time a new workshop began, the dance instructors would have to obtain new permission slips for equipment because the old ones were no longer valid, even though they were teaching at the same prison. Many of the dancers felt like they were not certain of what they were walking into when first entering a prison. Jacqueline states, “I think that sometimes it's definitely quite hard for me as a facilitator, going into that space, especially for the first time, was very daunting in a way. Because there were no expectations, I didn't know what was going to be, what it was going to be like” (Jacqueline, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021). This feeling is reflected in Mortimer's work on dancers' experiences teaching within prison. While things like CCTV cameras and

security procedures may be generally expected when first entering a prison, each prison has specific ways of doing things that outsiders may not be fully familiar with (Mortimer, 2017). Therefore, feelings of unease and walking into the unknown are common (Mortimer, 2017). Prisons function as a microclimate with specific rules, regulations, and procedures to follow, and these are often unknown to outsiders until one of those rules is broken (Goffman, 1961; Mortimer, 2017; Foucault, 1977). Thus, dance instructors were at the mercy of the prison environment and administrative rules.

There were rules around how to dress appropriately for teaching in the prison environment as well as rules around communication. Mortimer states that these are primarily rules that are meant to promote safety and protection, but often reflect the confining and controlling nature of the institution (Mortimer, 2017). Jacqueline noted that rules around communication presented a significant problem as the prison staff only wanted the dance instructors to teach ballet as opposed to forming personal connections with prisoners. As a result of this, she had her guard up when teaching.

You can't – you can have conversations, but I guess you had to be very careful with what information you were going to give out, and also at the back of my mind, a lot of the prison staff would always say -- when we had induction, "They can be quite cunning in a way, so you just have to be careful as to what they ask you." So, it was all these things at the back of my mind when I go into these spaces, where I had to almost have my guard up, but then when we were reaching a point where, I don't know there was trust coming from both sides, it was almost like you want to take that step forward and try to get to know – because at the end of the day, they are humans, and they're just like me.

(Jacqueline, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021, 2021)

These rules, specifically around communication, are reflections of the impact of disciplinary power on both prisoners and outsiders so that the system may exert as much control as possible (Foucault, 1977). However, this is detrimental to achieving emotional growth and change. Participation in anything creative can be emotional and bring up strong feelings for individuals that have the potential for discussion, either with the group, or with the instructor.

In prison, these emotions can be heightened due to the trauma of incarceration. Prisoners have a lack of control over their environment that can lead to things like depression, anxiety, and a severe amount of stress (Mortimer, 2017). I can attest to this from my own experience as a performer and someone who performed theatre with prisoners. Often during dramatic monologues or intense scenes, we would participate in a few moments of discussion and decompression for prisoners to process and discuss how the scene made them feel. This often led to personal anecdotes and sharing stories. Having the class focused solely on the instruction of dance is difficult in this setting and the dance instructors felt like they were not able to get as close to the prisoners as they had in other classroom settings.

Jacqueline expressed that she found the rules around communication challenging to work with as it was a direct barrier to the way she had been used to teaching in community spaces. In prison, she was forced to adjust her teaching style to suit these rules.

My practice right now, and my research, it's all about firstly embodied knowing and grounding yourself in who you are, where you've come from, and sharing that and having conversations with that, and then going into the moving. And not being able to do that, I was like "Oh my gosh, so what are some other ways to do that?" (Jacqueline, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021, 2021)

The frustration of having to deal with new rules and regulations, master lockdowns, and having to have specific paperwork for bringing in equipment is something that the dance instructors were forced to adjust to over the course of the program. However, while these security measures are expected in a prison environment as part of safety measures, they can be unexpected, intimidating, and impede the progress of the dance class (Mortimer, 2017). These obstacles and unexpected lockdowns are frustrating for both the dance instructors and the prisoners as it can lead to missed classes and falling behind, particularly when the group is working toward a performance or graduation. As make-up classes were not permitted and the instructors had a strict, eight-week window to work with, missed classes impeded physical and emotional progress. Missed classes were also distressing for prisoners who had come to enjoy the class as well as the progress that they were making. Sharon states that the men at Rolleston would be deeply upset if they had to miss a class for any reason, as they found joy in the environment and wanted to continue to improve their flexibility and coordination.

