

**Exploring Prison Theatre in Canada: A Case Study on William Head on Stage
(WHoS)**

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-To all the men of WHoS-

Abstract

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While the criminological literature has devoted great attention towards examining prison programs and interventions, the research has largely overlooked arts-based initiatives within prison. To gain an understanding of the impact that prison theatre has on the lives of criminalized individuals, this thesis represents a case study on Canada's only inmate-run prison theatre, William Head on Stage (WHoS). Through qualitative interviews with 15 incarcerated WHoS participants and 6 former WHoS participants, this study explores the experiences of individuals with this long-standing theatre initiative. By implementing an integrative conceptual framework that captures the prison backdrop to which prison theatre operates, this study draws on Goffman's (1961) total institutions as well as conceptual understandings around the prison culture (Ricciardelli, 2015; 2014b). Through the analysis of the participants' experiences, the emerging themes in this study collectively reveal how the impacts of WHoS stem from the contrasting nature of prison theatre to both the structural and social systems of prison. While this research study helps substantiate the significance of arts-based initiatives like WHoS, it also helps bridge the gap within the literature between the arts and criminology.

Keywords: William Head on Stage; prison theatre; criminalized populations; arts-based initiatives; imaginative criminology; prisoners; total institutions; prison culture

The views expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of Correctional Service Canada and Public Safety Canada.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

WHoS is special...Having the opportunity and the feeling of building something—especially through art—it's unique; I don't think you're going to get that anywhere else (Sammy¹, incarcerated WHoS participant).

1.1 Situating the Research

For decades, numerous countries including the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and Canada have been operating arts-based initiatives in prison, such as theatre. Despite the presence of prison theatre across the globe, the research examining such artistic initiatives remains largely underdeveloped (Hughes, 2005; Tocci, 2007). Criminological research has predominately focused on examining structured interventions in prison that aim to directly address risk factors associated with offending, such as correctional programs (Andrews, 1989; Andrews & Bonta, 2010). Given this, prison theatre and other arts-based initiatives have largely been left in the shadows of research. To help merge the gap in the literature between the arts and criminology while expanding the research on prison theatre, this thesis represents a case study on Canada's only-inmate run prison theatre, William Head on Stage (WHoS).

Situated in William Head Institution, a federal institution for men in British Columbia, WHoS has been operating as Canada's only inmate-run prison theatre for over 37 years. Despite its long-standing operation, no research has been done examining the implications that this theatre initiative may have on the participants. In light of the absence of such research in Canada and the limited understandings around prison theatre, this exploratory case study seeks to unpack the experiences of criminalized individuals²

¹ To protect the identities of the participants, all names have been replaced with pseudonyms.

² Throughout this study, 'criminalized individuals' is used to represent those who are in conflict with the law and have experience with incarceration. Please refer to Chapter 4 for a comprehensive explanation on the use of this term.

with prison theatre. In particular, the major research question guiding this study asks: *What impact does WHoS have on the participants?* Additional research questions that frame this study include:

a) What are the experiences of the participants with WHoS?

b) How does WHoS fit into the broader prison context?

To address these questions, this research study entails qualitative interviews with 15 incarcerated WHoS participants and 6 formerly incarcerated WHoS participants. Through this approach, the current study develops in-depth understandings that foreground the experiences of the participants; a population whose voices are widely overlooked in both the literature on prison theatre and the criminological research more broadly (Brown, 2008; Ricciardelli, 2014b; Schlosser, 2008). By including both incarcerated as well as formally incarcerated WHoS participants, unique and nuanced understandings are developed that capture both the short- and long-term impacts that prison theatre has on the lives of participants.

To expand the current state of knowledge on the impacts of prison theatre, this study purposely attends to the personal experiences of WHoS participants. As will be explored in the following chapter, the literature on prison theatre has often adopted an evaluation discourse whereby the focus is on measuring the impact of these initiatives through quantitative approaches (Khutan, 2014; Thompson, 2009). Additionally, while the research on prison theatre is still in its infancy, studies from the United States and the United Kingdom have suggested that these initiatives may have positive influences on participants in terms of confidence building and social skills development (Moller, 2003; Pensalfini, 2016; Tett, Anderson, McNeill, Overy & Sparks, 2012; Tocci, 2007).

Notwithstanding such findings, the research on prison theatre has yet to extend much beyond this, particularly with regards to the personal or individual impacts.

With much of the emerging discourses around prison theatre stemming from the discipline of applied theatre, the literature has yet to engage or consider the prison backdrop in which prison theatre initiatives operate. In turn, this research study adopts a unique criminological approach that considers the prison context. This is principally done by drawing on Goffman's (1961) theorization of total institutions as well as conceptual developments around the social structures of prison as they relate to the inmate culture (Clemmer, 1940) and prison masculinities (Ricciardelli, 2015). By integrating a conceptual framework that captures both the structural and social systems of prison, this study unravels how the impact of prison theatre may be shaped and conceptualized against the prison context.

With arts-based interventions in prison gaining greater recognition in recent years both in Canada and globally, this research topic on prison theatre stands as particularly germane³. As such, by extending the emerging literature to a Canadian context, this study contributes to the discussion on the significance and relevance of operating prison theatre initiatives in Canada.

1.2 An overview of WHoS⁴

For the past 37 years WHoS has been organizing theatre productions whereby the public has the exclusive and unique opportunity to come into the prison and experience

³ Soon after the commencement of this study, the Ontario Theatre and Rehabilitation through Arts in Corrections (OnTRAC) began inside Beaver Creek Institution in 2016. Facilitated by theatre artists, this newly developed program offers theatre workshops for prisoners.

⁴ Much of the information contained in this section is obtained through personal communications with WHoS participants, WHoS volunteer artists, and the staff at William Head Institution.

the captivating performances. Over the course of its long-standing operation, WHoS has produced more than 56 theatre productions (See Appendix A for an overview of all WHoS productions). While in some years these productions are based on the reimagining of existing plays or novels, in other years the productions represent originally devised plays. Each year, WHoS opens close to 14 shows for the public whereby the gymnasium of the institution transforms into a theatre space, complete with a set, stage, and a floor filled with seats for the audience.

As an inmate-run initiative, WHoS functions as a non-for-profit society and theatre company that the prisoners themselves operate (WHoS, n.d). Operating uniquely in this way, the participants of WHoS are involved in all the facets associated with the company's functioning. This includes the prisoners taking on the role of actors, costume designers, set designers, and even writers. In turn, the participants' involvement with WHoS is both multifaceted and collaborative. With an array of duties associated with putting on a production, being a part of WHoS is voluntary and is open to all prisoners within the institution who may be interested in participating. Approximating March of each year, WHoS commences the planning, designing and preparation of its yearly fall production, which opens to the public in October.

To have members of the public come into William Head Institution, extensive security protocols are in place. These security measures include electronic scanning and the use of detector dogs for all those entering the institution. Audience members must be over the age of 19 and all items and personal belongings are restricted entry into the institution. To attend a WHoS performance, members of the public must purchase tickets

in advance, which are available online through the WHoS website via Ticket Rocket⁵. Every year, WHoS donates a portion of the ticket revenue to a selected charitable organization, while the majority of funds go towards supporting the following year's theatre production.

For each production, WHoS hires a theatre director that collaborates with the theatre company and helps in orchestrating the production. The director works closely alongside the men of WHoS to devise scripts, facilitate role rehearsals, and guide the overall theatre process. Additionally, WHoS works alongside a group of volunteer artists from the community⁶. The artists are actively involved in assisting with the production processes and often support WHoS in aspects related to music, lighting, and set design, while also assisting with the facilitation of WHoS workshops. These workshops, which occur in preparation for the production, occur several days each month and involve a range of theatre activities, such as improvisational games. In addition to the artistic support offered by the volunteer artists, they may also take on select roles as actors/actresses in some WHoS productions. Further to the director and volunteers, WHoS also has a board of directors consisting of participating prisoners who are responsible for the various organizational aspects of the theatre company. Among many responsibilities, the WHoS board of directors take care of any administrative features, marketing aspects, as well as any negotiations required with the institution.

⁵ WHoS website: <http://www.whonstage.weebly.com> Ticket Rocket is an event ticketing business based in Victoria, British Columbia.

⁶ Prendergast (2016; 2013) offers creative, personal reflections regarding her experience of working as an artist at WHoS.

Despite WHoS being an inmate-run initiative, the institution oversees the operation of WHoS— given the context it operates in⁷. As such, the institution staff, mainly the Social Programs Officer, helps with coordinating the WHoS activities while also acting as the liaison for the theatre company. WHoS operates in the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) under social programs and leisure activities. According to CSC’s *Commissioner’s Directive-760*, leisure activities are, “structured and unstructured activities that encourage inmates to develop and maintain a healthy, pro-social lifestyle and to use their time constructively” (2016). In this regard, WHoS workshops and performances all generally take place at times other than the inmates’ working hours and scheduled programs⁸.

While operating as a leisure activity, the development of WHoS traces back to the post-secondary education program offered in federal institutions across British Columbia in the 1970s (Duguid, 1998). In partnership with the University of Victoria and Simon Fraser University, inmates were able to take part in various university courses related to humanities, social sciences and theatre. In 1975, following the two-year operation of the post-secondary education program, inmates in Matsqui Institution organized a prison theatre group called the Institutional Theatre Productions (Prihar & Little, 2014). This inmate-run theatre initiative ran for 6 years in Matsqui Institution until 1981, during which a prison riot lead to the halt of the prison theatre. During this year, many inmates from Matsqui Institution were transferred to William Head Institution, including many of who were involved in the prison theatre initiative (Prihar & Little, 2014). In turn, in 1981,

⁷ For example, the institution must review and approve the production script for censorship, as well as any notable supplies or equipment needed for the WHoS production.

⁸ All WHoS activities take place in the Program Building of William Head Institution. This building also houses the gymnasium where the annual WHoS productions take place.

prison theatre found a new beginning at William Head Institution and began in association with the post-secondary education program offered through the University of Victoria⁹. While the post-secondary education program at William Head Institution ended in 1984, the prison theatre initiative was continued by the inmates and operates to this day as WHoS.

1.3 Outline of Chapters

Following this introductory section, in the second chapter (Chapter 2) of this study I provide a review of the literature on prison theatre. To introduce this discussion, I begin by outlining a conceptualization of prison theatre while also highlighting some of the leading prison theatre initiatives across the globe. Subsequently, consideration is given to the dominant discourses around prison theatre that shape the approaches underlying these initiatives. Following this, I examine the existing literature on prison theatre by reviewing studies that look at the societal impacts of these initiatives, as well as research studies that explore the individual impacts of these initiatives on the participants. This chapter concludes by situating the current study within the literature and highlighting how it uniquely contributes to the field.

In the third chapter (Chapter 3), I outline the conceptual framework applied in this study. To understand and contextualize the experiences of the participants with WHoS, I draw on theoretical understandings around both the structural and social context of prison. This chapter begins by exploring Goffman's (1961) seminal theorization around total institutions, which, aside from outlining the confinements of imprisonment, also

⁹ The prison theatre at William Head Institution was first called William Head Amateur Theatre (WHAT), but was later re-registered as a non-for-profit society under the name of William Head on Stage (WHoS).

help shed insight on the mechanisms of resistance inmates engage in within these establishments. To create a relevant framework, the second section engages with theoretical conceptualizations around the social environment and culture in prison. This will be done by drawing on theorizations around the inmate culture developed by Clemmer (1940), as well as more recent developments such as that of Crewe, Warr, Bennett, and Smith (2014). Embedded within this discussion, understandings around prison masculinity will be drawn upon to develop a compressive theoretical framework on the social context of prison (Ricciardelli, 2014a; 2014b). This chapter ends by explicating the creative lens of imaginative criminology through which I approach this study with.

The fourth chapter (Chapter 4) details the methodological framework adopted in this study. I begin by outlining the ontological and epistemological assumptions that underpin this research. Following this, a detailed consideration is given to methods and data collection procedures, which includes explicating the study population, outlining the interview processes, as well as highlighting my site visit to WHoS. Subsequently, I detail the data analysis approach and techniques used to examine the data. This chapter concludes with a discussion on reflexivity and a consideration of the ethical safeguards and precautions that are intrinsically woven in all stages of the research process.

In the fifth chapter (Chapter 5), I provide an overview of research findings by exploring the themes emerging from the narratives of the 15 incarcerated WHoS participants and the 6 formerly incarcerated WHoS participants. This chapter is divided into three main sections, which are structured around three organizing themes. The first section explores the overarching theme of *Personal Growth* that the participants

experience through WHoS. The second section details the role of the *Environment* at WHoS. In the third section of this chapter, I explore the *Opportunities* afforded to the men through WHoS. By drawing on the conceptual framework of this study, this chapter intricately explores how the various themes within these organizing sections represent the ways in which WHoS impacts the lives of the participants.

In the final chapter (Chapter 6), I conclude by revisiting the thematic findings. In doing so, I contextualize the themes by summarizing how they collectively reveal how WHoS may be seen as a form of intermission or break from the structural and social context of prison. Following this, I reflect on the contributions of this study to the field. Lastly, I discuss limitations of this study and correspondingly outline directions for future research on prison theatre.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The following chapter provides an overview of the discourses around prison theatre as well as a review of the existing literature on these arts-based initiatives. The first section will begin by introducing a discussion on the conceptualization of prison theatre. This will include outlining current understandings around prison theatre as well as highlighting some of the leading prison theatre initiatives across the globe. Following this, a brief discussion will be made on the historical background and development of prison theatre, as well as a consideration on the different approaches that shape these initiatives. Subsequently, the next section of this chapter shifts the discussion towards a review of the literature. This involves the examination of research studies that explore the societal and individual impacts of prison theatre. As it will be demonstrated, despite the growing recognition of arts-based initiatives and the presence of theatre for criminalized populations across the globe, this area of research remains largely underdeveloped (Tocci, 2007). By reviewing existing discourses around prison theatre, I will conclude by situating the current study within the broader literature while also highlighting how this study contributes to new insights and understandings.

2.1 Conceptualizing Prison Theatre

Theatre initiatives are used in a variety of contexts, from educational settings in schools to institutional settings in prisons. As such, applied theatre, which involves the application of theatre in community settings or with marginalized populations, has been an ever-growing field (Nicholson, 2014). Over the years, there has been a cultivating interest in the application of arts-based initiatives, such as theatre, with criminalized

populations and in prison settings. The discursive shift in criminology from “nothing works” with regards to the rehabilitation of prisoners to “what works” may have helped propagate the development of these arts-based programs and interventions (Day, 2013; McGuire, 1995). While the literature around prison theatre only began to emerge in recent decades, prison theatre as a practice has been around for centuries.

The development of prison theatre does not have a clearly documented history. However, there have been notable initiatives or “significant moments” that may be associated with the advancement of prison theatre (Thompson, 1998, p.6). In his book *The Proscenium Cage*, Tocci (2007) states that theatre practices for prisoners have been around since the 1890s. Other scholars, such as McAvinchey (2011), have recognized that prison theatre goes as far back as 1789. During this time, prisoners¹⁰ in the colony of New South Wales staged the work of dramatist George Farquhar’s *The Recruiting Officer* (McAvinchey, 2011). In the United States during the 1950s, the San Quentin Drama Workshop was founded in San Quentin State Prison as one of the first prison theatre initiatives in the country (McAvinchey, 2011; Tocci, 2011). However, it was not until the 1960s and 1970s that prison theatre began to gain significant presence globally (Tocci, 2007), with prison theatre in Canada also beginning during this time through the prison post-secondary education program (Duguid, 1998). Since this time, across the globe, countries have been operating theatre initiatives for criminalized populations. In order to illustrate a picture of these initiatives, some of the long-standing theatre practices will be considered. This includes two arts-based theatre programs in the USA and the UK, as

¹⁰ These were prisoners of the First Fleet, which consisted of ships that transported convicts from England to Australia. During this time Australia was a penal colony used to separate and detain individuals from society.

well as the consideration of a theatre initiative specifically for women. By exploring some of the different theatre initiatives available for criminalized populations, a more holistic understanding of the common approaches that underpin these theatre programs is established.

Rehabilitation Through the Arts. Rehabilitation Through the Arts (RTA) is an example of one of the world's leading prison theatre programs. RTA has been operating since 1996 in prisons across the United States as a program that offers a variety of arts-based programs, such as music, dance, and visual arts (Halperin, Kessler, & Braunschweiger, 2012). The mission of the program is "...to use the transformative power of the arts to develop social and cognitive skills that prisoners need for successful reintegration into the community" (Rehabilitation Through the Arts, n.d). Thus, going beyond theatre performing, RTA is a program that values the processes and practices involved in the production of theatre. RTA provides a creative space for expression and allocates great responsibility to the prisoners given that their involvement extends beyond acting. Prisoners enrolled in this program are able to take on different roles such as actors, directors, and set designers. RTA has been recognized to provide prisoners with an avenue to express their unique creativity while connecting and collaborating with others around them (Moller, 2003; Shailor, 2011; Tocci, 2007). In its inception, RTA began operating in Sing Sing Correctional Facility in New York, but today RTA has expanded to three institutional facilities in New York and serves over 200 prisoners (Rehabilitation Through the Arts, n.d).

Geese Theatre Company. Adopted from the original Geese Theatre Program in the United States, the Geese Theatre Company in the United Kingdom was established in

1987 (Blacker, Watson & Beech, 2011). Led by theatre practitioners, the Geese Theatre Company operates interactive drama-based workshops and group activities within the criminal justice system. The company has operated in over 150 institutions and has worked with over 250, 000 individuals (Geese Theatre Company, n.d). While the Geese Theatre Company is not strictly a drama therapy program, it recognizes the therapeutic potential of drama and thus encompasses elements of drama therapy (Brookes & Mountford, 2002; Thompson, 1998). That is, theatre and drama are seen as effective tools for self-reflecting as well as promoting personal development and change. Furthermore, the active engagement and involvement of the prisoners in this company places emphasis on learning by doing (Brookes & Mountford, 2002). Thus, the Geese Theatre Company can be seen as a holistic approach that merges drama therapy with theatre education. As such, the goal is, "...to use drama and theatre practice to enable choice, responsibility and change amongst offenders and people at risk of offending ..." (Geese Theatre Company, n.d). Central and unique to this theatre initiative is the use of masks in the sessions and performances. Masks serve as a metaphor representing the 'masks' we wear in everyday life that characterize our external behaviour and which conceal our internal thoughts or experiences (Geese Theatre Company, n.d). Through theatrical methods, such as the use of masks or issue-based plays, participants involved with the Geese Theatre Company are encouraged to learn and practice alternative, constructive options to offending (Brookes & Mountford, 2002).

Clean Break. Established in 1979, Clean Break is a UK based theatre program for women who either are or have been in contact with the criminal justice system (Clean Break, n.d). Operating both within the prisons and in the community, Clean Break offers

theatre-based education and training programs. The theatre company offers workshops and courses, which provide participants with opportunities to engage in performance projects and productions. The premise of Clean Break is that theatre helps bring the stories of women to audiences and helps participants develop an array of proficiencies including social, professional and creative skills (Clean Break, n.d). As a women-only program that enables outreach to criminalized individuals in the community, Clean Break is theatre program that is unique of its kind.

What is apparent from the brief examination of some of the leading prison theatre programs in the USA and in the UK is that there is no singular mould or way of *doing* prison theatre. Rather, these arts-based initiatives encompass an array of styles, practices, and methods. Notwithstanding the various different prison theatre programs, these initiatives are often framed by similar underlying approaches, as will be explored in the following section.

2.2 Approaches to Prison Theatre

Considering the many prison theatre programs around the globe and looking at some of the leading programs, these initiatives appear to be constructed around two general dominant discourses: first, theatre as drama therapy and second, theatre as education or rehabilitation. In this section, each approach will be examined so that a clear conceptualization can be made of prison theatre practices.

2.2.1. Theatre as Drama Therapy. Drama therapy is founded on the healing characteristics that are present in the creative processes of drama and theatre activities (Langley, 2006; Leeder & Wimmer, 2007). The Drama Therapy Association of North America defines drama therapy as, “the intentional use of drama and/or theatre processes

to achieve therapeutic goals” (n.d). Rooted in both psychotherapy and theatre, the interactive and creative processes used in drama therapy allow individuals to express their emotions and feelings while developing interpersonal skills. While drama was used alongside mainstream therapeutic practices in the beginning of the twentieth century, by the 1930s, drama therapy began to emerge as its own discipline (Jones, 2007). Within this framework, theatre and drama are understood as being therapeutic mediums capable of facilitating healing and personal change (Landy, 1996; Langley, 2006).

Drama therapy has fluidity as it may involve different theatrical techniques such as storytelling, projective play, improvisation, movement, and even performance. Led by a drama therapist, drama therapy sessions in prison settings can be practiced in either individual or group settings. A key aspect of drama therapy is that individuals are able to engage with themselves and their personal challenges through these practices (Jones, 2007; Landy, 1996). Drama therapy approaches to prison theatre do not strictly entail treatment of psychological problems since it also involves allowing individuals to make self-reflections, such as connections between childhood and offending behaviour (Landy, 1996). The Geese Theatre Company described earlier is a prison theatre initiative that stems in large from this approach. While drama therapy is one method used in prison theatre practices, the vast majority of theatre initiatives fall under the approach of theatre as education or rehabilitation.

2.2.2. Theatre as Education or Rehabilitation. Theatre as education or rehabilitation is an approach whereby drama-based and theatrical techniques are used as an avenue for personal development (Moller, 2003). Rather than being viewed as therapeutic sessions, prison theatre programs that subscribe to the educational and

rehabilitative framework often run workshops, which focus on theatre making and devising. Professional actors, directors, as well as volunteers may take part in leading these workshops, rather than drama therapists. This approach emphasizes collaboration and allowing prisoners to connect and work together as part of a group. In turn, prison theatre initiatives that correspond with this framework provide opportunities for prisoners to both learn and practice social skills (Bailin, 1993). The role of participants in these prison theatre programs extend beyond acting as individuals may be involved in different aspects of theatre and take on various roles (Moller, 2013). The RTA program in the United States is illustrative of this approach where engaging in theatre and the arts aids in the development of skills that are understood to be supportive of the rehabilitation and reintegration process for those involved (Moller, 2003).

While most theatre programs are mandated in education, they none the less may incorporate techniques of drama therapy or have the capacity to provide therapeutic aspects for prisoners. Thus, a program that is not operating within the framework of drama therapy may still have therapeutic elements to it (Thompson, 1998). Likewise, programs that framed by therapy may have educational and rehabilitative potentials. In turn, while the discourses around the development of prison theatre programs are largely dominated by either therapeutic or educational/rehabilitative agendas, they are not to be viewed as conflicting or otherwise opposing approaches. Furthermore, while the vast majority of prison theatre programs operate within the frameworks of therapy and education/rehabilitation, some initiatives, like WHoS, are not entirely guided by either approach. WHoS may be seen as reminiscent of the theatre as education/rehabilitation framework given that it arose from the post-secondary education program offered

through the University of Victoria. However, following the closure of the education program at William Head Institution in 1984, WHoS has been operating independently as an inmate-run theatre company and non-for-profit society. That is, as oppose to being mandated as an educational or rehabilitative program, WHoS is a theatre initiative that devises and produces performances for the public. Notwithstanding the uniqueness of WHoS, given the therapeutic and rehabilitative agendas that underpin many of the prison theatre initiatives around the world, discourses around these frameworks dominate the literature on prison theatre (Pensalfini, 2016). In the following section, the focus shifts to the existing research on prison theatre.

2.3 Current State of Knowledge on Prison Theatre

The following section is a review of the existing literature on prison theatre initiatives. A general observation from the review of the literature is that the vast majority of this research stems from the discipline of applied theatre and is often done by theatre-art practitioners who have worked within prison theatre programs (McAvinchey, 2011; Moller, 2013; Pensalfini, 2016; Shailor, 2011; Thompson, 1998; Tocci, 2007). Given the limited scope of the existing research on prison theatre, I will be drawing in part from research on broader arts-based programs that offer theatre within them. While the research is scarce and limited, there have been different approaches used within the literature examining the implications of prison theatre. Research on theatre programs in prison often focuses on one of two areas: the societal impacts of these initiatives and individual impacts. The first section will look at studies that have examined the societal impact of prison theatre. The section following will then shift the lens and consider the

literature encompassing the individual impacts of arts-based theatre programs on participating individuals.

2.3.1. Societal Impacts. Research looking at the societal impacts of prison theatre are often evaluating the effectiveness or usefulness of operating these arts-based initiatives. As such, studies considering societal impacts often involve investigating the contribution of these initiatives to correctional objectives through quantitative methodologies. In turn, this body of research tends to examine the recidivism or reoffending rates of individuals involved in theatre programs or alternatively conduct cost-benefit analyses on these initiatives (Cheliotis & Jordanoska, 2015; Hughes, 2005).

One of the most extensive studies examining societal impacts of prison theatre is an early recidivism study done in 1987 by the California Department of Corrections. This study investigated parole outcomes for prisoners enrolled in the Arts-In-Corrections program (AIC), an initiative that engages prisoners with an array of artistic mediums, including visual art, music, and theatre. In this study, 177 parolees who participated in the AIC program for at least six months were compared to parolees who were not enrolled in the program (California Department of Correction, 1987). Parolees who participated in the AIC program were observed to have more favourable outcomes than those not enrolled in the program. AIC participants reoffended at a significantly reduced rate, compared to parolees who did not participate in the AIC. More specifically, within the first year of release, 74.2% of AIC participants maintained a clean record compared with only 49.6% of non-AIC parolees (California Department of Correction, 1987). Despite the promising conclusions drawn from this study, examining the AIC program, which

offers an assortment of arts-based activities, yields limited understanding on the contributions of prison theatre.

A particularly noteworthy study that sheds some light on the rehabilitative potential of theatre in prison is a 1998 study led by Stephen Duguid of Simon Fraser University. This report consisted of an extensive investigation of the Prison Education Program, which operated from 1973 to 1993 in federal institutions across British Columbia. Through this program, various liberal arts courses were offered to prisoners as well as extracurricular activities, which of particular relevance to the current study included a theatre production group. In this three-year research study, Duguid (1998) followed 654 released prisoners who participated in the education program, with the primary objective of examining whether the education program is effective in reducing the rate of recidivism¹¹.

While the study is on prison education, a subsection of this multifaceted research project looked specifically at the theatre production group sponsored by the universities and which ran adjacent to the education program. This subsection of Duguid's (1998) study bears particular relevance given that the theatre program considered represents the initiative that in later years evolved into WHoS. In looking at the "worst cases"¹², Duguid (1998) found that individuals who participated in the theatre program had a better post-release success rate (55%) than their predicted post-release success, as determined by their SIR score (36%). Individuals who took part in the theatre program also appeared to

¹¹ In accordance with the definition used by CSC, recidivism in this study was defined as, "...someone return[ing] to prison for an indictable offence within three years of being released on parole" (Duguid, 1998, p. 6).

¹² "Worst cases" in this study consisted of 119 individuals who fell within the two highest risk categories of the Statistical Information on Recidivism Scale (SIR) and were therefore perceived to be the most likely to recidivate.

have a better post-release success rate than those who did not take part in the theatre (Duguid, 1998). While this study is on prison education, the subsection considering the theatre component of the program is particularly important because there is no other Canadian-based research that touches on the impacts of prison theatre.

Notwithstanding the findings from the California Department of Corrections (1987) and Duguid (1998), the impact of prison theatre on these studies only yield partial understandings. Given the complexity of criminal behaviour, it is uncertain whether or not participating in the theatre initiatives has a direct bearing post-release behaviour. That is, the absence of a causal link means there may have been other factors that may have contributed to the difference in recidivism or reoffending rates. As such, considering the post-release behaviour of individuals who were involved in prison theatre offers limited understandings (Hughes, 2005). In turn, and alternative to this approach, several studies have considered looking at the costs and benefits of operating arts-based programs in prisons.

To understand the broad societal implications of arts-based programs, a number of studies have relied on cost-benefit analyses (Brewster, 1983; Johnson, Keen, & Pritchard, 2011). Two prominent studies taking on this focus include *An Evaluation of the Arts-In-Corrections Program of the California Department of Corrections* by Brewster (1983), and *Unlocking Value: The Economic Benefit of the Arts in Criminal Justice* by Johnson, Keen and Pritchard (2011). Brewster (1983) examined the AIC Program offered by the California Department of Corrections in four different institutions. In this early evaluation, the economic cost for the social benefits of the program were quantified and weighed against the economic cost of delivering the program. Through the financial

model of considering social return on investment, Brewster (1983) showed the AIC program as being a cost-effective initiative. In particular, this study found that while the cost of operating the arts-based program was \$123,110, the program produced \$228,522 in measurable benefits in one year (Brewster, 1983).

Parallel with the approach used in Brewster (1983), Johnson et al. (2011) considered the costs and benefits of arts-based programs in the rehabilitation of criminalized populations. This study examined three arts-based programs, which include the Clean Break Theatre Company, Only Connect, and Unitas. All three programs demonstrated to be a cost-effective way of helping participants when it comes to reoffending behaviour. For example, Johnson et al. (2011) estimate that for six years, there is £3.2 million in savings to the criminal justice system, given the lower rates of reoffending amongst participants of Only Connect¹³. That is, the analysis suggested that every £1 invested in Only Connect yields approximately £3.06 in savings to the criminal justice system.

Evaluating societal impacts of arts-based programs through quantitative cost-benefit analyses are noteworthy because they contribute to the field in a unique way. As addressed by McAvinchy (2011), studies applying quantitative approaches present anecdotal evidence in numerical and statistical forms that speaks to policy-makers, criminal justice administrators, as well as anyone apprehensive about the financial expenses of operating arts-based programs. However, albeit their contribution to the field, studies examining the societal impacts of theatre initiatives have been challenged in the literature given their positivist underpinning (Balfour & Poole in Thompson, 1998;

¹³ Based in London, Only Connect is an arts-based charity program involving theatre and rehabilitation projects for prisoners and ex-prisoners

Khutan, 2014; Thompson 2009). As reinforced by Hughes (2005), “methods for assessing cost effectiveness are complex and contested, and many impacts of the arts are difficult to quantify, especially in terms of monetary return,” (p. 37). These studies tend to reduce a multi-dimensional area of inquiry into numerical data guided by quantitative, evaluation-based discourses. Khutan (2014) explains how there is often pressure for prison theatre programs and practitioners to subscribe to the dominant evaluation discourse of measuring and quantifying their work in order to prove their legitimacy. In this regard, there is greater support in the literature for the use of qualitative research approaches given that they are more harmonious and inline with the intrinsic nature of arts-based initiatives (Balfour & Poole in Thompson, 1998; Brewster, 2010; Merrill, 2015). Shifting away from the societal impacts, when it comes to exploring the contributions of arts-based programs for individuals, we see that the literature tends to rely more so on qualitative methods of inquiry.

2.3.2. Individual Impacts. While the emerging research on prison theatre has considered the societal impacts, the research has also largely focused on the contributions of these programs on the participants themselves (Hughes, 2005; Merrill, 2015; Pensalfini, 2016; Tocci, 2007). As it will be explored in this section, the research looking at the individual impacts of prison theatre tends to take on the form of qualitative case studies. Reoccurring themes in the research on the individual impacts of prison theatre will be explored in this section, such as the concepts of confidence and skill development.

Brewster’s (1983) cost-benefit study on the AIC program in California, described earlier, incorporated qualitative data analysis of interviews done with participating prisoners and correctional staff, as well as workshop observations. The theme of self-

confidence emerged from the qualitative data analyses of this study. Many of the prisoners described their involvement with AIC as having a role in improving their discipline and self-confidence. Additionally, Brewster (1983) notes that for many of the participants it was their first time successfully completing a project and experiencing artistic growth.

Building upon the potential individual benefits demonstrated in Brewster (1983), in 2010, Brewster extended his research and carried out a comprehensive qualitative study using in-depth interviews with 18 members of the AIC program. The analysis demonstrated that through artistic and creative processes, the participants were able to connect with themselves and nurture their confidence and self-esteem (Brewster, 2010). As Brewster (2010) describes, “they realized a greater and deeper sense of who they were and what they could become (p.15). Despite the insights drawn from Brewster (1983; 2010), given the focus on the AIC arts-based program, these studies do not yield ample understandings of the potential influence that theatre in particular has on the lives of participants. In turn, the specific contributions of prison theatre programs remain largely ambiguous and unclear. As such, to complement the discussion on growth and confidence, it is important to consider studies examining theatre initiatives specifically.

Based on a case study conducted on the Clean Break Theatre Company, a theatre program for women, Merrill and Frigon (2015) investigated the transformative power of theatre for criminalized populations. Through the exploration of emerging themes, Merrill and Frigon (2015) examined the role of transformation and growth for participants enrolled in the theatre company. Notably, the theatre participants in this study indicate how their involvement with Clean Break helped build their confidence.

From overcoming fears, to being given the opportunity to overcome feelings of rejection or isolation, theatre engagement helped the participants gain confidence through the theatre creative process (Merrill & Frigon, 2015).

In a similar vein, a case study done by Moller (2003) analyzing journal entries written by male prisoners involved in the RTA program spawned comparable insight into the benefits of the theatre program for prisoners. Amongst the themes uncovered in the workshop observations and analysis of the participants' journal entries is the theme of self-confidence. As Moller (2003) describes, "...through theatre, under the guise of playing a character, [the prisoners] take off masks that shield them, express their sensitive sides, walk in other people's shoes, and expand their perspectives" (p.65). By focusing specifically on theatre within the prison setting, Moller's (2003) study is particularly relevant as it sheds some light into understanding the individual impacts of prison theatre on the participants.

Also considering prison theatre initiatives, in the book *The Proscenium Cage*, Tocci (2007) conducts a series of case studies in the United States on three prison theatre programs: Theatre for the Forgotten, Cell Block Theatre, and Prison Performing Arts. Tocci (2007) interviews participating prisoners in these programs in order to capture the significance of these three theatre programs. Through the prison theatre, the prisoners were able to engage in appreciated and purposeful behaviour, which as their responses suggest, allowed them to feel respected (Tocci, 2007). Furthermore, prisoners described theatre as providing them with an avenue to express themselves and a means for self-discovery and self-evaluation. Through acting, the participants were able to explore other personality types and characters while at the same time reflecting on themselves in those

circumstances. As Tocci (2007) describes, “they were able to ‘find themselves’ by playing with these different personality types and ‘be themselves’ by rehearsing and repeating performances...” (p.166). Furthermore, Tocci (2007) suggests that the unique emphasis of theatre on interaction and socialization distinguishes it from other arts-based programs in prison, which tend to be more individualistic, such as creative writing or painting. Moreover, through Tocci’s (2007) case studies, additional studies emerged showcasing the pivotal role theatre plays in allowing participants to develop social skills.

A group of case studies conducted by Tett, Anderson, McNeill, Overy, and Sparks (2012) on prisoners participating in arts-based intervention programs in Scottish prisons explored how these initiatives help foster social skills, specifically collaboration, amongst participants. In particular, these arts-based programs centered on music, opera, and theatre. Similar to Tocci (2007), these case studies involved interviewing participants in addition to the analysis of feedback forms and behaviour records. The analyses from Tett et al. (2012) found that arts-based programs help enable collaboration between the prisoners. The programs created opportunities for the prisoners to work collectively and establish a sense of trust, which Tett et al. (2012) indicate as enabling the participants’ to further build their self-esteem. As the researchers describe, “all the projects involved people in working together so that the more withdrawn participants were brought out of their shell,” (Tett et al., 2012, p.178). By collaborating as a team, the programs allowed the participating prisoners to connect and support each other.

Another emerging theme that the researchers uncovered in these series of case studies is the active learning culture (Tett et al., 2012). Through the collaborative and supportive environment offered by the programs, participants were encouraged and

motivated to improve their verbal and written literacy skills. As the researchers describe, “literacy skills were embedded in the range of activities that the arts projects developed and so enabled participants to work to their strengths, enhance their creativity and reach the outcomes that they saw as desirable” (Tett et al., 2012, p.180). Parallel with Tett et al. (2012), similar observations in terms of literary skill development amongst participating prisoners in theatre is shown in research on The Shakespeare Prison Project (SPP; Bates, 2003; Pensalfini, 2016; Shailor, 2011). SPP is a prison education program that allows prisoners engage in studying, rehearsing, as well as performing Shakespearian plays. Participating prisoners in this program observed to show greater interest in engaging with both education and literature (Bates, 2003; Pensalfini, 2016).

Looking at the studies on the different art-based theatre programs, it appears that qualitative case studies are valuable for providing insight on the individual impacts of prison theatre. The majority of studies have recognized that theatre may play a role in the personal growth and confidence of participants (Brewster, 1983; Brewster 2010; Moller 2003, Tocci 2007). Adding to the discussion of the contributions, these programs have on the individual, research such as those done by Tocci (2007) and Tett et al. (2012) unfold the skill development observed in participants taking part in prison theatre programs. Notwithstanding the presence of these studies, further research is required that explores the impact that prison theatre has on participating prisoners.