Part of the problem with delayed or missed classes was staffing issues within each prison. Staff had to be available to escort prisoners to and from their cells to the class, which often resulted in the class starting 10 to 15 minutes late. This speaks to a system that is ill-equipped to handle programs that are outside of the norm, such as ballet. Corrections officers have their own procedures to follow that do not integrate with the needs of the dance instructors. Sharon stated that the classes did not always start on time, but “you had to finish on time.” The rules and security procedures that the system has in place must be followed by the dance instructors, or they risk the program being shut down. Instead of combatting these rules and regulations, Jacqueline chose to embrace them and described dealing with interruptions and the microclimate of the prison as “part of the journey” (Jacqueline, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021, 2021). Despite

these interruptions, the dancers found that the New Zealand Department of Corrections and the majority of the staff inside of the prisons were supportive of the program.

Corrections Support

A primary theme that was discussed throughout the course of the interviews was the support of corrections staff and its impact on the program, as well as the dancers and prisoners. The Royal New Zealand Ballet's prison program was sparked by a conversation with the CEO of the RNZB and the director for Arohata and Rimutaka prisons. A senior staff member for the RNZB expressed that "if you don't have the buy-in and the support of the department of corrections director all the way down to the staff, you are toast." The support of any correctional department for arts-based programs is essential to the program's success and its continuation, as well as ensuring that the program reaches other institutions. It is critical that the prison wardens and directors are able to see the benefits of said programming. For the RNZB's program, the performance is part of the fundraising process, as well as maintaining support from the Department of Corrections.

Overall, the program was embraced by the wardens at the prisons in Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch, as well as senior staff members from the New Zealand Department of Corrections. Wardens and staff members can see the benefits of this program through live performances and graduation ceremonies that come at the culmination of the workshop. This allows them to witness both physical and emotional transformation in prisoners and to be able to see prisoners in a different role. Some of the corrections officers expressed their support for the program by helping the women make their costumes for the final Christmas performance.

There was one female officer who, I don't quite know why, she got really super involved in one of the second rotations, and she made sure she was scheduled to work on the day and time of the class so that she could always be there, and there were a couple of times where she came in on her day off... and she helped the women to make their costumes.

(Sophia, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021, 2021)

This type of support from corrections staff not only makes the dancers' jobs easier, but it also allows for corrections officers and prisoners to relate to one another in a different way that is outside of their designated roles in the institution. It was clear that some of the correctional staff valued this type of programming. They wanted to provide as much support as they could within the confines of their role as correctional officers. Staff also wanted to support the prisoners and see them succeed in this program.

Some staff joined in on a few of the classes the classes, fostering a better relationship between them and the prisoners and providing encouragement to prisoners. This was especially important for the women who had difficulty participating due to self-esteem issues and a general reluctance toward the program. Catherine remembers:

The women would sometimes be like oh I just need to sit down, and it would turn into that like, then someone else would sit down and they'd just start chatting and that was difficult to manage because you're like, 'Aaah! Join in, join in!' But when it was a staff member who would join in and she'd go, 'Come on, guys! Come on, I'm doing it!' And they'd all get up and we'd all be doing it and that was quite awesome to see that they just trusted that staff member enough to do that in front of them and had that relationship and they could be a bit silly with each other, and that was really, really cool. (Catherine, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021, 2021)

I was curious about the idea of corrections officers joining in on a dance class. Due to my own experiences with working in a Canadian institution as well as my knowledge of the prison environment, I naturally assumed that this would not be permitted. In many instances, prison regulations, modalities of control exerted over both staff and prisoners, as well as the natural hierarchy of the carceral environment mean that corrections officers and prisoners only interact on a very specific, professional level (Foucault, 1977). However, Catherine's anecdote allowed me to see that this kind of participation from staff can not only be encouraging but add to the humanization and role shifts of prisoners.