2.4 Study Contribution

Despite the presence of prison theatre programs across the globe, the research examining such arts-based initiatives remains largely underdeveloped and repeatedly raises the concern for the need of more research within this emergent field (Hughes,

2005; Merrill, 2015; Tocci, 2007). To expand this area of research, the present study will extend the analysis of prison theatre to a Canadian context and explore the role of such initiatives on the lives of criminalized populations. By conducting a case study on WHoS, this study will help develop understandings on the contributions and benefits of theatre engagement in prison. As the first study in Canada to look at the individual impact of prison theatre, this study is expected to provide novel, insightful understandings, while at the same time, filling in the present gaps in the literature. With virtually no research on this topic in Canada, this study will help proliferate a discussion around the significance of theatre initiatives in Canadian prisons.

In addition to extending the scope of the current literature, the present study will also help develop the current state of knowledge on prison theatre practices. Given the latency of the personal testimonies of criminalized individuals in the literature, this research study attempts to foreground the voices and experiences of the participants. It is through the participants' experiences with WHoS that this study aims to develop understandings of the impacts of theatre on their lives. While the emerging literature on prison theatre has suggested that such initiatives may play a role in the development of confidence, collaboration, and social skills, the research remains limited (Moller, 2003; Tett et al., 2012; Tocci, 2007). To supplement current understanding of prison theatre, this study will consider the perspective of former prisoners who were involved with prison theatre for the purpose of exploring whether theatre has enduring impacts on individuals following imprisonment. This inclusionary feature will uniquely contribute to the field given that the research looking at prison theatre as it relates to post-release tends to focus on reconviction and recidivism rates (Hughes, 2005).

Demonstrated from the review of the literature, research on prison theatre largely stems from the discipline of applied theatre and is thus, often conducted by theatre practitioners and scholars (Shailor, 2011; Thompson, 1998). This qualitative case study is distinctive as it is written from a criminological researcher's perspective. Such an interdisciplinary perspective is of particular significance to the literature given that it will allow for the consideration of how theatre initiatives are situated against the backdrop of prison. That is, in this study I recognize how the experiences of participants with prison theatre and the impacts that such initiatives have on their lives may be shaped and conceptualized against the structural and social context of prison. The absence of attention given to the prison context in turn leaves an important point of consideration out of the discourse on prison theatre. For this reason, theoretical and conceptual frameworks specifically on prison are incorporated in this study in order to provide comprehensive and nuanced understandings on how theatre impacts the lives of criminalized individuals.

To complement the advances that this study will make to the current literature on prison theatre, this study will be drawing on theoretical conceptualizations in the data analyses. As Merrill (2015) expresses, research looking at theatre with criminalized populations rarely incorporates theory. Through the application of theory in the analyses, this study will help enhance and develop and a deeper understanding of the experiences of the participants with prison theatre and the role such initiatives play in their lives. By doing this, the current research can help expand and deepen the conversation on both the significance and relevance of prison theatre while simultaneously responding to the call within the literature for the need of cross-disciplinary research between the arts and social sciences (Frigon & Shantz, 2014; Hviid Jacobsen, 2014; Thompson, 2009; Walsh, 2017).

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework

Introduction

The following chapter explores the theoretical underpinnings that frame the data analysis in this study. To understand the experiences of the participants with WHoS and explore the impact that this initiative has on their lives, I will be incorporating relevant theories and conceptualizations around the structural and social setting of prison. With currently no research engaging with the context in which prison theatre practices operate, this integrative conceptual approach will help develop a coherent framework regarding the prison backdrop in which WHoS operates. To accomplish this, I will be merging early theoretical understandings on prison, such as that developed by Erving Goffman (1961) and Clemmer (1940), with more contemporary conceptual understandings on prison such as that of Crewe et al. (2014) and Ricciardelli (2014a; 2014b).

To contextualize the experiences of criminalized individuals with prison theatre, I will begin by incorporating concepts from Erving Goffman's (1961) seminal work on total institutions. Goffman's ideas shed insight on the setting and context of prisons whereby he paints a picture of the restrictions and confinements characterizing these establishments. To further expand on the understanding of the prison backdrop, the second section of this chapter will engage with conceptualizations on the social environment or culture in prison. This will primarily be done through the theoretical ideas on the inmate culture developed by Clemmer (1940) and other criminologists such as Crewe (2009; 2014). Adjacent to this, theorizations around prison masculinity are drawn upon to more holistically capture the social environment characterizing prison (Ricciardelli, 2014a; 2014b). By applying a combination of relevant theories and

conceptualizations on prison, I develop a comprehensive conceptual lens for exploring the experiences of criminalized individuals with prison theatre that attentively considers the prison context.

Parallel to the integrative nature of prison theatre that unites the art and prison, I conclude this chapter by situating this research within the creative framework of imaginative criminology. Engaging with imaginative criminology offers a means of expanding the criminological milieu into one where the creative arts, such as theatre, may be recognized as meaningful areas of inquiry within the field.

3.1 Prison Structural Context: Goffman's Total Institutions

Canadian-American Sociologist Erving Goffman is known for his various influential works situated within the framework of symbolic interactionism¹⁴. The theoretical developments Goffman presents in his seminal work *Asylums* (1961) will be applied in the analysis of this research project. *Asylums* (1961) is a collection of four essays centered on Goffman's notion of total institutions, which he theorizes as:

...A place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time together lead an enclosed formally administered round of life (xiii).

While Goffman develops his idea of the total institutions (1961) from his participant observational study on the St. Elizabeths Mental Hospital in Washington, D.C, he extends it to other social establishments, such as the military, boarding schools, and of relevance to this study, to prisons. As noted by Weinstein (1982), Goffman's work is one of the primary sociological studies examining the situation and experiences of

¹⁴ Identities are seen as being formed and shaped through social interactions.

inmates¹⁵ within total institutions. By sketching the characteristics and features of total institutions Goffman (1961) offers a way of understanding what these institutions make of the inmates, as well as what the inmates make of life inside these establishments. Importantly, this study will apply Goffman's theoretical conceptualizations not to theorize or analyze the purpose of prison, but rather to frame an understanding of the prison context.

Total institutions are characterized by their encompassing tendencies that create constraints and separations from the outside world. As Goffman (1961) describes, these constraints can be clearly manifested or built into the physical attributes of these institutions. This includes physical barriers such as locked doors, barbed wire, or water circumferences. However, alongside these overt barriers, social barriers and constraints also define total institutions. Inmates are restricted in their interface and contact with the outside world due to limits to external social interaction (Goffman, 1961). While total institutions are characterized by the construction of physical and social barriers, at an individual level, these establishments breakdown the barriers that distinguish and separate the different spheres of one's ordinary life.

A central feature in Goffman's (1961) sketch of total institutions is that all aspects of the inmates' lives occur within defined parameters of the institution, under a single body of authority. Daily activities and routines are typically compacted into a sequenced schedule and are carried out with the company of others. Put together, these features place total institutions in stark contrast to the basic social arrangements of society where individuals carry out tasks and activities in varying places, with different associates, at

¹⁵ Goffman (1961) uses the term "inmates" to refer to individuals residing inside total institutions.

fluctuating levels of authority, and without an overall externally imparted plan. Thus, while in the everyday world we are able to form barriers for our various life facets and activities, in total institutions, these internal barriers that separate the different rounds of life are collapsed. For this reason, Goffman (1961) conceptualizes total institutions as social hybrids as they are simultaneously part residential and part formal establishments. Given these characteristics, Goffman (1961) describes these establishments as, “a natural experiment on what can be done to the self,” (p. 12).

By considering the inmate world¹⁶ in total institutions, Goffman (1961) develops important concepts that relate to the self, which build off his previous work stemming from *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life* (1959). In line with his symbolic interactionism approach, Goffman (1959) conceives the self as arising from the various social interactions and arrangements of life. However, in total institutions and immediately upon entrance, one is stripped away from these social arrangements and interactions. Traces of the identities of inmates are also scrutinized by various procedures and practices, such as through the issuing of identification numbers or confiscation of personal items. The separation of the inmate with the wider world noted earlier, coupled with abasing procedures that assault the inmates' sense of self and self-worth mark the beginning of curtailment, or what Goffman (1961) deems as the mortification of the self. As Goffman (1961) stresses, “here one begins to learn about the limited extent to which a conception of oneself can be sustained when the usual setting of supports for it are suddenly removed,” (p.148).

¹⁶ Goffman (1961) uses the term “inmate world” to refer to the life of inmates inside total institutions.

In his sketch of total institutions, Goffman (1961) also considers sources of mortification that occur from having inmates' independence compromised. Goffman (1961) notes how in everyday life, "...actions will be defined as matters of personal taste, with choice from a range of possibilities specifically allowed [and] for much activity, the judgment and action of authority are held off..." (Goffman, 1961, p.38). However, in total institutions, there is the continuous and constant prescription, judgment, and sanctioning of a person's line of behaviour. In turn, inmates are limited in their capacity to act independently or otherwise express their agency¹⁷. Accompanying this disruption of the usual relationship between individuals and their acts, inmates further experience the mortification of the self from the obligation to request permission for carrying out tasks or performing actions which, outside of total institutions, individuals perform through their personal autonomy (Goffman, 1961). This obligation of requesting permission places the inmates in a submissive, suppliant role where they are unable to freely act and perform different tasks. In turn, "The autonomy of the act itself is violated," (Goffman, 1961, p.38).

The overall regimented environment of total institutions limits the degree in which self-determination, autonomy, and freedom of action can be exercised. As such, restrictions to the agentic self, combined with the absence of normal social interaction, "...can produce in the inmates a terror of feeling radically demoted..." (Goffman, 1961, p.43). However, Goffman's theorization of total institutions goes beyond encapsulating

¹⁷ While interpreted diversely within the social sciences (Campbell, 2009), agency may be viewed as, "the ability of actors to operate independently of the determining constraints of social structure" (Calhoun 2002, p. 7).

the limits and restrictions characterizing these establishments. In his theorization, Goffman also recognizes the non-total nature of these establishments and conceptualizes the ways in which inmates may uphold and resist institutional pressures (Crewe, 2011). The following section will explore Goffman's ideas of resistance as they relate to total institutions.

3.1.1. Resistance. An impetuous read of *Asylums* (1961) may give the appearance that Goffman insinuates that inmates in total institutions are “docile bodies”¹⁸ completely stripped of agency and autonomy. However, Goffman's conceptualization of total institutions is more nuanced in that the expression of agency and individual freedom is merely compromised by the organizational and structural arrangements of the establishments. In *The Underlife of a Public Institution of Asylums* (1961), Goffman advances his ideas on life within total institutions by recognizing how inmates partake in certain practices to acquire elements of freedom and uphold the restrictive environment. Here, Goffman (1961) introduces the fundamental concept of secondary adjustments, the systems that allow inmates to experience forms of freedom and retain some measure of autonomy. Goffman (1961) conceptualizes secondary adjustments as, “practices that do not directly challenge staff but allow inmates to obtain forbidden satisfactions, or to obtain permitted ones by forbidden means” (p.54). These adjustments exemplify ways of coping with the environment and represent ways in which the individual stands apart from the institution (Goffman, 1961).

¹⁸ In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1977) conceptualizes docile bodies as those “...that may be subjected, used, transformed, and improved,” (p. 136).

There are two general kinds of secondary adjustments the Goffman (1961) identifies: disruptive and contained. Disruptive secondary adjustments are those actions and activities where the intent of the participant is to abandon the institution or radically alter its structure, as such creating a disruption in the operation of the institution. This form of secondary adjustment is of less relevance because, as Goffman (1961) suggests, they are of greater prominence in studies of unionization and infiltration of governments. Instead, Goffman (1961) focuses and elaborates on contained secondary adjustments, also referred to as simply practices. These practices are secondary adjustments that fit into existing institutional structures without introducing pressure for radical change, and rather function to avert actions that may be seen as disruptive (Goffman, 1961). There are various sources that inmates use to carry out these practices, as well as places where they can be performed.

Goffman (1961) observes that one of the primary sources which serves as an avenue through which secondary adjustments may become accessible are special assignments, such as allocated work, recreation, or therapy. These assignments may be regarded as legitimized activities that provide the opportunity for an extension of satisfactions. Goffman (1961) provides numerous examples to illustrate this conceptualization, such as inmates who assist with sports activities within the institution and in turn have greater opportunities for recreation, or those who volunteer at the library and have access to new books first. Another source or means through which inmates may partake in secondary adjustments as a way transcending institutional arrangements is through what Goffman (1961) identifies as sociable associations with outsiders. This encompasses those opportunities that yield inmates are contact with individuals who are

members of the public, distinct from both the inmates and institutional staff. Goffman (1961) notes how associations with individuals who are external from the institutional world provide inmates with a means of detaching themselves from both the institutional culture and their stigmatized status. In addition to the consideration of the sources and the ways in which inmates may partake in contained secondary adjustments, of greater significance is Goffman's (1961) conceptualization of the setting or place that these practices may occur.

Goffman (1961) conceptualizes the inmate world inside total institutions as divided into three regions, with the third space being of particular relevance for secondary adjustments. The first space is the off-limits or out of bounds space that inmates are prohibited from, such as administrative sections of the building. The second space is what Goffman (1961) describes as the surveillance space, or the prevailing areas of the institutions where inmates are subjected to the usual authority and restrictions. Central to *The Underlife of a Public Institution in Asylums* (1961) and to the concept of secondary adjustments is the third space that Goffman focuses on, which he identifies as free spaces.

Free spaces are areas within the institution that are ruled by less than usual authority and staff allowing the inmates to engage in a range of activities, with some degree of security. What makes free spaces of particular relevance is that:

All of these places [are] pervaded by a feeling of relaxation and self-determination, in marked contrast to the sense of uneasiness prevailing on some wards. Here one could be one's own man (p.231).

While free spaces may encompass physical settings, such as covert regions within the institution, Goffman (1961) emphasizes how certain activities and assignments may

provide inmates with free spaces. This is especially the case in circumstances where a member of the public takes part in the guidance or supervision, marking a distinct freedom or ease from institutional authority (Goffman, 1961). To illustrate this, Goffman (1961) notes that the basement where dance therapy operated served as a free space. Compared to the lives of the inmates, this space was regarded as harmonious and free from institutional pressure. Beyond the spaces where inmates may engage in secondary adjustments, Goffman (1961) perceives a type of secondary adjustment that provides inmates with an extended sense of release.

Goffman (1961) identifies activities that provide an escape from the regimented and strict life of total institutions, as removal activities. Removal activities are seen as particular types of secondary adjustments that allow the inmates to disconnect from the institutional environment and lose themselves in. Goffman (1961) identifies several practices that may be conceptualized as removal activities because of their ability to create a sense of separation and release from the institutional atmosphere, such as sports or art courses in prisons. It would be limiting to use the terms informal, unofficial or illegitimate to describe removal activities and secondary adjustments more broadly for they often occur through formal institutional programs and activities. Rather, the significance of removal activities comes from the function they serve the inmates for as Goffman describes, removal activities are:

...Sufficiently engrossing and exciting to lift the participant out of himself, making him oblivious for the time being to his actual situation. If the ordinary activities in total institutions can be said to torture time, those activities mercifully kill it (Goffman, 1961, p68).

Inmates are stripped of their accustomed affirmations, satisfactions, and subjected to various forms of mortifying experiences to the self inside these institutions. Thus, the

conceptualization of secondary adjustments, offer inmates an avenue to resist the life characterizing total institutions, offering individuals with experiences or gratifications they may otherwise not attain. While there are different forms, places, and avenues for engaging in secondary adjustments, what these adjustments or adaptations allow is for the inmates to retract from the institutional situation. In doing so, the inmates acquire elements of freedom that coupled together, provide inmates with evidence that they are their own, with some degree of control over their environment. This is important since as Goffman argues, “without something to belong to, we have no stable self” (Goffman, 1961, p.320).

Goffman’s (1961) conceptualizations related to total institutions are of value when researching practices and initiatives in prison because through his developments, insights can be drawn to help understand what role and impact prison theatre has on criminalized individuals. The dynamic relationship between criminalized individuals, prison, and theatre can be intricately understood through the conceptual developments offered by Goffman (1961). First, his ideas on total institutions help to cognize and illustrate life or experiences of being confined inside total institutions. Furthermore, Goffman’s concepts related to total institutions shed light into some of the resisting strategies employed by inmates to cope with the constraints of these institutions. Some of the current research has drawn on elements of Goffman’s (1959) ideas on performativity because of his analogical use of theatre and dramaturgy to explain social interaction (Merrill, 2014; Merrill & Frigon, 2015). However, the research on prison theatre has yet to engage with his theorizations around total institutions. For this reason, by applying the

various notions and ideas from Goffman's *Asylums* (1961), I will be using a new and unique conceptual lens that will help develop new understandings on prison theatre.

3.1.2. Criticism of Goffman's Total Institutions. While Goffman's (1961) work on total institutions is salient in criminological research and has been adopted by many scholars, it is not free from criticisms. Representing the primary conceptual framework used in this study, to remain critically conscious, it is essential that the limitations associated with total institutions is considered. The main criticism evident in the literature on the application of Goffman's total institutions is that this conceptualization is not reflective of the modern prison system where restrictions are less total, and the separation between the inside and outside are less dichotomous or distinct (Farrington, 1992; Martin & Mitchelson, 2009). There has undoubtedly been shifting discourses around incarceration, particularly in criminology where the concept of the total institution may not perfectly capture the image of the modern prison. However, of significance is the recognition that elements of total institutions do still stand and remain evident in current day institutions. Marked by encompassing tendencies where individuals are separated from the larger society and lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life, modern day prisons retain the fundamental features characterizing total institutions (Goffman, 1961)¹⁹. Parallel to Goffman's illustration of the total institution, the modern prison remains to be conceptualized by criminologists as fundamentally confining (Hancock & Jewkes, 2011; Carlen, 2005; Crewe, 2011). Many scholars, such as Crewe (2011) have

¹⁹ Aside from institutional characteristics, tedious measures are taken for a member of the public to gain institutional entry/access, as will be explored in the proceeding chapter.

suggested that although prison may be less directly oppressive today, the prison experience remains gripping, and in some ways, “tighter” than before (p.524)²⁰.

As a way of recasting Goffman’s conceptualization of total institutions, Davies (1989) proposes the view of “open” and “closed” total institutions, to encompass varying degrees of formal administration. However, in *Asylums*, Goffman (1961) makes clear that the characteristics, features, and practices are not present to the same degree nor are they exclusive to total institutions. As Goffman (1961) elucidates:

Every institution captures something of the time and interest of its members and provides something of a world for them; in brief every institution has encompassing tendencies. When we review the different institutions in our Western society, we find some that are encompassing to a degree discontinuously greater than the ones next in line (p.4).

This differing level of institutional regimentation or totality that Goffman considers is reflected in Canada's correctional setting where prisons vary in levels of security, ranging from maximum, medium, and minimum security. Thus, Goffman’s (1961) theoretical understanding on total institutions remains a fruitful framework in the current study where I am considering an initiative taking place inside a prison. Alongside Goffman’s (1961) ideas, in order to develop a holistic conceptual framework of the prison context, the following section will detail the theoretical conceptualizations around the prison social setting and culture.

3.2 Prison Social Context: Inmate Culture

In order to develop a comprehensive framework for the analysis of the role and

²⁰ Mirroring Foucault’s (1977) notion of disciplinary power being a “...penetrative means for ensuring penal control” (p.510), Crewe (2011) offers a full discussion on how modern prisons may be tighter because of contemporary penal practices introducing further pains and frustrations.

impact that theatre has on the lives of criminalized individuals, it is essential to consider the social aspect of prison. Theoretical underpinnings around prison inmate culture, ethos, or as Crewe (2009) describes, the “social world” of prison, is a valuable perspective to adopt as the experiences of participants with prison theatre are likely to be conceptualized and defined against the normative social context of prison. Prison can be seen as a microcosm society, characterized by norms, rules, and expectations. While the institution fundamentally mandates the life of prisoners—as Goffman (1961) would assert—it is essential to recognize that prison life is also largely shaped by the social and normative behaviour set out by the prisoners themselves. In prison, narratives and expectations are set out about how one should behave, known as the prison inmate culture²¹. Despite the covert and unofficial status of the inmate culture, it is an aspect of prison life that is widely understood, enforced, and reproduced by inmates (Haney, 2011).

The theoretical consideration of the inmate culture began with Donald Clemmer’s (1940) investigation of the inmate community in his pioneering work, *The Prison Community*. Clemmer (1940) introduces the term *prisonization* to describe, “...the taking on in greater or less degree of the folkways, mores, customs, and general culture of the penitentiary” (p.270). Similar to Goffman’s theorizations on total institutions and the accompanied mortification of the self, Clemmer (1940) also perceives how prisonization, or the socialization process into the inmate culture, creates personal disruptions for the inmates as they begin to assume the passivity attached with their role as inmates (Gillespie, 2002). Within the penological literature, it is widely conceptualized that notions of masculinity are also inherently entrenched and embedded within the inmate

²¹ The literature also refers to this as the con code, the inmate code, the prison code or the prison culture.

culture and social system (Britton 2003; Crewe, 2014; De Viggiani, 2012; Evans & Wallace, 2008; Jewkes, 2005; Newton 1994; Phillips, 2001; Ricciardelli, 2015; Sykes, 1958). More specifically, the behaviors, attitudes, and values associated with the inmate culture are molded around dominant displays of masculinity as well as an exaggerated version of it.

3.2.1. Prison Masculinities. Raewyn Connell's (1995) seminal development of hegemonic masculinity stands as the most enduring and widely recognized theorization for understanding the inmate prison culture. Hegemony refers to the, "cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life" (Connell, 1995, p. 77). Applied to the study of masculinity, hegemonic masculinity is understood to be the socially idealized expression of manhood (Connell, 1987; Messerschmidt, 1993; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). For Connell (1995) masculinity is hierarchically and relationally constituted, with hegemonic masculinity representing the revered narrative of manhood, which overrides subordinate expressions²². While hegemonic masculinity is malleable in the sense that the idealized version of masculinity may vary depending on the social context, there are central features that remain relatively constant. Of many characteristics, some of the principal qualities of hegemonic masculinity include displays of aggression, independence, dominance, power, and heterosexuality, features which are defining to the inmate culture (Connell, 1995, Karp, 2010).

Scholars such as Sabo (2001) have theorized that the uni-sex environment of prison amplifies hierarchical relations that both fuel and reproduce hegemonic ideals (as cited in Ricciardelli, 2015). As has been routinely supported in the literature, displays of

²² Masculinity is stratified according to various factors such as race, social class, physicality, and sexuality (Connell, 2005).

physical domination, confrontation, aggression, and heterosexuality are associated with seniority and respect within the inmate culture (Crewe et al, 2014; Ricciardelli, 2015; Ricciardelli, Maier & Hannah-Moffat, 2015; Sabo, Kupers & London, 2001; Seymour, 2003). These valued masculine features manifest and are demonstrated in various ways, such as by excessive engagement in physical activities and weight lifting (Nandi, 2002; Sabo, 2001) or by inmates maintaining emotional robustness and confrontation in the face of conflict (De Viggiani, 2012; Kupers, 2001; Ricciardelli et al., 2015). As with the hegemonic masculinity, independence and self-reliance is also valued in the inmate culture, where resorting to assistance from prison authority in the face of conflict is seen as a violation to the prestige of the prison inmate culture (Sykes & Messinger, 1960; Toch 1998). The pecking order or social hierarchy of criminal offences in the inmate culture is also recognized as being arranged around the masculine ideal (Hsu-Fu, 2005; Karp, 2010; Ricciardelli, 2014a; Ricciardelli, 2014b; Sabo et al., 2001; Sim 1994). In this respect, inmates associated with crimes that insinuate toughness, such as organized crime or murder, are seen as having higher status than those inmates associated with sexual offences or crimes involving those who are vulnerable, such as women or children (Crewe, 2009; Jewkes 2005; Sapp & Vaughn 1989; Sim, 1994; Wooden & Parker, 1982)

The inmate culture and the social context of prison can undoubtedly be seen as linked by the “umbilical cord of masculinity” portrayed in the larger society (Sim, 1994, p. 115) However, as understood by Messerschmidt (2001), displays of masculinity are significantly dependent on the particular circumstances and setting in which it they are displayed. In prison where masculinity is continuously contested and the opportunities for prisoners to assert their masculine status is limited, the expression becomes redefined into

an intensified version of the hegemonic ideal (Bandyopadhyay 2006; Haney, 2011; Karp, 2010; Phillips, 2001; Ricciardelli, 2014a; Rymhs, 2012; Toch, 1998). The inmate culture has been observed and conceptualized to enforce an intensified or exaggerated version of masculinity, known as hyper-masculinity (Jewkes, 2005; Karp, 2010; Toch, 1998).

According to Schroeder's (2004), hyper-masculinity refers to the, "set of behaviour and beliefs characterized by unusually highly developed masculine forms as defined by existing cultural values", (p. 418 as cited in Ricciardelli, 2015). As Ricciardelli (2015) adopts in her study on masculinity in Canadian prisons, I will also be assuming Schroeder's (2004) definition of hyper-masculinity in the conceptualization of prison social environment. Hyper-masculinity exemplifies how men may engage in certain behaviors to embody or achieve the idealized, hegemonic form of masculinity. The concept of hyper-masculinity has been used less frequently in the literature compared to the theoretical notion of hegemonic masculinity. Nonetheless, it exhibits particular prominence in prison-based research where it is seen as a means of dealing with the deprivations associated with imprisonment.

The prison social context itself is conceptualized as a distinctly gendered environment (Ugelvik 2014; Sykes, 1958). As identified by Sykes (1958), the deprivations associated with imprisonment retract and deny the inmates the very aspects central for the assertion of the hegemonic masculine ideal (Connell, 1995; Messerschmidt, 1993). The deprivations associated with imprisonment, or what Sykes (1958) coins as "the pains imprisonment", help shape the inmate culture. These pains are seen as arising from the deprivation of: liberty, goods and services, heterosexual relationships, autonomy, and security. Amongst the many deprivations, the submission to

authority and loss of autonomy lead to the closure of avenues that are seen as central to the enactment of masculinity (Jewkes, 2002).

As theorized by Toch (1998), prison is a hyper-masculine environment where an inflated or hyper version of manhood is both promoted and reinforced. As much as the hyper-masculinity of the inmate culture entails the adoption of rampant displays of dominance, physicality and toughness, it also compels the inhibition of other behaviour that are regarded as subordinate or otherwise feminine. The inmate culture objects displays of softness, gentleness, fear, kindness, or love (Carceral, 2004; Karp, 2010; Sabo, 2001; Seymour, 2003; Toch, 1992). Such emotional expressions not only undermine the masculine ideal but they may be regarded as indicators of vulnerability and weakness (De Viggiani, 2012; Haney, 2011; Karp, 2010; Seymour, 2003). As Jewkes (2005) notes in her research examining prison masculinities, "... prison researchers will be familiar with the sentiment that inmates feel it necessary to adopt a facade while inside," (p.52). Adopting a tough, hyper-masculine façade characterized by emotional concealment and suppression shows conformity and is widely understood through the conceptualizations of "wearing masks" and "putting up fronts" (Crewe et al. 2013; De Viggiani, 2012; Jewkes, 2005; Karp, 2010).

The concepts of masking and fronting have been widely recognized and used in the literature as a frame to the masculinity characterizing the prison inmate culture. This study specifically adopts the conceptual frameworks developed by Crewe et al. (2014) in their study examining the emotional geography of prison life. Masking and fronting represent two distinct but complementary strategies of subscribing to prison masculinity. Fronting is understood as the overt display of certain emotions or characteristics to

communicate one's masculine potential. On the other hand, masking in this context is understood as the suppression or hiding of emotions that may be regarded as indicative of vulnerability, weakness, or fear. As Crewe et al. (2014) affirm, when it comes to fronting and masking in relation to emotional expression in prisons, "this is the difference between cultivating or presenting a version of the (emotional) self that is inauthentic, and concealing or holding in a version that is authentic" (p.64). That is, fronting involves the generating and displaying of emotions whereas masking, as its name suggests, involves the concealment of emotions and anything that may appear as feminine or otherwise not in line with the hyper-masculine ideal. Taken together, the social environment of prison can be understood as a unique social context characterized by a culture that is largely woven by hegemonic, hyper-masculine strands. While the emotional geography of prison is dominated by masculine bravados involving the concealment of vulnerabilities, researchers have suggested that this feature of the culture may be manifested in varying intensities across the prison²³.

3.2.2. The Rise of the Inmate Culture. The degree in which the structure and confines of prison shape the inmate culture has yielded two theoretical perspectives within the literature (Crewe, 2009). Early theorists maintained that the rigid and restricted structure of the prison institution plays a principal role in the development of the social world within it. This theoretical perspective, known as the deprivation model, has been largely associated with the work of Sykes' (1958) *The Society of Captives*. Resonating with Goffman's notion of total institutions, this approach conceptualizes prison as separate from society, thereby characterized by its own structural and social system.

²³ Crewe et al. (2014) theorize that prison contain zones where emotional display may be more acceptable, such as family visiting rooms.

Sykes' (1958) theorization on the inherent deprivations associated with imprisonment bears resemblance to Goffman's (1961) ideas as both theorists highlight the role of the prison environment in fostering its own social system (Jewkes, 2005).

The emphasis that the deprivation approach places on the prison context is counteracted with the importation perspective. Rather than focusing on prison characteristics, this perspective underscores the importance of pre-prison social norms and values in shaping the inmate culture (Irwin & Creasy, 1962). That is, the inmate culture under this perspective is perceived to be a reflection of broader society where the latent 'criminal' culture is imported into the institution (Irwin & Creasy, 1962). Under the importation theoretical perspective, prison is not seen as a closed social system as inmates bring their experiences and socializations with them into prison, which in turn shape inmate culture.

While both the deprivation and importation perspectives have been adopted for the consideration of the inmate culture in prison, there is an ever-growing recognition in the criminological literature for the merging of both positions, forming the integration model (Crewe 2009; Lacombe, 2008; Lahm, 2008; Sparks, Bottoms & Hay, 1996). Researchers such as Crewe (2009), Lacombe (2008) and Ricciardelli (2014a) have concurred that the inmate culture and prison experience are, "...neither produced independently of situational dynamics nor in an institutional vacuum" (Ricciardelli, 2014a, p. 237). Both models have implications for the inmate culture and thus, should be seen as complementary to each other.

To provide a backdrop for the theoretical and conceptual framework, this study is situated within the realm of the integrative approach. The integrative approach allows for

the recognition of the role of both the institutional environment and the inmates' personal socializations in shaping the inmate culture. That is, while the assertion of the masculine ideal in the inmate culture may be seen as a reflection of wider societal notions of hegemonic masculinity (importation; Irwin & Cressey, 1962), the prison social context itself is also a distinctly gendered environment that fosters an intensified, hyper-masculine ideal (deprivation; Ugelvik 2014; Sykes, 1958). That is, I recognize that the overall social environment within prisons is contoured by both societal norms and the prison context itself. By drawing on theories and conceptualizations of prison and the general culture within these institutions, a more comprehensive understanding of the impacts of theatre on the lives of criminalized individuals can be established.

3.3 Imaginative Criminology

By recognizing and realizing that criminology is also—besides obviously being a science and perhaps even by now a mature science—an art form, in research as well as in teaching, some of the incessant and unnecessary drive towards exorcising everything that seems incompatible with 'science' may lose its impetus and turn into a peaceful, fruitful and respectful coexistence with the more artful dimensions of the discipline (Hviid Jacobsen, 2014, p. 11).

A further theoretical inspiration or lens through which the data analysis is explored is that of imaginative criminology.²⁴ This approach can be seen as the theoretical crossroad that joins criminology with the theatre-arts. Criminological research encompassing creative topics or arts-based approaches are often regarded as unconventional to the field. However, as it has been gaining recognition in the literature, attending to artistic and creative artifacts, such as film, dance, photography, or in this case theatre, increases the scope and depth of criminological knowledge and

²⁴ First coined by Jock Young (2011) as the *Criminological Imagination*.

understandings (Young, 2011). As Hviid Jacobsen (2014) notes in his call to reimagine a criminology that is more creatively oriented, “all sciences may indeed benefit—every now and then—from deploying a more playful and imaginative attitude towards their studies and research procedures” (p.14). While theatre may appear to be futile from a mainstream criminological perspective, exploring the experiences of criminalized individuals with prison theatre and considering the impact it has on their lives can help shed unique insight to both the research on prison theatre and criminological research more broadly.

As envisioned by Frauley (2015) in his work *On Imaginative Criminology and Its Significance*, imaginative criminology breaks away from positions and assumptions that are doxic. Drawing on Bourdieu’s (1992) seminal development, doxa refers to the taken for granted understandings that are unquestionable and seen as commonsense, or otherwise natural (Frauley, 2015). Imaginative criminology incites the move away from positivism, scientism and bureaucratic domination, all of which reign criminological understandings (Frauley, 2015). Frauley (2015) creatively describes how these doxic assumptions within criminology shape the “interpellative process” within the field whereby criminologists routinely subscribe to the dominant, preferred principles of positivism and scientism, while excluding other discourses (p. 624). This study, in part, aims to stretch and expand the purview of criminology to further encompass arts-based approaches and initiatives. Doing this can help contribute to the resonating call within the literature to alter or break away from the conventional and dominant positivist approaches characterizing the field (Frauley, 2015; Hviid Jacobsen, 2014).

Unlocking imagination in criminological research is not done through a specific

key, nor is there is a definitive requirement of what constitutes imaginative criminology (Carlen, 2016). Indeed, if this were the case, imaginative criminology would ironically be rather unimaginative. Instead, imaginative criminology is an overarching lens or framework that challenges mainstream criminological conventions, approaches and even methodologies²⁵. This may precisely be done through the selection and examination of unconventional criminological objects, such as theatre, that transgress either the disciplinary boundary or the boundary of conventional practice (Frauley, 2015).

The transgression of disciplinary boundaries of imaginative criminology is exemplified by the creative work of Frigon (2014) on dance in prisons. In her research, Frigon (2014) offers a new way of understanding women's experiences of imprisonment through the medium of dance and choreographic performances. In this light, with the body being central to performances, criminology can be further expanded and developed by inserting women's mobilities and bodies into the research frame (Frigon, 2014). Frigon (2014) conceptualizes this creative criminology project as new *performative criminology* whereby, "choreographic propositions translate into criminological propositions" (p.259). Of particular significance, imaginative and creative inquiries involving theatre have only recently begun to germinate within the field. Merrill and Frigon (2014) in their innovative work consider how theatre initiatives offer a means for understanding the experiences of criminalized women. In line with Frigon (2014) and Merrill and Frigon (2014), I too seek to anchor the creative arts and theatre within criminology and prison settings.

In adopting an imaginative lens and approach to this study, I view the

²⁵ This will be detailed in the subsequent chapter on the methodological approach used in this study.

examination of arts-based theatre initiatives in prison as a significant area of inquiry for criminology, an area that is widely left in the shadows. That is, by considering the experiences of criminalized individuals with theatre and exploring the impact it has on their lives, this study will shed light into how arts-based initiatives fit into the prison setting and more specifically how it can operate as a positive tool in the lives of criminalized individuals. Mainstream criminological research tends to focus primarily on interventions and programs in prison that are guided by a rehabilitative and correctional agenda (Andrews, 1989; Andrews & Bonta, 2010). On a more basic level, prison theatre can be seen as a “non-traditional criminological object”²⁶ of investigation as it represents an initiative that transgresses the boundaries of conventional practices and initiatives found inside prison. Parallel to this, the present research does not investigate the impacts of prison with regards to its capacity to target ‘criminal behaviour’. Many of the insights and themes that may emerge from this research would likely be lost or otherwise overlooked if prison theatre is viewed strictly through such an approach. As it will be revisited and further explored in the following chapter, embracing an imaginative criminological lens means that not only will this approach structure the analysis in this study, but it also shapes the underlying methodological approach.

²⁶ A term borrowed from Frauley (2015, p.627)

Chapter 4: Methodology

Introduction

In order to gain an understanding of the impact that prison theatre initiatives have on the lives of criminalized individuals, I conducted an exploratory case study on Canada's only inmate-run prison theatre, WHoS. This chapter provides a detailed account of the methodology used for this research study. First, I will begin by outlining the ontological and epistemological assumptions that underpin this research study, in addition to the methodological approach adopted. Following this, I will unfold the various facets of the data collection process by presenting the study population, outlining the recruitment procedures, as well as detailing the interview process and my site visit to WHoS. Subsequently, I will explain the analysis process by explicating the approach and techniques used to make sense of the data. Next, I will shed light on issues related to reflexivity and reflexive practice by offering a behind the scenes look on how I situate myself within the study while also highlighting ethical procedures and precautions that are fundamental to the research process. Finally, this chapter concludes with a presentation of the participants involved in this study.

4.1 Positioning: Ontology, Epistemology, and Voice

Different paradigms offer unique perspectives for interpreting knowledge, with each characterized by a unique set of ontological, epistemological, and methodological dimensions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). With the fundamental focus of building an understanding on the impact that theatre has on the lives of criminalized individuals, this study is situated within the constructivist paradigm. Research guided by this paradigm aims to develop understandings from the perspectives or socially constructed realities of

individuals (Glesne, 2010). Guided by this positioning, this study is premised in a relativist ontological belief that recognizes knowledge as being both setting and context bound (Glesne, 2010; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). That is, rather than the existence of one universal truth, I instead recognize that there are multiple realities, all of which are constructed on the basis of our lived experiences and social interactions. A relativist view links well with this research study because it is through the individual perspectives and unique experiences of the participants that I am exploring the impact of theatre. In turn, I assume that the findings in this study do not produce one generalizable truth, but rather represent the realities of the participants who either are or have been involved with WHoS.