Dancing together allows for a kind of breaking down of previously constructed roles, even if it is only for a short amount of time. Both officers and prisoners can engage in new front stage selves with one another. Catherine brought up the fact that some of the correctional staff members were "quite jokey" with the prisoners already and there was already a pre-existing relationship that was slightly more comfortable than my own preconceived notions of a prisoner-guard relationship. The dancers stated that corrections support sometimes varied from prison to prison, and that if the dynamics and relationships between prisoners and staff were already positive, there seemed to be more support for the program overall. Corrections staff were supportive in other ways as well.

Some of the staff acted as security during the dance classes, which took the pressure off of the dancers to manage behavior and classroom dynamics. Normally, the dancers had radios with them while they were teaching for security purposes as they were sometimes left alone with the prisoners during the class. This gave the dancers the opportunity to focus on teaching ballet and connecting with the prisoners. Catherine states that there were no behavioural incidents with the group that she was teaching. Sophia told me, "I had one incident in one of the prisons in one

of the classes where the whole prison then had to be locked down.” However, this appears to be the only behavioural incident in the program’s history. Many of the dancers communicated to me that if pre-existing hierarchical relationships between prisoners that could cause tension, one of the prisoners would simply leave the class as opposed to choosing to disrupt things.

Mainly, corrections officers were there to prevent any violent outbursts, but the officers who worked in the gym were supportive when things went wrong. Catherine remembers attempting to bring an iPad into the gym so that she could have access to music, but the paperwork did not match the specific device she was bringing in.

It’s going to be very difficult to teach dance class with no music, but we got to the gym and the gym staff had a speaker in there and they could hook it up to their computer and they just found my playlist on Spotify, and I’d be like, ‘Can you play like this song?’ And they’d put it on for me and so they were like our personal DJ’s which is so not their job description, but they were really, really helpful, and that made such a difference.

(Catherine, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021, 2021)

The dancers acknowledged that it was critical for them to form positive relationships with corrections officers, and that these relationships with staff were just as important as the ones they created with the prisoners. The prison environment is intimidating and hostile (Foucault, 1977; Jewkes, 2013). Thus, forming strong connections with corrections staff not only helps to ensure the longevity of the program, but makes staff more receptive to the dancers in the carceral space. Jacqueline communicated this to me saying, “they’re going to support us to get to where we need to do what we need to do.” Both the dancers and the staff have specific roles and jobs to fulfill within this space, and it is important that there is mutual respect on both sides. All of the dancers that I spoke to discussed wanting to respect the environment, respect the rules, and form positive

relationships with the corrections officers as well as the higher-ups in the prison. However, some of the dancers felt judgement from some corrections officers when they first began teaching.

As previously discussed, there is a hierarchy within the prison and a distinct power relationship between corrections officers and prisoners. When a new visitor is introduced into the prison environment, particularly one who will be in that space for an extended period, this can alter previously established power relationships. The primary job of a corrections officer is to maintain the safety and security of the institution through surveillance, searches, and security procedures. The New Zealand Department of Corrections website states that corrections officers supervise prisoners' routines, monitor behaviour (including enforcing rules and disciplining prisoners who break those rules), help to control any conflict that may occur within the institution (New Zealand Department of Corrections, 2021). This job description is similar to the overall job description of corrections officers around the world, including Canada. With this relationship, comes a specific power dynamic within the institution that is also enforced by the institution. When applying Goffman's dramaturgical framework, officers can be seen as adopting a specific front for their primary audience, which is other officers, prisoners, superiors, and visitors (Goffman, 1959). This front could involve intimidating behavioural tactics to enforce rules, a uniform to separate them from prisoners, and a set of values and attitudes that go along with their job and skill set. These attitudes can lead to feelings of judgement for visitors, as was expressed by the dancers.

Some of the dancers felt that their motivations were being questioned or judged by certain correctional officers. Sophia communicated to me that she felt as though she was being scrutinized by some of the officers, stating, "they're probably thinking what's that weird woman doing?" However, she did note that at this prison, the connection between prisoners and staff was

far less positive than the other prisons that she taught at. While the dancers made it clear that nothing was directly expressed to them, Samantha stated, “I feel like we were a nuisance for a while. I think that’s important to say. Because we’re coming into the system and if we – you know, they’ve got to finish at 4:15 instead of 4:00. So I think we were a little bit of a nuisance until they got to know us as well” (Samantha, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021, 2021). Many of these relationships began to change over time as the staff became comfortable with the dancers and had the opportunity to see the benefits of the program.