Corresponding to the constructivist approach, this research study is reinforced with a subjectivist epistemological standpoint. As Guba and Lincoln (1994) assert, the constructivist paradigm is subjectivist in that knowledge is seen as constructed throughout the research process. I recognize that the perspectives and experiences of the participants, as well as myself as the researcher, will undoubtedly influence the knowledge and understandings that are produced in this study (Brown, 1996; Guba & Lincoln, 1994)²⁷. In turn, while the research may be understood as a co-creation of knowledge between the participants and myself, I attempt to foreground the voices of the participants and present them as authentically as possible throughout this study (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006).

The role of voice is imperative when working in the constructivist paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Correspondingly, the concept of voice is central to this study

²⁷ A full discussion on how I recognize my subjectivity is provided later in this chapter in section 4.5 on Reflexivity.

where I am principally attending to the experiences of the participants in order to gain an understanding of the impact of theatre on the lives of criminalized individuals. As both a criminology student and researcher, I am deeply aware of how the voices, perspectives, and experiences of criminalized individuals are latent and often overlooked in research. This is particularly the case for incarcerated individuals as access to this population is fundamentally limited and restricted (Ricciardelli, 2014b; Schlosser, 2008). As exemplified in Chapter 1, the academic literature on prison theatre is no exception to this. With the recognition that agency or voice cannot inherently be taken away or given to individuals, my aim in this study is not to fundamentally “give” voice to the participants (Ezzy, 2002). Instead, through this study, I am allowing the voices of criminalized individuals to be heard. Therefore, an underlying premise of this study is to bring the experiences of criminalized individuals to the front stage of criminological research.

4.1.1. Defining Criminalized Individuals. With the notion of *criminalized individuals* used throughout this research study, it is important to explain the meaning behind this term and clarify the reasons why I have chosen to use it. In the context of this study, I use criminalized individuals to describe those who are in conflict with the law and have experience of being incarcerated. More specifically, this conceptualization captures the participants in this study, which include incarcerated WHoS participants and former WHoS participants who are no longer incarcerated. Rather than adopting the dominant discourse of describing this population as ‘criminals’ or ‘offenders’, I have explicitly chosen to describe the participants as criminalized individuals. Adopting this terminology acknowledges the social processes and mechanisms that have deemed their actions as ‘criminal’. Furthermore, in line with the constructivist position, I assume that

the definitions and meanings we give to ‘crime’ and ‘criminals’ are both socially and legally constructed and therefore, do not represent an inherent ontological reality. By using the concept of criminalized individuals, I am in turn safeguarding against the use of labels that are embedded with connotations that may stigmatize or otherwise marginalize the participants (Link & Phelan, 2001; Pickett, Mancini & Mears, 2013). As a research study involving participants who are criminalized, utilizing qualitative approaches are particularly useful when it comes to recognizing the voices and experiences of those who are marginalized (Kincheloe & McLarsen, 2005; Kobayashi, 2001).

4.2 Qualitative Research and Engaging with the Criminological Imagination

Criminology as a discipline has been dominated by quantitative research approaches characterized by an ontology that posits a knowable reality, an epistemology that is objectivist, and a methodology that is experimental (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Imaginative criminology as a quality of mind challenges this positivist, mainstream approach to research²⁸. As Young (2011) asserts in his seminal work *The Criminological Imagination*, there appears to be a fetishism and over reliance for numbers within the discipline of criminology. In this atmosphere, just about any research topic or area of inquiry is often processed into the machine of positivism and its associated quantitative methodologies (Young, 2011). However, quantitative research centered on quantifying, measuring, and evaluating runs the risk of being reductionist whereby the dimensions of experiences and complex phenomenon are ultimately, “...lost in a sea of statistical symbols and dubious analysis” (Young, 2011, p.viii).

²⁸ Imaginative criminology as a quality of mind is an adaption of Mills’ (1959) sociological imagination whereby he promotes a critical examination of the unquestioned state of scientific knowledge (Piamonte, 2016).

In line with the vision of imaginative criminology, I too perceive the need to broaden mainstream approaches in criminological thought. With the aim of developing in-depth understandings of the impact of prison theatre on the lives of criminalized individuals from the experiences of the participants, adopting a qualitative approach is best suited for this study (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Hammersley, 2013). As Hviid Jacobsen (2014) describes, “quantitative methods may show the scope and range of a given phenomenon.... however, [they] are not appropriate when seeking to understand a phenomenon creatively from the ‘inside’, as it were, considering the humanistic coefficient (p.3)”. That is, quantitative approaches may be able to capture the recidivism or reoffending rates of prison theatre participants, however they would ultimately offer limited understandings because they are completely disconnected from the research participants. Unconfined to statistical measures, tools, and variables, adopting a qualitative approach in this study allows for a more expansive and comprehensive understanding to be made regarding the impacts of prison theatre.

While imaginative criminology calls for the break away from the iron cage²⁹ of positivism when it comes to doing research, a similar call is found within the applied theatre literature. Introduced by Thompson (2009), the affective turn is seen as rejection of the evaluation discourse around applied theatre whereby the focus has been on measuring and quantifying impacts of artistic initiatives (Khutan, 2014). In his discussion on the affective turn, Thompson (2009) calls for the examination of applied theatre

²⁹ A term coined by Max Weber (1905) to represent the increased rationalization in society which traps individuals in systems of teleological efficiency and rational calculation.

practices, such as prison theatre, in terms of their aesthetic merit and affect³⁰. At its base, the affective turn in applied theatre denounces the overreliance given to quantitative approaches to studying the arts where a focus has been on evaluation through statistical outcomes and measures (Thompson, 2009; 2005). A qualitative approach for examining prison theatre is not only more conducive of developing in-depth understandings, but, in part, it responds to the calls found within both the criminological and applied theatre literature.

4.3 Data Collection Procedures

The following section details the data collection procedures used in this study. To accomplish this, I begin by introducing the study population and outlining the general characteristics of the participants. Secondly, I outline the processes and procedures used to recruit the participants. Finally, I detail the steps and procedures used to collect the data in this study by both explicating the process of conducting the interviews as well as outlining my site visit to WHoS.

4.3.1 Study Population. The participants interviewed in this study can be divided into two main groups³¹. The first group includes incarcerated WHoS participants (current prisoners) while the second group includes former WHoS participants who are no longer

³⁰ Thompson (2009) refers to *affect* as the embodied response provoked by aesthetic experience or otherwise the emotional, sensory, and aesthetic side of theatre. In his book *Performance Affects*, Thompson (2009) offers a full, detailed discussion on the affective turn.

³¹ Community artists involved with WHoS were recruited as the third group in this study. However, given the high volume of WHoS participants, the interviews with the community artists/volunteers were not included in the analysis of this study. This decision was warranted given that the research on prison theatre predominately stems from the perspective of theatre-arts practitioners, as demonstrated in the literature review chapter. While these interviews were not analyzed, they nonetheless provided invaluable information for understanding the operation of WHoS.

incarcerated (former prisoners). With regards to their incarceration, all the participants in this study either are serving or have served a federal sentence of two years or more.

Incarcerated WHoS Participants. This group entails 15 men currently incarcerated at William Head Institution who have participated in WHoS³². Any prisoner who has experience of being involved with WHoS was eligible to participate in this study. This was purposely done to allow for diversified experiences to be captured in this research. In turn, this group of participants includes individuals who have been involved in various WHoS productions and in different capacities. Though each participant interviewed has taken on the role of an actor in at least one WHoS production, many of the participants have other levels of experience in the company, including but not limited to being: board members, assistant stage managers, costume designers, musicians, painters, set designers, and numerous other behind the scene involvements. Of the 15 incarcerated WHoS participants, 6 have been involved with WHoS for one production while 9 have participated in the theatre company for several productions.

Former WHoS Participants. This group includes 6 men who are no longer incarcerated and have participated in WHoS prior to their release from prison. Similarly, to the first group, these individuals have also been involved in WHoS in various capacities and over the course of various years. Of the six men who were interviewed, five had been involved with WHoS for more than one year. While all of the former WHoS participants have taken on acting roles in WHoS, many of them have been entrenched in other aspects of the company throughout their years of involvement where

³² I interviewed a total of 20 incarcerated WHoS participants. However, five of these interviews are not included in the analysis of this study. These interviews were omitted because they were either interrupted or otherwise cut short (i.e. inmate count).

they took on roles such as board members, assistant stage managers, costume designers, musicians, painters, set designers, and even writers. Of these former WHoS participants, three of the men disclosed that they were released from prison within the past year while the remaining three have been in the community for several years. Former WHoS participants were included in this study as their experiences sheds light on the impact that WHoS may have on individuals following incarceration, an area overlooked in the literature on prison theatre.

4.3.2. Recruitment. As a case study on WHoS looking at the context of prison theatre in Canada, I engaged in purposive sampling whereby I recruited individuals who either are or were involved with WHoS. Purposive sampling is a non-random sample whereby the researcher requires a specific target population, given the nature or objectives of the study (Bachman & Schutt, 2007; Neuman, 2009). However, given that one group in this study encompasses incarcerated individuals (prisoners) and the other group encompasses individuals who are in the community (former prisoners), I used different recruitment methods for each group.

For the incarcerated WHoS participants, the recruitment process commenced during my site visit to William Head Institution on October 16th of 2017³³. I met with the WHoS Board³⁴ during my initial visit to the institution where I had the chance to introduce myself and outline both the nature and purpose of this study. I responded to any inquiries the board members had and also had the opportunity to ask them some general questions. This interaction enabled me to both learn more about the prisoners as well as the general operation of WHoS. After introducing myself to the board members and

³³ My site visit to WHoS took place during the theatre company's production of *Antigone* (2017).

³⁴ The WHoS Board consisted of three members, all of whom are prisoners.

explaining the purpose of my thesis, I provided the WHoS board members with the recruitment forms for distribution amongst the WHoS participants (see Appendix B). Those who were interested in participating in an interview for this study were required to sign-up for an interview with the Social Programs Officer at William Head Institution, who in turn scheduled and arranged the interviews.

In addition to this recruitment process, I also recruited participants in-person throughout my extended and frequent visits to William Head Institution. I showed a lot of presence in the institution, particularly in the Program Building where WHoS operates. In the time I spent there, I regularly talked to many of the men and invited them to participate in the study. With this, it is important to recognize that snowball sampling also likely occurred whereby those who participated in an interview referred others to take part in the study (Atkinson & Flint, 2001; Bachman & Schutt, 2007). I am aware that this sampling technique took place given that I had 3 individuals inform me that they were encouraged to participate in this study by others who had partaken in an interview.

The recruitment of former participants of WHoS was approached differently given that these men are no longer at William Head Institution nor are they incarcerated. To facilitate the recruitment process for the former WHoS participants, I reached out to a community artist who has collaborated with WHoS for several years and has directed productions for the theatre company³⁵. This artist played an instrumental role in the recruitment process of this group given that she was able to reach out and connect me with both former WHoS participants as well as other artists who are in contact with former WHoS participants. The recruitment form for this group as well as an

³⁵ I connected with the artist through my supervisor who had a pre-established relation with the artist. Prior to the commencement of this study, I had also met the artist in 2016 during a conference.

introductory, invitation email was sent electronically to the artist for distribution (see Appendix C). This recruitment email was distributed in September of 2017, in the month prior to my research visit to Victoria, British Columbia to conduct the interviews. Individuals interested in participating were requested to contact me directly via email or phone if they wish to participate, or upon their request, have the connecting artist forward their contact information to me. All the interviews were scheduled and arranged directly between the participant and myself either via email, phone or text message.

4.3.3. The Interview Process. The data-collection process for this study took place between October 15-28th of 2017, during my visit to Victoria, British Columbia and my site visit to WHoS in William Head Institution. I conducted qualitative, individual, semi-structured interviews with the participants³⁶. With my interest in understanding the impact of theatre on the lives of criminalized individuals from their personal perspective and experiences, this method of data collection was most suitable as it is a method of inquiry that is not detached or disconnected from the participants. In turn, conducting interviews allowed understandings to form from the direct testimony of individuals who either are, or have been involved with WHoS (Alasuutari, 1995). All the interviews were conducted in-person, as this permits more nuanced interactions and connections to be made between the participants and myself. With the interviews being semi-structured, questions were asked related to the experience of the participants with WHoS, while leaving room for more open-ended, flexible discussions to take place (Balfour & Poole,

³⁶ In preparation for the interviews, prior to my site visit to WHoS I reviewed some material on interviewing prisoners and interviewing men, such as Schwalbe and Wolkomir (2003). I also consulted with both a Registered Psychotherapist and my thesis supervisor for tips on conducting individual interviews.

1998; Van Den Hoonaard, 2012). Interviews ranged between 30 minutes and 90 minutes, with the average length of an interview lasting approximately 48 minutes.

With the focus of the study being on WHoS, no questions were asked about the participants' 'crimes' or 'criminal history'. The interviews instead centered on the participants' experiences and involvement with the theatre company. Interview guides were developed; one for the current WHoS participants (Appendix D) and one for the former WHoS participants (Appendix E). Rather than a strict guide that is to be followed, the interview guides were merely created as a reference for relevant topics or questions that I can ask the participants³⁷. In view of this, I embraced the nondirective method or approach to interviewing (Rogers, 1945). In adopting this nondirective technique, I remained open to the direction in which the participant was going in during the interview³⁸. This meant that the dominant voice and dialogue was coming from the participant being interviewed, rather than myself. My position in the interviews can thus be seen as what Rogers (1945) describes as a "verbal mirror" whereby my responses were often either a mere reflection or clarification of the participant's responses. Doing this and adopting the nondirective approach also allowed me to check and confirm my understanding of the participant's narrative (Berg, 2006; Rogers, 1945).

Prior to the commencement of an interview, I outlined the purpose of the study and reviewed the consent form with the participant (see Appendix F and Appendix G). Alongside this, it was of particular importance that I reiterate to each participant that this

³⁷ Many of the questions were not asked because participants would often touch on them or answer the question through their discussion during the course of the interview. Typically, the participants required little prompting for them to discuss and share their experiences.

³⁸ For a full discussion on this approach and the benefits of its adoption, see Carl Rogers (1945) *The Nondirective Method as a Technique for Social Research*.

study stems from my MA research in criminology at the University of Ottawa. Clarifying that this research study is external to CSC is an important preliminary point of clarification, as individuals may feel more comfortable in participating when the research is not affiliated with the system or incarcerating body (Schlosser, 2008). Participants were informed that that they may pass on answering any of the questions and that they are also able to withdraw or end the interview at any point, without any repercussions³⁹. Following this clarification, informed consent was obtained from the participant, which included permission to have the interview audio recorded. Participants were assured that the interview would not be accessed or heard by anyone other than myself and that any identifying information disclosed would not be published in the study. Two copies of the consent form were signed in each interview, one for the participant and one for myself. For the interviews with the incarcerated WHoS participants, an additional consent form required by CSC was also reviewed and completed.

During the interviews I used my notebook to take down brief notes of relevant information, points that the participants emphasized, or anything that required revisiting in the interview for further clarification. In addition to this, the interview notes also included contextual matters such as the participants' attitude, gestures, and displayed emotion. In order to supplement and enhance the data analysis process, these matters were noted as well any observations, thoughts or reactions I had.

Setting. All the interviews with the incarcerated WHoS participants took place in an office in the Programs Building at William Head Institution. I recognize that the interview context plays a role in setting the tone for the interactions and discussions that

³⁹ None of the participants withdrew from the study or asked to have the interview terminated.

take place during the interview (Berg, 2006). For this reason, the office was arranged so that the desk was against the side of the wall, leaving no barrier between the participants' seat and myself. This in turn helped foster more of a direct connection and a relaxed, informal atmosphere, which mirrors Rogers' (1945) non-directive, non-authoritative approach.

Unlike the interviews with the incarcerated WHoS participants, the interviews with the former WHoS participants were not confined to a specific setting. As such, all these interviews took place at local coffee shops in Victoria, British Columbia. The specific location was agreed upon during the arrangement of the interview with the former WHoS participant.

4.3.4. Site Visit to WHoS. My site visit to WHoS at William Head Institution warrants consideration as it represents the contextual and observational aspect of this study. My visits to WHoS extended beyond merely carrying out the interviews, as during my visit I was able to both observe and take part in some of the processes and activities of WHoS. With the permission of the staff at William Head Institution and support from the WHoS participants, I was able to join WHoS during the pre-show preparations for five of the performances. Of those five performances, I was able to remain backstage during the course of three shows and watch the performance amongst the audience for two shows.

With the opportunity to go backstage I was able to observe the general environment of WHoS as well take part in some of the activities, such as: make-up application, costume preparation and warm-up routines. In being backstage, I did not request anything from the participants as this opportunity was meant to better understand

how WHoS functions, how the participants engage in the theatre process, and also as an opportunity for me to build rapport with the participants. As Michael, an incarcerated WHoS participant mentioned during the interview with him after I had been backstage for one of the shows, “I think the best thing for you, was doing what you did on the weekend, getting behind the scenes and seeing how it all works.” In the reflexivity section of this chapter, I will discuss my visit to William Head Institution in order to thoroughly explicate how this experience shaped the relationship and interactions I had with the incarcerated WHoS participants, as well as how it impacted the overall progression of the interviews.

After each of my site visits to WHoS and presence backstage, I wrote field notes describing the general atmosphere, the proceedings that occurred, as well as my personal thoughts or reflections. While my observations and involvement with WHoS form part of the “data corpus” in this study, it is the individual interviews that are primarily analyzed in this study (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.5).

4.4 Data Analysis Techniques

To facilitate the data analysis process, there were preliminary steps that needed to take place, mainly the transcription of the interviews. Transcribing entails the process of converting audio recordings into written text. I transcribed all the interviews by listening to the audio files and typing the interviews verbatim to what was said, including any pauses, laughter, ‘umms’ and any other paralinguistic elements that may provide context to the participants’ words (Gray, 2003; Poland, 1995). During the transcription process, all names were replaced with pseudonyms and the interviews were anonymized so that any information that might identify the participants was either altered or removed. Given

that the process of transcribing requires frequent pauses and rewinds, I listened through each interview once prior to having it transcribed, in order to familiarize myself with the data. All the interviews were transcribed into Nvivo, the same qualitative software program I used for organizing and analyzing the data.

The interviews with the incarcerated WHoS participants and former WHoS participants were transcribed so that each interview can be thematically analyzed. A thematic analysis is the systematic approach to the examination and interpretation of data in order to identify reoccurring themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2013). As defined by Braun and Clarke (2006), “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,” (p. 10). Given the qualitative nature of this study, a thematic analysis was most fitting given its ability to highlight significant themes and concepts for understanding both the experiences of the participants with prison theatre as well as the impact that it has on their lives. Furthermore, thematic analyses allow for the consideration of latent and underlying ideas within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the context of this study, it was anticipated that the impact of prison theatre may not always be explicitly or directly disclosed by the participants. Instead the impact of WHoS may be implied through the participants’ experiences and engagement with the theatre company.