For many corrections officers, these kinds of programs can be disruptive to their day-to-day routines, and some officers may not see the value in bringing this type of programming into a punitive space at first. They are also observing a new power relationship between dancers and prisoners that is outside of the norm in the institution. Power is not necessarily negative. Foucault recognizes that while power can be coercive, repressive, and negative, it can also be a beneficial force that produces positive change (Foucault, 1977). Since prison staff are also there to maintain safety and security, there is a power relationship between the corrections officers and dancers as well.

Catherine expressed to me that she received email reminders, making sure that she was adhering to the rules, specifically around dress, despite none of these rules being broken. Catherine communicated to me that it made her feel as though her intentions as an instructor were being questioned since she was teaching at a men’s prison. She felt as though some corrections officers had preconceived notions about why she was there without taking the time to speak with her face to face about her motivations for teaching the ballet workshops. However, these feelings were not shared by every dance instructor and, overall, the relationships between prison staff and the dancers were positive. Due to my epistemological and ontological

positioning within this thesis, I felt that the different relationships and experiences that dancers had with corrections officers was important to discuss within the context of this project. The support of both the Department of Corrections, as well as corrections officers within each individual prison is essential for allowing the Royal New Zealand Ballet's prison program to grow and continue to have a positive impact on the prisoners who participate.

The RNZB's prison program is a chance for prisoners to learn new skills, become acquainted with the art of dance, reconnect with their bodies, and form a community within prison walls. Based on the interviews conducted, it became clear that the program not only provides prisoners with a sense of freedom, but it also allows them to see themselves as more than just criminals. They were able to discuss their accomplishments with their family members and bond with one another in new ways. RNZB dance instructors reported significant changes in attitude, self-image and self-confidence, humanization, and connection. These findings are reflected and supported in the literature. During the eight-week RNZB program, prisoners felt a deep sense of accomplishment in completing the workshop and performing in front of an audience. While these dance classes can help them with flexibility and physical endurance, it is apparent that they are also valuable to emotional wellbeing and assisting prisoners with finding a sense of identity and fulfilment while incarcerated.

Conclusion

This project set out to discover how prison alters and confines the body, how dance can help to change the incarcerated body and allow prisoners to find a sense of identity that is not associated with their incarceration. Within the literature, there were brief discussion on dance's ability to resist the power of the prison and its hold on prisoners. This thesis seeks to expand on

those brief discussions and explore the connection between dance, the body, and identity.

Exploring the impact of incarceration on the physical body as well as how it shapes identity is critical to understanding the experiences of prisoners and creating more compassion as well as more diverse programming in order to better prepare them for reintegration into their communities.

Many of the themes and issues that I located within the literature were reflected in the data that I had collected, and then expanded upon in order to bring them into the criminological context. As previously stated, much of the literature surrounding dance programming in prisons came from dancers and dance therapists with little focus on how incarceration shapes the body. While the dancers noted that the program was not long enough to observe dramatic changes to posture and movement outside of the classroom, they did express that prisoners began to move differently, and with more confidence as the weeks went on. This confidence came through in their performances, as well as the ways in which they built relationships with their fellow dancers.

The introduction of new movement vocabulary not only gave prisoners a sense of physical and emotional freedom, but it also allowed them to see themselves as something more than a prisoner for an hour and fifteen minutes a week. Whether or not these changes could be observed outside of the classroom environment is beyond the scope of this study as the dancers did not have the opportunity to observe prisoners in their cells or in their daily interactions with staff. However, prisoners did experience a great deal of benefits.