The thematic analysis of the interviews was principally done inductively or from a “bottom-up” approach whereby themes were derived from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In adopting this approach to the analysis, there was no pre-existing coding frame developed for the analysis. Rather, I allowed the themes to develop from the narratives of

the participants and from what was shared in the interviews. Approaching the analysis inductively was suitable given the exploratory nature of this study—particularly since the research on the impact of prison theatre is limited, and in the case of Canada, non-existent. While the thematic analysis is largely inductive, Braun and Clarke (2006) identify that researchers can never entirely free themselves from their theoretical and epistemological underpinnings, and that all research includes deductive elements within it. Data analysis does not occur in a vacuum nor do I, as the researcher, enter the study as a blank slate. Demonstrably, prior to the commencement of the analysis, I was aware that some themes might likely appear in the data, such as the development of confidence due to my familiarity with the literature on prison theatre.

The process of thematically analyzing data often starts during the data collection stage when the researcher starts to notice patterns in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As I was carrying out the interviews in this study, I began to notice reoccurring themes being raised by the participants. As I was picking up on these themes, I made sure to take note of them throughout the process since, as Braun and Clarke (2006) note, “...writing should begin in phase one, with the jotting down of ideas and potential coding schemes, and continue right through the entire coding/analysis process” (p.15). I used these preliminary notes and the notes taken during the interviews as a reference point when coding the data. To code, I read through each interview transcript line-by-line and created meaningful units (or codes) for different topics, ideas and concepts that were discussed by the participants. I coded the interviews inclusively whereby the coded excerpts were often several sentences long, in order to not lose the context in which they are expressed (Bryman, 2001 as cited in Braun & Clark, 2006). In keeping with the inductive approach,

I coded interview data even if it did not directly relate to the major research question. This coding process resulted in an abundant number of codes, which I then needed to collate into potential themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

During this phase of the analysis, I organized the codes into over-arching potential themes by combining codes that were related or similar in concept. Codes were mainly joint if they had shared or cross-referenced interview excerpts. This process resulted in 25 potential themes, which were then, by virtue of comparison, refined and collapsed into fewer themes. For instance, some of the potential themes either did not have enough supporting data or they were similar to some of the other potential themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Given this, I arranged the themes into major-organizing themes and sub-themes. This process resulted in three overarching themes, with each containing three main-themes. The resulting themes were assessed in two-tiers. First, I ensured that the themes corresponded with the coded extracts and second, that they were reflective of the overall interview data (Patton, 1990 as cited in Braun & Clarke, 2006). In carrying out these considerations, I was able to ensure that the analysis and the themes convey the experiences of the participants and capture the impacts of prison theatre in a way that is reflective of how it was shared by them in the interviews. However, beyond this, I also needed to take into consideration how my role as the researcher shapes the data analysis and overall research study.

4.5 Reflexivity

In keeping with the epistemological position of this study, I recognize that I bring in my own knowledge, experiences and beliefs into this research. Reflexivity, as a strategy, allows for researchers to be mindful or conscious of their own role in the

research process (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; Grbich, 2004; Mortari, 2015). In line with Grbich's (2004) discussion on the role of the researcher, I do not position myself in the hierarchical role of an "expert". Instead, I regard myself as a "learner" in that it is through the experiences shared by the participants that I want to understand or learn about the impacts of theatre on the lives of criminalized individuals (Berg, 2006). However, in engaging in reflexive practice, I have deliberately chosen to write this study in first person in order to recognize that, alongside the principal voices of the participants, I am also contributing my own voice in the construction of knowledge.

Brown (1996) describes how, "...Investigators must step into their own spotlight and with a cold eye, and assess their behaviour and thoughts..." (p.19). Since the commencement of this study, I have attempted to engage in reflexive practice by continuously reflecting on my position in this study and on the interplay of discourses that not only shape me, but inevitably also influence my approach to this study (Grbich, 2004; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). I am a young, Muslim-Canadian woman with a university education in criminology. In particular, I identify as a critical criminologist who often questions mainstream understandings and conceptualizations of both 'crimes' and 'criminals'. Though I do not regard this study as inherently critical, I recognize that many of the decisions I made in this study stem from my engagement with critical criminology. This is evident from the methodological choices I made, the language I use throughout the study, to even my decision to conduct research on the distinctive, non-mainstream topic of prison theatre. Aside from my background in critical criminology, my decision to carry out this study also stems from my love for the creative arts. Importantly, I have not studied theatre nor am I a theatre artist. However, I became

interested in carrying out research on prison theatre because it was a way of merging my appreciation for the arts with my principal interest and training in criminology. Extending beyond how I anchor myself in the research study, reflexive practice also entails that I reflect on the way I present myself to the participants and how I am in turn, perceived by them (Presser, 2004).

Researchers conducting fieldwork, particularly in a prison setting, may often feel apprehensive about being perceived as an “outsider” by participants (Schlosser, 2008). Prior to meeting any of the participants in this study, I found myself having this same concern since I did not know if individuals would be interested in participating in the study nor did I know how open they would be in sharing their experiences with me. This was particularly the case given that my identity markers, particularly as a woman, are in stark contrast to the participants’. However, as in the case of Bucerius (2013) in her ethnographic work on male-groups involved in illicit-activities, I quickly learned that being a woman conducting research with men and in a men’s prison was, “...not a liability to overcome” (p.717). Instead, being a woman may have allowed for more expansive connections to be made with the participants and enabled more points of access (Arendell, 1997; Bucerius, 2013; Scully & Marolla, 1984). For example, many of the participants in this study engaged in deep disclosure during the interviews where they felt comfortable enough to not only share their thoughts, but also share their feelings and emotions. Several participants got emotional when discussing the impact that WHoS had on their lives or when reminiscing about their experience with the theatre company. While it cannot be known for certain, I suspect that such emotional anecdotes and expressions would not have been displayed in the same degree had I been a male

researcher. Said differently, the differences between the participants and myself are not necessarily impediments or barriers to the research process (Bucerus, 2013). Instead, these differences are merely aspects that I need to be reflexive of since they demonstrate how I may be shaping the participants' disclosure of information.

In the process of continuous self-reflection, there were several fundamental aspects related to the way I viewed the participants and the way I presented myself that together aided in the development of an open and cordial relationship. The participants were not only very open to sharing their experiences during the interviews, but all the interactions I had with the participants were very positive. Throughout this study, I maintained a non-judgmental stance where complete respect was held for all the participants. With my research involving criminalized individuals who either are or have been federally incarcerated, maintaining this non-judgmental stance was paramount as I did not want to contribute to the marginalization or stigmatization of the participants (Mander, 2010). In turn, it was important for me to view the participants for who they are rather than defining them on the basis of what they have done. For this reason, the participants were not asked about their offence nor did I inquire about such information—practically since it bore no relevance to the study. Correspondingly, with the focus of this research study on WHoS, many of the participants expressed an appreciation for researching a positive, inmate-run initiative and having the interest in learning about it through them. As Rick, an incarcerated WHoS participant mentioned during the end of his interview:

I'm just very appreciative of everyone coming in, such as yourself, because—I'm sure you've been told it from other cast members and so forth with the WHoS—you coming in all the way from Ottawa and doing interviews, and the study, and the research; all I can say is it's not only appreciated but, I really do hope you have

a bright future in whatever you do, because you're very genuine, and that's rare—in this place anyway (Rick, incarcerated WHoS participant).

The combination of embracing a non-judgmental approach, with the examination of a positive initiative stemming from the participants undoubtedly aided in fostering a supportive bond between the participants and myself.

In general, the participants were very open to sharing and talking about their experiences with WHoS with me during the interviews. For the former WHoS participants, a factor that may have contributed to this rapport is that I connected with them through community artists that they know and that they have worked closely with in previous years. As for the incarcerated WHoS participants, rapport was established through my regular presence at William Head Institution and the frequent interactions I had with the men from being on site for the interviews and also backstage at WHoS. When I would have a few minutes to spare between the scheduled interviews with the incarcerated WHoS participants, I often had individuals stop by the office if they happened to be walking by. As one individual mentioned to me, I had become a, “friendly familiar face” in the institution. All the men I met at WHoS, even those who did not participate in the study, were very embracing of my presence amongst them and were appreciative of any assistance I offered during the backstage processes. Evidently, the men treated me with the same respect and kindness they showed to the other volunteers who were present backstage. Amongst the many aspects and tasks of the backstage processes, I found myself helping out and taking part in the warm-up routines, make-up application and even the costume preparations prior to the public performances. Overall, being backstage and immersing myself with the WHoS processes really helped both the participants and myself in becoming more familiar and comfortable with each other. This

in turn, helped foster strong rapport with the participants as well as an overall positive research experience (Van den Hoonaard, 2012).

To assist in the process of engaging in reflexive practice, I maintained a journal that I took notes in for the different stages of the research process. In this research journal, I wrote any thoughts I had, decisions I made, and also included the field notes and memos taken during the process of collecting the data and analyzing the interviews. Implementing and engaging in this reflexive technique during the analysis was particularly helpful for checking my biases and ensuring that the themes are reflective of what was shared by the participants (Charmaz, 2010; Ortlipp, 2008). Keeping notes and reflections during the analysis stage also helped to ensure I was giving equal attention to all the interviews. In turn, this helped safeguard against the possibility of paying more attention to certain narratives. Thus, using this journal helped in creating structure and transparency where I can reflect on the research process and maintain the position of a reflexive researcher.

4.6 Ethical Procedures, Safeguards and Precautions

Ethical considerations and undertakings are necessary aspects of all research, particularly that which involves human participants. With this study involving criminalized populations, particularly incarcerated and formally incarcerated individuals, I engaged in extensive ethical procedures, considerations and precautions throughout the various stages of this research study (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; Israel, 2004; Van den Hoonaard, 2012). Criminalized individuals represent a population that is not only often stigmatized and marginalized in society, but also a population that is associated with

vulnerable circumstances⁴⁰. Given this and the need to gain access to a federal institution in order to interview incarcerated WHoS participants, I needed to navigate through a complex and elongated maze of applications, submissions, and approval processes in order to carry out this research study.

In accordance to the guidelines and standards set out by the Tri-Council Policy Statement 2 (TCPS2), I submitted an extensive ethics application to the University of Ottawa's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board (REB) detailing the various elements and facets of the study. Full ethics approval was obtained by the University's REB on June of 2017 (Appendix H). Prior to this, conditional ethics approval was initially granted given that carrying out this study also required approval from the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC). Upon consulting with the Assistant Warden, Management Services of William Head Institution and receiving preliminary support from the Senior Management Team, I proceeded with the submission of a comprehensive External Research Application package to CSC's Research Branch at National Headquarters. In accordance to CSC's *Commissioner's Directive-009* (2017), research external to CSC must undergo this review process whereby the proposed research is assessed on a range of criteria. This research study was granted approval by CSC in June of 2017 (Appendix I). The accompanying security applications, clearances and authorizations required for both carrying out this study and gaining institutional access were also all approved. Notwithstanding this process, navigating through the maze

⁴⁰ As defined by the Tri-Council Policy Statement 2 (2014), "Vulnerability is often caused by limited decision-making capacity, or limited access to social goods, such as rights, opportunities and power. Individuals or groups in vulnerable circumstances have historically included children, the elderly, women, prisoners, those with mental health issues and those with diminished capacity for self-determination" (p.8).

of required approvals only represents the formal, procedural ethics needed to carry out this research study (Waldrop, 2004). Beyond this, there are also underlying ethical principles and precautions that I needed to be mindful of.

As Guillemin and Gillam (2004) maintain, "...ethical research is much more than research that has gained approval of a research ethics committee" (p.273). As discussed earlier in this chapter, detailing the nature of this study and obtaining the informed and voluntary consent of all the participants was emphasized prior to the commencement of any interview. This, along with the review of information regarding the participants' confidentiality and anonymity, were fundamental for engaging in ethically sound research. Further to this, in order to avoid any potential feelings or experiences of exclusion, I made the decision to interview all those who were interested in taking part in the study. Doing this led to a larger than anticipated sample size, particularly with respect to the number of incarcerated WHoS participants. Despite knowing that having a large sample for a qualitative study is a challenging undertaking, I decided to accept all those who were interested in being interviewed. This was principally done as it was important for me to engage in ethical practice and ensure that individuals did not feel excluded.

As a way of further remaining ethically cognisant as a researcher, I only asked the participants questions in the interviews that related to their involvement with WHoS. As has been mentioned earlier, I refrained from asking anything about the participants' personal information or even their 'criminal history'. In one of the interviews with an incarcerated WHoS participant I had an individual digress into personal anecdotes unrelated to the research study. After attempts of realigning the interview back to the

participant's involvement with WHoS, I decided that ethically, lending an empathetic ear and slowly closing off the interview would be most fitting. This is precisely because although the participant's discussion bared little relevance to the study, it was nonetheless significant for the participant.

In line with this, I did not view the participants in this study as “sources of data” (Pittaway, Bartolomei, & Hugman, 2010, p.231). That is, even after having completed all the interviews with the incarcerated WHoS participants, I decided that I would continue attending and helping out with the backstage processes of the WHoS performances. It was important for me to do this because the relationship between the participants and myself did not simply end as soon as I had completed the data collection for this study. Rather, there was a bond formed between the participants and myself and so it was both personally and ethically imperative to me that I extend my presence beyond the scope of the interviews themselves.

Intrinsically related to the underlying notions of ethics, when presenting the participants' quotes in the analysis section, I have deliberately chosen to present them in their contextual entirety rather than in short fragments. This is precisely to safeguard against losing the participants' voices or speaking “for” them (Alcoff, 2009; Fine et al., 2003). Despite doing this, throughout the research study I was troubled with the idea that I may potentially be “using” the participants' voices—as is often done in research (Bruckert, 2014). This concern stems from my commitment to engage in ethical research that does not exploit the participants. However, my unease in relation to this was somewhat alleviated by the fact that so many of the participants saw value in this study, were interested in participating, and were overall eager to have WHoS recognized

through research. As Jayden, one of the incarcerated WHoS participants mentioned to me when commenting about this research study, “I would hope that *this* reaches the right eyes to give others the opportunity to not only do this, but also see the positives that come from WHoS”. Indeed, I hope this is achieved through this study.

4.7 Participant Profiles

The following section introduces the 21 participants in this study, which include 15 incarcerated WHoS participants and 6 former WHoS participants. To protect their identities, pseudonyms are used and descriptions are limited to a general overview of each participant’s level of involvement with WHoS.

Table 1. Incarcerated WHoS Participants (n=15)

Participant	
Brandon	Brandon has acted in two WHoS productions and has also taken part in costume designing.
Rick	Rick has been involved with WHoS for over four years and has both acted and played as a part of the band for WHoS.
Thomas	Thomas is participating in WHoS for his first time and is taking on the role of an actor while also assisting with costume and set design.
Karl	Karl has been involved in WHoS in various ways over the course of his five-year involvement, ranging from acting, set design, and make-up.
Joe	Joe has been involved in WHoS for four years and has taken on various acting roles, played as a musician in the band, as well as been involved in costume making.
Samuel	Samuel has been a part of WHoS for five years, taking on various roles such as actor, musician, board member as well as sound/music technician
Jackson	Jackson is participating in WHoS for the first time as an actor while also assisting with set design.
Jayden	Jayden is taking part in WHoS for the first year as an actor in the production.

Michael	Michael has participated in WHoS for over five years and has taken on various acting positions as well been involved in costume designing.
Dave	Dave has been a part of WHoS for two years where he has been involved as both an actor and WHoS board member.
Sammy	Sammy has been a part of WHoS for three years and has taken on various acting positions.
Logan	Logan is participating with WHoS for his first time and is taking on the role of an actor while also assisting with costumes.
Kevin	Kevin has been involved with WHoS over the course of seven years in various roles including actor and assistant stage manager.
Andre	Andre is participating in his first year with WHoS as an actor.
Zane	Zane is participating in WHoS for first time and is taking on an acting role.

Table 2. Former WHoS Participants (n=6)

Participant	
Seth	Seth was involved with WHoS for five years and participated in different aspects of the theatre company including acting, assisting with the administration, as well as taking part in set design and props.
Jake	Jake was involved in WHoS for 10 years where he participated in various capacities, taking on roles such as set designer, carpenter, actor, as well as assisting with the administration aspects of the production.
Armin	Armin participated in WHoS for one year where he was involved as an actor in the production.
Lincoln	Lincoln was a part of WHoS for five years and took on several roles in the theatre company where he participated as an actor, producer, and stage manager, as well assisted in various administrative and organizational aspects of WHoS.
Dylan	Dylan took part in WHoS for two years where he produced music for the productions as well as took part in acting.
Andrew	Andrew was involved in WHoS for about 13 years where he was involved as an actor, assistant, writer, board member, in addition to taking part in various other administrative aspects of the company.

Chapter 5: Data Analysis

5.1 Introduction

At the end of the day WHoS has survived because there are people who really enjoy it, not just in here but out there. It's unique, and WHoS gives of itself more than we give it, it just keeps on giving. Yes its draining, yes its time consuming, it costs money, but at the end of the day it gives more than it takes—and it's a win-win. It's a win for the guys in here, it's a win for the staff, it's a win for the public, it's a win for the arts community—it just continues to grow (Michael, incarcerated WHoS participant).

The following chapter presents the results and analyses of the interviews with the 15 incarcerated WHoS participants and 6 former WHoS participants. By drawing on their direct testimony, this chapter elucidates understandings on the experiences of the participants with WHoS as well as the impact that theatre has on their lives. To guide the analytic discussions, the theoretical framework and conceptualizations presented in Chapter 3 will be applied. In particular, I will be drawing on Goffman's (1961) conceptualization around total institutions while also applying relevant theoretical understandings around the prison social context and inmate culture (Clemmer, 1940; Crewe, et al., 2014, Ricciardelli, 2014a). The emerging themes in this study will also be further contextualized by the existing literature on prison theatre.

The interviews with the participants revealed a variety of themes and experiences regarding the impact that participating in WHoS has on their lives. However, these themes have been organized and divided into three overarching-global themes, with each containing main themes within them. The three organizing themes relate to 1) *Personal Growth* experienced through WHoS; 2) *The Role of the Environment* at WHoS; and 3) *Opportunities* afforded to the men through WHoS.

The first organizing theme encompassing *Personal Growth* revolves around the ways in which the participants experience elements of personal development through WHoS. As will be examined, the main themes around personal growth all relate to the capacity of WHoS to place the men in a context that is different than the normalizations characterizing prison. These themes include A) Camaraderie and Challenging Judgments, B) Emotional Awareness, and C) Comfort Zone and Confidence. The second organizing theme of *Environment* entails themes that are related to the context and atmosphere of WHoS. The three main themes stemming from this include A) Connecting with Community, B) Development of Self-esteem, and C) Escape. These themes shed particular insight on how the features of WHoS afford the participants with experiences that are unique to the setting of WHoS. The last organizing theme of *Opportunity* considers the ways in which WHoS provides the men with a means of expression. This organizing theme encompasses the main themes of A) Agency, B) Challenging Perceptions, and C) Practicing of Skills.

While the themes in this research study are presented into three organizing themes, of significant importance is the recognition that all of the themes are interconnected and related to each other. That is, though the themes are situated under different organizing themes, they are not to be seen as dichotomous. Rather, many of the themes are interconnected and complement each other when it comes to understanding the impact of prison theatre. For example, the themes encompassed under personal growth also tie into elements related to the environment of WHoS. Furthermore, while the experience expressed by each participant represents an individualized testimony, the dominant and reoccurring narratives emerging from the interviews demonstrate how the

participants' involvement with WHoS is part of a collective, shared experience. That is, though the participants have been involved with WHoS in different year(s), have varying lengths of involvement, and have taken on diverse roles, there appears to be great commonality and overlap in the experiences shared by the men—as will be demonstrated. Additionally, some of the findings and themes in this study parallel some of the findings of the previous literature on prison theatre. However, the direct testimony of the participants combined with the criminological lens applied in this study together yield unique insight on both the impacts of prison theatre, as well as how these art-based initiatives fit into the broader prison context.

5.2 Personal Growth

5.2.1 Camaraderie and Challenging Judgments

In WHoS and when we get out there [on stage], we're a team—it's not me by myself, it's a team that goes on stage. And if you forget your lines or drop your lines, the other actors are there to support you ... So ya, as a team we always seem to succeed and that's one of the things I really like about being a part of the WHoS production, it's a team effort and everyone puts in their part, and we work as one unit, and we don't want to see anybody fail. A lot of times we put our differences aside because we are not from the same backgrounds, or religion, or even institutions, and politics inside the institution—like whether you're in on this type of charge—your index offence. We put all these differences aside, and we get together and we produce a show for the public. So, I think that's one of the most appealing things about WHoS— for me anyways (Samuel, incarcerated WHoS participant).

One of the most prominent themes evident from the interviews with the participants and which Samuel's words help illustrate is the capacity of WHoS to unite and bring the men together. This theme is evidenced from the participants' experiences with WHoS in two ways. First, the narratives reveal how WHoS establishes camaraderie and collaboration amongst the men. Secondly, through this connectedness, the

participants responses reveal how WHoS provides an opportunity for them to put aside many of the negative judgments and prejudices they hold towards each other, which are largely rooted by the inmate culture. This theme will be explored through the application of conceptual understandings around the prison social system and inmate culture.

The interviews with the men routinely pointed to the collaborative environment of WHoS where everyone needs to work together in order for the company to both operate and create a production. Andrew uses the analogy of a meal to illustrate how being a part of WHoS entails a joint effort from all those involved:

I use the example of the meal. The theatre or performance is the meal. And so there are people who wash the dishes, there are people who cook the food, there are people that serve the meal, and there are people that sweep up afterwards. Every job is important! So if the floor is dirty or the lights don't turn on, or if the lines are not read, chairs aren't set up properly—if somebody screws up we all screw up, you know it all falls apart and it all cascades down. And so everybody is helping everybody and that's the community of WHoS—not just on stage (Andrew, formerly incarcerated WHoS participant).

The team effort involved with WHoS parallels the findings of previous studies that highlight the unique, collaborative aspect of prison theatre practices (Moller, 2003; Tett, et al., 2012; Tocci, 2007). Unlike most activities, which are often characterized by limited significant interactions with others, WHoS allows individuals to come together for a collective undertaking. As Thomas highlights:

There are a lot of people that stay in their rooms and do nothing—and they've been doing it since probably max and medium [security institutions]—because they are so insular. There is not a lot of interaction other than probably sports, card playing, and things like that. And so WHoS is a totally different thing, it's a different beast in itself; everyone gets together and produces something that's creative (Thomas, incarcerated WHoS participant).

The men involved in WHoS collaborate and are brought together by the unison goal of putting on a production. The connectedness characterizing the men's experiences

with WHoS resonate with the understandings developed from the case studies of Tett et al. (2012) regarding the interconnections and relationships that theatre practices help foster amongst individuals. As Joe describes:

The entire process of WHoS brings people together- not just the performance: That's what WHoS does—like this play didn't start a month ago, this play started right after last Christmas. They started to have meetings, ideas and playing silly games... but by doing all that, that's what brings people together (Joe).

Kevin elaborates on this when he speaks of the relationships that are formed through WHoS:

One thing I like is the guys that I met here through WHoS is that you get to know them at a different level. You don't get to know them as, "I sold this much drugs, made this amount of money"—you connect at a different level. You get to know them like "Hey do you remember when we did this show and we went through this, and we did this?"(Kevin, incarcerated WHoS participant).

These accounts shed light on the connections and bonds that are formed amongst individuals when they are taking part in the theatre company. The participants underscore the significance of being able to connect with others on an initiative that is prosocial and positive. Several participants, such as Kevin, make note of how the majority of their teamwork and relationships were often negatively centered. For example, Lincoln, a formerly incarcerated WHoS participant, reflects on how his best relationships were often brought with drugs and negative "criminal minded" individuals but, that with WHoS, he was given people who were set to one main focal goal, that everyone can agree on which he describes as, "...a good show and good times".

Being backstage during the preparation of the shows, I found my experience and observations to echo the narrative of the participants around the camaraderie of WHoS. I immediately noticed how many of the men were routinely and thoughtfully helping each other out with make-up application, costume preparation, and even feedback and line

rehearsing. The continuous cordial occurrences that I witnessed backstage at WHoS are demonstrative of the collaborative and comradeship that are woven in the participants' accounts.

Interestingly, the group dynamics at WHoS vary each year given the involvement of different participants and directors. For example, some of the men express how certain directors are able to foster and promote a familial group atmosphere more so than others. In his reflections on the ritual of one year's production where the director had everyone hold hands and say appreciation statements prior to the WHoS show, Dave, an incarcerated WHoS participant, describes how, "...during those moments there was a real sense of community and transcending of prison politics, and criminal past—all this..." While some participants describe the communal atmosphere as being transitory or limited to context of WHoS, many of the men typically spoke of the extension of these bonds. Individuals who take on similar acting roles, work on parts of the set together, or are involved in the same WHoS productions over the years often express the cultivation of rapport and friendships amongst each other. Given their mutual involvement with WHoS, former WHoS participants often spoke of the continuation of the friendships they developed through WHoS being carried over on to the outside.

While the alliance associated with creating theatre and being a part of WHoS is, as Jake describes, "...closer camaraderie than you ever would find in any other prison setting," working with others and having to collaborate is evidently not an easy or harmonious process. The men continually voiced and shared the difficulty and challenges of having to negotiate and work with others as a cohesive group. As Jayden, an incarcerated WHoS participant explains, "there are some people that are very rough

around the edges and it's sometimes really hard to be around them, but you're just like, I got to let it go for things to work." In having to work as a group, the participants share a host of challenges that arise in WHoS that the men try to work through, such as individuals falling short of their tasks or individuals not being responsive to feedback. However, the men routinely express how the collectivist nature of WHoS that necessitates them to work through and overcome these interpersonal obstacles has proven to be an invaluable experience for them. Sammy speaks to this when he conveys the patience he has developed from having to work with others:

For myself, establishing more of that patience and communicating with people and not getting aggressive—I think that was a lesson for me. It is—especially in a prison setting, you know what I mean, it can get pretty fucking stupid over nothing, people start acting very immature. You can tell when a lot of guys are having difficulty working with people (Sammy, incarcerated WHoS participant).

Seth, a formerly incarcerated WHoS participant, further highlights this when he explains how the cooperation and teamwork he developed from his experience with WHoS resonates with him to this day; "WHoS made me understand that life is a team game, you got to work together. And now, even when I'm working, I ask the other guys what do you think of this? I never did that before!"

Beyond bringing individuals together where they can collectively be a part of a team, the collaborative nature of WHoS frames an environment where the men are able to challenge and put aside many of their judgments and intolerances towards each other. In working on a unified goal and purpose, the men express how they are compelled to come together and not let their differences overshadow the theatre devising process of WHoS. Brandon expresses how WHoS helped him look past his negative views towards those around him:

As much as I want you to not view me as a monster, I will take my own judgments and look at the person beside me and judge him. And WHoS has really kind of forced my hand to look at that...either I can hold on to my own judgments and not really be a team player, or I could put that aside and be productive and be something positive in WHoS. I don't want to hinder the WHoS process at all, and that means I had to put down some of the judgments that I carry (Brandon, incarcerated WHoS participant).

In discussing the presence of intolerances towards each other as well as the challenges they must in turn negotiate through, the men's narratives continually reveal how many of these preconceived judgments towards each other stem from the social normative context of prison. As such, through these discussions, it is helpful to draw on the theoretical underpinnings on the "social world" of prison for the development of nuanced understandings (Crewe, 2009).

Throughout the interviews, the participants allude to the presence of what they identify as "prison culture", "prison politics" or the "con code". While multi-faceted, the participants often explicate tensions and difficulties in having to associate with the "different classes of inmates," which they explain as relating to different offences. This resembles the pecking order of the inmate culture in prisons that have been identified in previous studies done by Karp (2010), Jewkes (2005) and Sabo, Kupers, and London (2001). While the normative culture of prisoners tends to reinforce and perpetuate an environment where interpersonal relations are often based on differences, hierarchies and 'criminal' past, WHoS offers an opportunity for them to begin to break the intolerances and prejudices they hold towards each other, which are moulded by the con code or inmate culture. As Brandon explains:

Being able to work or having to work with some of the men that I was working with, you know really challenged me on my willingness to hang on to a lot of the con code that I carry. Like I'm not able to put it all down today, I've been in for almost 25 years—but I don't want to believe in the con code anymore!...So it

really forced me to look at that, and the value of hanging on to those values. Sometimes when you've done something in a certain way for an extended period of time, its just hard to put it down—even when you've grown beyond it, its just hard to put down- you know the first thing that comes to your mouth is some sort of lash, some sort of criticism. So, it was difficult not to be that way, especially when one is a child molester, one raped—it's difficult, so it really forced me to challenge how far I wanted to carry that. So, this is a huge step forward for me, to just really not judge them anymore (Brandon, incarcerated WHoS participant).

Brandon's involvement reveals a shared experience expressed amongst the men, which is the difficulty of having to put aside their judgments and views. The normalization of the participants to the "con code" or culture in prison is illustrative of Clemmer's (1940) theoretical understanding of prisonization. Through their incarceration, the men have come to adopt and accept the views that are enforced and perpetuated by the prison culture. For many of the participants, the extended and long-term experience of being incarcerated makes looking past this social normative system particularly relevant. As Samuel explains:

I think that over years of being in maximum and medium security prisons and the integral violence that happens inside there in the prisons- I think after years of that and then coming down to minimum, I did need to make some serious adjustments. You know you have this bravado of don't look at me, don't talk to me, you're less than me... So for me, in here, getting involved in the play and interacting with guys that I don't really normally interact with gave me a chance to open up and not be so guarded from others, and change my belief system. So those adjustments are slow and they are work in progress, but I still value them and I still work on them daily, and I think it will be beneficial when I get back in the community (Samuel, incarcerated WHoS participant).

In WHoS the men are challenged or compelled to not let their preconceived judgments of each other overshadow the theatre process where individuals are part of a unison team and a goal that extends beyond their individual self. Jackson reinforces this narrative when he speaks of his experience:

I've been in since I was 16 years old and I've preconditioned myself to live in prison and abide by the con code. So immersing myself in this situation it really put myself out there to surround myself with the sex offenders and other sorts of people. But, once I got passed that, I haven't looked back. It was hard though. But after I put all that stuff to the side I just focused on the team...I mean, I even gained respect for some of these men—and I need that, because I can't be looking at people because they're this or they're that if I want to be a productive member of society. I'm starting to look at people for just people right now- as appose to this guy is sex offender, and this guy is this, this guy is that—I'm just like whatever, this guy is my co-actor (Jackson, incarcerated WHoS participant).

In coming together through WHoS, the men are exposed to different aspects of each other that challenge their own prejudices and help them negotiate new understandings. WHoS offers a lesion or intermission to the prison culture whereby interpersonal relationships can be constructed on communion rather than on the emphasis of differences. In this regard, Goffman's (1961) theorization on free spaces of total institutions is particularly fruitful. Similar to how Goffman (1961) identifies free spaces as being contrasted to the uneasiness and tensions found in the broader prison context, correspondingly WHoS can also be understood as a form of interruption to the social normative standards of prison. Dylan, a formerly incarcerated WHoS participant illustrates this when he reflects on the social atmosphere of WHoS, "I was very judgmental, ...but, as the play gets developing we let those things go and it's all left outside of there because that space was where everyone was just human—and we were friendly to each other." The level of connection formed at WHoS allows the men to begin to detach themselves from social normative understandings of prison while at the same time allowing them to recognize the insignificance of their perceived differences. Joe's words elucidate this:

In prison there are different cultures; there are offences, there's religion, there's gangs—all kinds of different aspects of prison. And what I found is that when people are in the WHoS, that kind of takes a backseat—not always, but most of

the time it takes a backseat and it gives people a chance to get to see that we are not all that different, really. And some guys realize that and it makes a difference in their life because that's when they start changing and that's when they start going like, 'ok well maybe there's more to this person, there's better here.' And if that happens for one guy, it's big (Joe, incarcerated WHoS participant).

Evident from the interviews with the participants, it appears that the communion characterizing WHoS helps promote new understandings for the men whereby the prejudices and judgments inherent in the prison culture can come to be contested. While the collaborative capacity of theatre practices is well recognized in the literature (Moller, 2003; Thompson, 2003), the participants' experiences in this study sheds unique insight on how WHoS helps challenge the negative views held by the prisoners. Expanding beyond prison theatre, this finding bears some relevance for the broader criminological literature. Despite the widespread recognition of prisons having a social world, there is limited understanding on how this social normative system can be attenuated. Prison theatre, such as WHoS, may offer a means through which the prison culture can be partially suspended. This is particularly relevant given that many of the participants necessitate their desire to move past the social normative system perpetrated within prison. Prison politics and the overall con code are interlaced in the prison context that the men often express their disbelief in how WHoS is able to bring them together. As Zane, an incarcerated WHoS participant shares, "...I am so blown away that everybody can put their guns down and say, you know what, we're in this together, we're going to go on stage and we're going to do this!"

5.2.2 Emotional Awareness

For me, being able to express myself, the happy times and the bad times— I think guys need to be able to convey what they're feeling, and not be ashamed of it and not be made fun of or anything. And you know, that all plays into the growth I've experienced through WHoS (Kevin, incarcerated WHoS participant).

Another theme around personal growth that emerges from the interviews with the participants is the emotional awareness and connectivity that WHoS helps them develop. As will be explored in this section, the men's narrative around the emotional growth experienced through WHoS is highlighted in several ways. Notably, all these discussions are continuously framed by the men in terms of the difference between WHoS and the overarching normative standards in prison that calls for the inhibition of emotional expression.

WHoS places the men in a context where they are able to engage with their emotions. In acting and performing different character roles in the production, the participants express how they must embody the feelings and emotions of their character, and in turn project it to the audience. As highlighted by the participants, achieving this often involves the voyage of drawing on connections between the character and themselves—which, many participants indicate as being a feature they learned from the artists who volunteer at WHoS. Jackson, an incarcerated WHoS participant, explains how he is able to embody the feelings of desolation associated with his character by relating it to his life: "I projected a lot of things I went through as a child because I can relate to the character in the sense that I had a bad relationship with my father...I know how it feels, so I was able to express that." Logan echoes Jackson's experience when he shares how he sees his character's experience of abandonment resembling his own life story. As he describes, "when I'm acting out this role there is something inside of me is being

expressed through that character and the next day when I wake up I feel lighter...”

(Logan, incarcerated WHoS participant).

Evidenced from the interviews with the participants, the emotional engagement that WHoS stimulates becomes particularly pronounced when the productions are written or devised by the men themselves. A significant amount of the participants interviewed have been involved with WHoS during years where the productions integrated personal experiences or sentimental stories⁴¹. The participants share examples of many stories that have been incorporated in previous WHoS productions that either came from them personally or from the other men. Amongst many, some of the personal narratives that have been incorporated into WHoS productions include childhood memories, stories of separation, experiences with heartbreak or parental abandonment, in addition to the incorporation of elements related Aboriginal heritage and culture. These stories or elements that the men are able to express through the WHoS productions all carry sentimental value or emotional significance to them. Several participants express how the production—including the preceding workshops and reflective exercises used to draw on their experiences, are emotionally “healing”. This is because through WHoS, the participants are able to reflect on their stories and in turn, work through their emotions—which many of them have customarily sheltered in prison. Accordingly, WHoS can be understood as offering a form of emotional release. Brandon’s experience as an actor in WHoS helps illustrate this:

So my role was coming out from a point of loss, the dissociation from my family, from my loved ones, which is very real for me...It was me expressing what I feel about experiences that I've had. I had a lot of loss to reflect on, to lean on. I cried every single show, which gave me an opportunity to show my vulnerability, and

⁴¹ Productions that involved this include, but are not limited to, *Sleeping Giants* (2016), *Here: A Captive Odyssey* (2015), and *Time Waits for No One* (2014).

not really be concerned with the judgment that comes with it. It's a difficult thing to come out and stand in front of this crowd and just leak when it's really not what we're meant to do here. You know, we bark at people, we do whatever, but to sit there and leak in front of people—it's difficult— but that's what I did... We are not used to men standing up on stage and crying, it's just not the norm (Brandon, incarcerated WHoS participant).

Brandon's account is significant not only because it reveals the emotional catharsis associated with relating to the characters and stories in the production, but also beyond that, it is demonstrative of a reoccurring narrative that is woven in almost all the interviews, which is the emotional expression that WHoS permits.

Previous research on prison theatre has recognized the capacity for theatre in aiding individuals with engaging with their emotions (Landy, 1994; Nicholson, 2005). While the participants' experiences with WHoS corroborates with such findings, the participants' experiences in this study shed particular insight on how this emotional engagement and expression becomes of imminent importance in the context of prison. In speaking of the significance of being able to express themselves and their emotions in WHoS, the participants repeatedly draw on the emotional apathy characterizing prison and the inmate culture. In describing the emotional atmosphere of prison, Kevin asserts how:

Sitting in prison you don't show emotion. Like when you're having a conversation with somebody you don't have a smile on your face, even when your taking pictures you don't smile—you don't, everything is suppressed (Kevin, incarcerated WHoS participant).