As Catherine pointed out, prisoners expressed to her that the dance instructors treated them “like human beings” (Catherine, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021). The dehumanization that prisoners experience as a result of incarceration has been a topic of intense discussion (Foucault,

1977; Shantz, Kilty & Frigon, 2009; Frigon & Shantz, 2010; Lawston, 2008). Arts-based programs give prisoners the opportunity to express themselves as whole human beings in a creative and safe environment (Milliken, 2008; Mortimer, 2017). The opportunity to experience something that evokes feelings of joy and creative expression allows prisoners to express their humanity and find an identity beyond the walls of the prison.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Revisiting Contributions to Research

The primary goal of this study was to fill in the gaps in the literature around dance and incarceration, and to examine them from a criminological context. Much of the literature on dance in prisons revolves around dance therapy, and, thus, there is a lack of a criminological perspective. While portions of this study focus on the rehabilitative nature of dance, there was also an exploration of emotional growth and the sense of fulfillment, personal satisfaction, and community that can occur with prison-based arts programming. Many of the dancers expressed that the prisoners felt a sense of joy and used the classes as a way to have fun and connect with others for an hour and fifteen minutes once a week. While the majority of literature on arts programming discusses recidivism rates and rehabilitation, there are few that focus on how arts programming can be used to foster a sense of personal accomplishment and gives prisoners a sense of joy (van der Muelen & Omstead, 2021).

A secondary goal in this study was to shed light on the RNZB's prison program and document it within academic literature. As the program is relatively young, having only begun in 2017, there has been limited academic research conducted on its benefits. This study serves to fill in that gap and provide further research about the rehabilitative and healing nature of this program. It also sheds light on the importance of corrections support, as well as the struggles that dance instructors experience when teaching in a prison environment. However, there are limitations to this study that will be discussed in the following section.

Limitations and Recommendations

The thematic findings located within the context of this study are not able to be generalized to all prison dance programs. Some of the experiences and beliefs that were discussed are unique to the RNZB's prison program, such as the support and enthusiasm from the New Zealand Department of Corrections and the unique relationships that were witnessed between prison staff and prisoners. The dancers at the RNZB stated that the support of the New Zealand Department of Corrections was crucial to getting the project off the ground, and while this study addressed some of the challenges associated with the program, examining and engaging with other challenges is beyond the scope of this research.

Another second limitation to this study relates to the methods chosen. Originally, interviews were scheduled to be in-person in two New Zealand prisons. It was also decided that interviews would be conducted with RNZB staff as well as prisoners. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, international travel was suspended, and the methodology was forced to change. It is also my belief that had this study been a combination of interviews and observing the dance classes, I would have been able to gather different data and provided a deeper understanding of the physical and emotional transformations that occur during the program. However, due to the pandemic as well as the time constraints on a Masters thesis, an ethnographic study would have been impossible to conduct under these circumstances. It is my belief that the data that I collected was more than sufficient at not only answering my research questions but also filling in the gaps in the literature. However, I am able to make some recommendations based on the data that I collected during interviews – specifically regarding funding.

Currently, the New Zealand Department of Corrections does not help to fund this program. Thus, funding must be acquired through other organizations. If prison-based arts programs do not receive adequate funding, they can perish just as quickly as they begin. One key recommendation for the RNZB prison program would be to ask the New Zealand Department of Corrections to assist with funding these dance workshops. This would allow RNZB staff to hire more contractors, expand to more prisons, and keep the program alive well into the future. I would also encourage more public engagement with the program, something akin to the way that William Head on Stage incorporates public “talk backs”. This engagement is beneficial for breaking down the stigma of imprisonment through art and allows prisoners to communicate directly with outsiders (Prendergast, 2016). Currently, the RNZB prison program’s performances and concerts are for prison staff and their family members, as well as other members of the RNZB and funding organizations. Opening these performances up to the public could help to foster a sense of community engagement and support that prisoners are missing in their lives due to the nature of incarceration (Shantz, Kilty & Frigon, 2009).

The Canadian Context and Closing Remarks

Currently, there is no long-standing prison-based dance program operating in Canada. Based on the data collected from this study as well as the literature review, it is evident that dance programs have a positive and therapeutic effect on prisoners, helping to improve their physical and mental wellbeing and provide them with a sense of joy, empowerment, and accomplishment (Frigon, 2014; Frigon & Shantz, 2014; Milliken, 1990; Milliken, 2008; Mortimer, 2017). The prison environment can exacerbate mental health issues (Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2011). Dance programming helps with flexibility, physical confidence,

self-esteem, and providing prisoners with something entertaining to help them get through their sentence. Like anyone else, prisoners deserve to have something to look forward to each week that brings them a sense of comfort and joy. Merrill and Frigon point out that arts programming is currently considered a leisure activity under Correctional Service Canada's classification of initiatives and programs (Merrill & Frigon, 2015). Thus, it can be difficult to provide long-term dance programs for prisoners due to this categorization. Incorporating a dance program similar to the one provided by the RNZB in Canadian prisons would be highly beneficial to the emotional health and well-being of prisoners.

Dance programs can provide a therapeutic, non-judgmental space for prisoners, as well as help them to learn to cooperate and work together to produce something creative and positive in a system that is violent and isolating (Frigon, 2014). Prisoners are often deprived from any sense of community and outside engagement, which only serves to further stigmatize them and reinforce harsh and unfair stigma around incarceration (Shantz, Kilty & Frigon, 2009). Dance programming can provide a way for prisoners to communicate their feelings through creative expression, open up emotionally, bond with others, and share their stories with outsiders. Art provides a space for dialogue and understanding. Merging art forms like dance and criminology can allow us to better understand the experiences and needs of prisoners. This can also give future researchers and corrections the opportunity to provide more well-rounded programming that combines creativity with physical and emotional transformation.

One of the goals of this study was to understand the impacts of dance on the body, as well as the emotional growth and wellbeing of prisoners. Throughout the course of this study, it became obvious that dance not only improved physical fitness, but body image and self-confidence, which translated into a sense of joy that prisoners are deprived of in prison. Dance

helped prisoners see themselves as something more than their criminality and the labels that have been thrust upon them by the institution.

For an hour and fifteen minutes once a week, the men and women who participated in the RNZB's prison program were able to forget that they were incarcerated, find a sense of freedom, connect with their bodies, and connect with each other through dance. While I could close this thesis with my own conclusions and ruminations, I think that it would be most appropriate to leave you with a quote from Catherine, one of the dance educators who worked out of Arohata Women's Prison and Rimutaka Men's Upper Prison:

One of the case managers was saying that she had someone on her case load and was like 'Oh, I heard that they're doing ballet, and I want to do the ballet class.' And she was like 'Well, how did you hear about that? What makes you want to do it?' And he was like 'I was walking past, and I heard the music, and I heard all the laughing and... it just sounded like so much fuckin' joy was going on in there.' That was the main thing, because not everything has to be like, 'All right, this is your offender plan and we're going to improve you by this much today.' Sometimes it can just be about... **everyone deserves a bit of joy**, and everyone deserves a bit of happiness and fun. (Catherine, RNZB Dance Instructor, 2021)

Appendix A

Recruitment email script

Hello _____,

I am writing to ask if I may interview you as part of a research project that I am completing as a graduate researcher at the University of Ottawa.

The purpose of the project is to gather data on dance programming in prisons through a one on one interview with you. I will be sharing the information (video/audio files and transcripts) with my supervisor, Dr. Sylvie Frigon. Your personal information will only be accessed by myself and Dr. Frigon.

My project is an examination of the emotional and physical effects of dance on incarcerated individuals. If you agree to participate in this interview, I would like to talk about your experience facilitating or leading a prison-based dance program as a member of the Royal New Zealand Ballet.

If you are interested in participating, please let me know. I will follow up with you, answer any questions you have about the project, and send you a copy of the informed consent form. If you would like to speak to my supervisor, Dr. Sylvie Frigon, for more information regarding this project, you can contact her at sfrigon@uottawa.ca.

Thanks very much for your time,

Jana Skorstengaard

Appendix B

Interview Guide for Royal New Zealand Ballet Members

1. Can you tell me a bit about the history of the program? (Question for Pascale).
 - a. OR how did you get involved in the program?
2. What made you want to participate in the dance program?
 - a. Were you looking to get something specific out of the program as a dancer or a facilitator?
3. How was the day structured?
4. Did you experience a lot of interruptions from prison staff throughout the course of the workshop, i.e. did prisoners have to leave to attend count, visit with staff, etc.?
5. Did you notice a change in prisoners' bodies throughout the course of the program? i.e. flexibility, mobility, etc.
 - a. How did the prisoners move on the first day of class compared to the last day?
 - b. Were there physical barriers to their movements that had to be addressed?
Mobility issues, flexibility issues, etc.?
6. Did you notice a connection between the dance program and a change in the self-esteem or mood in the prisoners?
 - a. Were there emotional shifts in them that you were able to see?
7. Did you notice a change in attitude throughout the course of the program?
 - a. Were the prisoners more reluctant to participate in the beginning, or was it easy to get them to participate?
8. Did you notice that the prisoners' interpersonal relationships with each other changed over the course of the program? Or their relationship with you, or prison staff?
9. What was your relationship with the prison staff like as a dancer or a program facilitator?
 - a. Were the prison staff accepting and approving of the dance program?
10. Do you think the dance program allowed the prisoners to see themselves differently? As more than just prisoners?
11. Is there anything you'd like to bring up that you feel I may have missed?

Appendix C



Consent Form

Title of the study: **The Emotional and Physical Effects of Dance on Incarcerated Bodies**

Jana Skorstengaard ([REDACTED]); [REDACTED] and Dr. Sylvie Frigon (613-562-5800 #6900; sfrigon@uottawa.ca). Department of Criminology, Faculty of Social Sciences, the University of Ottawa.

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the abovementioned research study conducted by Jana Skorstengaard and Dr. Sylvie Frigon. This project is funded by the Ontario Graduate Scholarship as well as the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study is to look at the the physical and emotional effects of dance programs (specifically ballet) on incarcerated individuals. This could include the ways that an individual's body changes as a result of performing ballet, improvements in self-esteem and self-worth, mood, relationships with others, etc.

Participation: My participation will consist essentially of a one-on-one interview during which I will be asked questions about performing dance as an incarcerated person or teaching dance as a program instructor. The sessions will be scheduled for any time between November 2020 and January 2021. The specific time and date will be negotiated and arranged with Jana Skorstengaard and Dr. Sylvie Frigon via email or phone. The interview will last between 45 minutes to an hour in length. Both audio and video will be recorded with my permission.

Risks: My participation in this study will entail that I may volunteer some personal information that could cause some emotional distress. I have received assurance from the researcher that every effort will be made to minimize these risks. These measures include being provided with a crisis line such as Lifeline at 0800 543 354 (0800 LIFELINE) or Healthline 0800 611 116.

Benefits: My participation in this study will contribute to the advancement of knowledge on the subject of dance programs in prisons.

Confidentiality and anonymity: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. I understand that the contents will be used only for a master's thesis and that my confidentiality will be protected through pseudonyms anonymity in the dissemination of the results. In order to minimize the risk of security breaches and to help ensure your confidentiality we recommend that you use standard safety measures such as signing out of your account, closing your browser and locking your screen or device when you are no longer using them / when you have completed the study.

Anonymity will be protected in the following manner: participants will have the opportunity to choose pseudonyms or go by an initial of their choosing in the dissemination of results. The identity of participants will not be revealed in publications unless the

Appendix D

12/01/2021

Université d'Ottawa

Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

University of Ottawa

Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

CERTIFICAT D'APPROBATION ÉTHIQUE | CERTIFICATE OF ETHICS APPROVAL

Numéro du dossier / Ethics File Number	S-11-20-6164
Titre du projet / Project Title	The Emotional and Physical Effects of Dance on Incarcerated Bodies
Type de projet / Project Type	Thèse de maîtrise / Master's thesis
Statut du projet / Project Status	Approuvé / Approved
Date d'approbation (jj/mm/aaaa) / Approval Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	12/01/2021
Date d'expiration (jj/mm/aaaa) / Expiry Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	11/01/2022

Équipe de recherche / Research Team

Chercheur / Researcher	Affiliation	Role
Jana SKORSTENGAARD	Département de criminologie / Department of Criminology	Chercheur Principal / Principal Investigator
Sylvie FRIGON	Département de criminologie / Department of Criminology	Superviseur / Supervisor

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Appendix E

Final Concert at Arohata Prison:

<https://www.facebook.com/CorrectionsNZ/videos/826149994223184/>

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