As illustrated by Kevin and the narratives from the other participants interviewed, the dominant prison culture does not support overt displays of emotional expression. This can be understood through Connell's (1995) notion of hegemonic masculinity, which has been widely recognized in the literature as being a defining feature in the inmate culture

(De Viggiani, 2012; Jewkes, 2005; Karp, 2010; Ricciardelli, 2013). In this regard, displays of domination and aggression are reinforced and perpetrated while exhibitions of vulnerability and emotional expression are discouraged. Many of the participants, spoke of “guards”, “barriers”, “walls”, and “layers” that they built for themselves in prison to inhibit or otherwise conceal their emotions. These accounts are reflective of the theorizations of fronting and masking, which have been identified as defining features associated with the hegemonic, hyper-masculine nature of the inmate culture (Crewe et al, 2014). Both fronting and masking may be applied to understand the account of the participants given that many of the men describe how in prison they inflate displays of masculinity— such as toughness, while at the same time concealing traces of vulnerabilities. Karl, an incarcerated WHoS participant, exemplifies the presence of this masculine façade when he describes how, “normally we try not to show emotion, we try not to act tough and stuff, but we go to this place [WHoS] to kind of just have fun and be ourselves”.

Despite the pressure to maintain a masculine façade given the social normative system that is reinforced in prison, the participants highlight the dormancy that this façade has when they are in WHoS. Kevin speaks to this when he describes how the men shed their layers and drop their guard when they are in WHoS:

Guys get emotional in there, they talk about their lives, they relate their lives to the scenes, and you got to be supportive... The guys shed their layers after a little bit of time in there and that’s a huge shift in a lot of guys who have done long time because you got guys that come from very different walks of life and you got to drop the guard... I think once guys start shedding those layers and start being able to feel and talk about their stuff, I think that’s a big shift in a person’s ability to manage themselves (Kevin, incarcerated WHoS participant).

Reflective of Kevin's words and the narratives of the participants, WHoS provides an opportunity for the men to drop the fronts and masks that they so often maintain throughout prison. WHoS allows the men to connect to each other at a personal and emotional level. As it relates to the theme explored previously, the camaraderie that is developed between the men at WHoS fosters a climate where dominant prison inmate culture assumes less relevance and the men are able reveal aspects of their authentic self—without masks or fronts, with some degree of security. As demonstrated, several participants spoke of the relevance of this in aiding them with their ability to understand and empathize with both the experiences and emotions of others.

WHoS can be understood as offering a unique emotional domain to the dominant prison culture. This is parallel to recent research in criminology looking at the emotional geography of prisons and the presence of what Crewe et al. (2014) identify as distinct or differentiated “emotion zones”. Certain areas within the prison are recognized to carry softer emotional atmospheres whereby the hyper-masculine nature of the dominant prison culture is partially suspended (Crewe, et al. 2014). The literature has identified some of these zones to include the privacy of prisoners' cells (Jewkes, 2005) and family visiting areas (Crewe et al., 2013; Moran, 2013). Likewise, the participants' narratives in this study demonstrate how WHoS may also be understood as a differentiated emotional domain to the dominant prison system.

Drawing from the experiences of the participants, the emotional disclosure that WHoS permits appears to offer a sense of relief for many of the men. Having to constantly uphold a masculine front and mask their emotions appears to be a challenge that many of the men face. Many spoke of the desire to move past this hyper-masculine

bravado they put on and point to the significance of WHoS in helping them do so. In considering the emotional robustness characterizing prison, Kevin explains how:

It's not a good place to be for me, guarded all the time. I want to be able to be like 'me', and I don't want to be the guy that's going to be cold and not receptive to a person when they're talking. So with this whole theatre stuff you have to shed those layers and you get comfortable with being able to convey and deal with your own emotions... Like, I always thought that whatever I did or experienced, nobody else experienced, but it's until I started sharing it with people, everyone experiences the same thing (Kevin, incarcerated WHoS participant).

Jake further reinforces this when he talks about how WHoS has helped him with his emotional expression:

WHoS has helped me on my journey to get from where I was when I walked in, to where I am now. Which is being able to express feelings, which I suppressed for years and years and years. You know, it has so many benefits to it. The biggest one is your emotional growth that you get out of it. Being able to trust yourself to be strong enough to share your feelings, and realize that everybody has feelings, and not everyone is going to jump on and crush them—and they will share their feelings with your feelings and it's a way of connecting and bonding. I think that's one of the biggest ones (Jake, formerly incarcerated WHoS participant).

While the participants' testimonies demonstrate the emotional growth they experience through WHoS to display vulnerability and emotionally disclose, it is important to recognize that this does not come with ease. Participants shared how they felt initial discomfort in having to open up or show feelings given that they have been so accustomed to emotional inhibition. For example, Logan describes how for him showing emotion is difficult, but that doing so while in character when he is acting came with more ease:

Well, it's weird because like when you're wearing costume it's easier to do it, then when you're standing there by yourself... I felt more exposed. But, when I had the mask on and the other things I have to wear, that stuff is kind of like a shield where I can just become this character out here and that no one can really see that it's me. So, that's like my false sense of insecurity (Logan, incarcerated WHoS participant).

Logan's experience shared above helps uncover a third theme related to the personal growth experienced by the men at WHoS which relates to stepping out of their comfort zone and confidence.

5.2.3 Comfort Zone and Confidence

What I find it does is it gets people out of their comfort zone and they realize that if they can do something like this, there's not much that they can't do. And for some guys that's all they need, is kind of a little push to get over this hump and then they go from there (Joe, incarcerated WHoS participant).

Relating to the organizing theme of personal growth participants in this study emphasize the transformation they experience from being a part of WHoS. This, as Joe's testimony alludes to, is often expressed with regards to the experiences facilitated by WHoS that puts the men out of their comfort zone. Correspondingly, many of the men's discussions centre on the confidence they develop from being able to challenge themselves through being a part of WHoS.

The men speak of several ways that WHoS assisted them with stepping out of their comfort zone and overcoming some of their personal challenges. However, in regards to this, public speaking and having to perform in front of an audience are the dominant emerging narratives. Many of the men speak of the difficulty associated with having to stand on stage and present in front of others. Andre, and incarcerated WHoS participant, explains the uneasiness of his experience of having to perform in WHoS for the first time:

I looked at the crowd, and my heart was just pounding- like out of my shirt! I thought I had a panic attack, I thought I was going to hyperventilate, pass out, fall down, fall off the stage. Ya! It was way more than I expected. I knew I was getting out of my comfort zone to do it, but I didn't expect that to happen to me...But now, I look up to the light, pretend nobody is there and I get through it.

It is getting better. I'm not as nervous, it still kind of happens but it is a lot better than the first time (Andre, incarcerated WHoS participant).

The majority of participants spoke of the difficulty of having to go up on stage and perform. This appears to be a shared experience for most of the men interviewed, regardless of their respective roles in WHoS, be it acting, dancing, or playing in the band. Many participants express how the first performance is particularly difficult because the production is performed to the prison-inmate population. Unlike having an unknown public audience, in the first performance, the participants are placing themselves in front of their acquaintances—making it particularly challenging. Several participants indicate that their participation in the WHoS production largely stems from their desire to challenge themselves interpersonally, as is the case for Thomas:

I had decided I wanted to do that [WHoS] mostly because I'm an introvert, don't do anything really—public speaking or anything like that. So I knew this would be very good for not just my Correctional time, but for myself—a personal goal kind of thing (Thomas, incarcerated WHoS participant).

Dylan speaks of a similar experience when he discusses his participation with WHoS:

So, before I got to William Head I was already kind of ready to make some changes and try something new, and challenging yourself in healthy challenges. So, when I was thinking about the play, I was like ok well this is a healthy challenge maybe this will help me come out of my shell, speak, and project myself (Dylan, formerly incarcerated WHoS participant).

Through their involvement with WHoS, the men are given an opportunity to directly step out of their comfort zone and work through any apprehensions they may have when it comes to performing or public speaking.

The participants underscore the importance of WHoS in allowing them to challenge themselves given the prison context. Drawing on Goffman's (1961) theoretical conceptualization of total institutions, prison is characterized by administered and

sanctioned rounds of life. Activities are limited and mundane given their basis on routine and formal administration (Goffman, 1961). However, WHoS can be seen as a break from the structured routine given that it involves opportunities for the men to challenge themselves and engage in activities that are distinct from the normalized occurrences in prison. Accustomed to the ordinary occasions of life inside prison, WHoS gives the men the stage, literally, to engage and work through their apprehension of performing or presenting in front of others. As Michael, an incarcerated WHoS participant reinforces, “it gets us out of our comfort zone and guys take away something that they would never get to experience—more than likely, anywhere else”.

The opportunity to challenge themselves and step out of their comfort zone in WHoS translates into a narrative of personal development and growth. This is precisely because entrenched in the participants’ testimonies are discussions around the confidence they have developed from being able to challenge themselves. Kevin describes how WHoS has been monumental in building his confidence given that it allowed him to overcome his long-standing struggle with public speaking, which he attributes as playing a pivotal role in the problems that ultimately led him to prison:

I believe that WHoS—if WHoS wasn’t around, I would’ve still been struggling with my fear of public speaking. And kind of getting through that, increased my confidence, and made me believe in myself that I can overcome the internal critic. That’s like huge for me right because I defeated myself half the time with my thoughts about ‘I can’t do this, or so and so is so much better—how come they can do it and I can’t?’. And I used to always say that when it came to oral presentations and public speaking....I give 100% credit to WHoS, and [the artists] because they gave me the opportunity to take on a bigger role, to start challenging myself—and had it not been for this, life could’ve been very different....WHoS—out of everything within my 14 years of doing programs, this is the stuff that helped me believe in myself (Kevin, incarcerated WHoS participant).

Kevin’s testimony on WHoS echoes the experience of many of the men in the study,

which is the emphasis on the role that WHoS plays in helping them overcome their fears and build their confidence.

The confidence the men gain through WHoS unlocks their capacities and reassurance in themselves. For Sammy, WHoS has helped him realize his capabilities and the importance of challenging himself, which he parallels to his reintegration process:

There is a lot in here that is capable of doing a lot. Don't have limits, there's always things that if you want to do it, you can do it, you can pull it off. It kind of breaks that fear mechanism- you don't want to live in 'I can't do this'...I can relate it to being in prison—me being in for how long I've been in, doing a life sentence and on my way out—trying to get out *is* not giving up. Try to better yourself and break those barriers—this kind of thing helps. It helps a lot (Sammy, incarcerated WHoS participant).

In gaining the confidence of stepping out of their comfort zone, participants voice how WHoS has correspondingly inspired them to take on new challenges. Several participants speak of their interest in now expanding their involvement to music, poetry, and other creative performances. The confidence developed from their involvement with WHoS enables the men to begin to redefine their understandings of their abilities. As encapsulated by Logan:

It gives you the confidence to try something new that you've never done before. You don't want guys getting out jail angry with no hope of the future, you know. Now they really have confidence to try something else or go into this, maybe they try that, because now they have this experience where you know what, this is one of the biggest fears ever- its public speaking, and we did that, so now what can we do? (Logan, incarcerated WHoS participant).

Indeed, as the case for many of the former WHoS participants, WHoS has encouraged them to continue to seek creative opportunities outside of prison. Illustrative of this is Armin, a formerly incarcerated WHoS participant, who shares how since he has been out of prison he has been both volunteering and auditioning for theatre opportunities in the community.

The role of WHoS in assisting the men in developing confidence resonates with the findings of previous studies, which suggest the role that theatre has in building self-confidence (Hughes, 2008; Merrill, 2015; Moller, 2003; Tett et al., 2012; Tocci, 2007). However, extending beyond this finding, the analysis in this study reveals how in being able to work through personal challenges that WHoS enables confidence building. Being a part of WHoS for several years, Michael describes how his favourite part about WHoS is seeing the men's confidence blossom: "Seeing the men around me grow and thinking that there is no way they can do something and then they end up doing it—and they're just shocked by their own ability. I think I take a lot of pride of guys feeling good and doing well," (Michael, incarcerated WHoS participant).

It is important to note that the personal growth the participants experience occurs throughout their involvement with WHoS as oppose to solely during the theatre performance. That is, for many of the participants, stepping out of their comfort zone and building the confidence begins before the commencement of the public performances. Rather, it is through the workshops, activities, and continuous support provided by the volunteering artists that, as Lincoln, a formerly incarcerated WHoS participant explains, "whatever that's inside of you that's scared kind of quiets down." The men describe the WHoS workshops, which take place in the months preceding the production to be the warm-up that incrementally prepares the men for final production. It is in these workshops that the men begin to challenge themselves by singing, acting, and performing in front of each other. Seth's reflection of the men during the WHoS workshops illustrates this process when he describes the development they go through:

Here's the funny thing. Its starts off as a room with 25 people, and [they] are all very quiet. About a month into rehearsals, they are asking questions, saying I can

do this, I can do that, I can take more dialogue. You built it from people on the fringes that are hiding in the shadows to all of a sudden, they all want to be on the stage (Seth, formerly incarcerated WHoS participant).

For many of the participants this progression took place over the course of several years being involved in WHoS. For Rick, an incarcerated WHoS participant, performing in front of an audience became easier after being involved in WHoS for a number of years. As he reflects, “my very first [performance], I was more nervous than an alligator in handbag factory I’ll tell you that much. But, this year, after being on stage for a few years, it’s easy for me. I don’t know, more of a comfort.” As is the case for the majority of the men, participants share how they often started off in WHoS with a small role and progressively started taking on bigger roles and greater responsibilities— as they felt more comfortable.

For a lot of the men, joining WHoS is in and of itself an endeavour that is out of their comfort zone. Several of the participants speak of their initial reluctance in joining WHoS. Much of these accounts can be understood through the masculine ideals characterizing the prison culture (Ricciardelli, 2015; 2014b). Participating in theatre can be seen as lying in contrast to the hyper-masculine, intensified version of manhood that is generally upheld in prisons. As Michael’s words suggest:

How many men in the community would wear sequins, glitter, and everything else, and embrace everything that WHoS does in a very male driven environment? How many men in the community would even think about doing that? Not many! (Michael, incarcerated WHoS participant)

Theatre offsets the emotional robustness, toughness and hyper-masculine aura of prison through the connections with others, expressing oneself, and displaying emotion. Many of the men describe how they did not initially think of themselves as “the theatre-type” because they would normally spend their leisure time playing sports or exercising—

activities which align with hegemonic masculine ideals (Connell, 1995). Despite this, the men express their sincere gratefulness for stepping out of their comfort zone and getting involved with WHoS. As, Armin asserts, “It was something I would never do, but I am so glad I did.”

5.3 Environment

5.3.1 Connecting with Community

The volunteers they come in and its endless support! It brings such warmth to each and everybody, they bring such warmth that they care about you! And so, it's like a little happy family I guess you can say. So, your emotion starts developing where you start seeing that, hey, I'm not just a nobody (Zane).

A dominant theme related to the environment of WHoS revolves around the presence of volunteer artists from the community. All the participants express an appreciation for having volunteers come in and highlight the pivotal role they play in fostering a positive, accepting environment at WHoS. Notably, as will be explored in this section, the men underscore how the presence of volunteers creates both a contrasting setting and contrasting social interface than what they are used to in prison.

The volunteers come into WHoS and work alongside the men throughout the workshops and productions. As community artists, the volunteers assist with a range of creative aspects such as costumes, set design, sound, and even acting. However, beyond the technical support they offer, the volunteers provide the men with the opportunity of being interacted with in an accepting, non-judgmental way. Joe speaks to this when he describes the approach and attitude the volunteers embody:

You know, they come in here and they don't give a crap who you are. You treat them right and they're going to treat you like a member of their family. And for somebody that never had that, it's big (Joe, incarcerated WHoS participant).

Logan further elaborates on this:

These people I mean they don't know you but they come in here and they just show you love and it's just like wow! We are blessed to have these people who come in from nowhere and all of a sudden, they're in, they're here with us in the mix and you know, there are lots of us in here doing life- I mean almost the whole main cast, we are doing life sentences—they're not scared...and it gives you hope! When you can come into a place and [be] shown love by a complete stranger, that's pretty, it's pretty ground shaking for some people. I know a lot of people in here they never really had love, they never had acceptance—things that people assume that they probably had (Logan, incarcerated WHoS participant).

As Joe and Logan's words demonstrate, for many of the participants, being perceived by others without a negative overcast appears to be an uncommon experience. Coming into WHoS, the volunteers work with the men as individuals and as artists rather than seeing them as prisoners, 'offenders' or 'criminals'. That is, the statuses or labels that are often attributed to the men come to be de-emphasized through interactions with the volunteers. This appears to be because the volunteers are neither prison staff nor prisoners and thus, share a context beyond the prison walls.

The participants routinely describe the volunteers as individuals from the "outside" or "from the street". Goffman's (1961) theorization around secondary adjustments in total institutions is relevant to this discussion. Secondary adjustments are the systems that represent the ways in which individuals may experience forms of freedom within the institution. Goffman (1961) identifies that sociable associations or interactions with outsiders as a way in which the inmates may partake in secondary adjustments. As Goffman (1961) describes, by interacting and having contact with members of the public, inmates can detach themselves from both their "stigmatized status" as well as the institutional culture. The experience of the participants with the volunteers of WHoS can thus be understood through Goffman's (1961)

conceptualization. Interactions with institutional staff are framed by the view that the men are ‘offenders’ and are under their authority, while the inmate culture and its associated hierarchies frames the interactions that occur between the prisoners (Clemmer, 1940). However, in being unaffiliated with neither the staff nor the prisoners, the volunteers offer unique interactions that are contrasting to the normalized interfaces that take place in prison. Dylan, a formerly incarcerated WHoS participant, illustrates this when he reflects on the nature of the relationships prisoners have with the institutional staff compared to that with the volunteers:

There is an opposition with the correctional officers, even the correctional officers that weren't in uniform; they are still correctional officers so you can't be candid. A lot of guys open up to somebody from the street, but they can't open up to someone else—they can't say what they want because they are afraid its going to go on their file. And if you are a lifer [serving a life sentence], that's going to be in your file forever (Dylan, formerly incarcerated WHoS participant).

The participants in the interviews regularly express how the dynamics with the volunteers are less restricted and rigid while the interactions with the institutional staff are more reserved given the dynamics of power and authority of the staff. Jake further reinforces this:

[Being able] to express yourself to somebody that's not trying to observe you and look for fault, they just look at you as a person. Its something [prison] needs more of... You are always so guarded there, you have to watch what you say, you have to watch how you act, you have to fall within these certain parameters of behaviour, otherwise you could be shipped [transferred]. Volunteers are a huge part of it. They really are (Jake, formerly incarcerated WHoS participant).

This echoes the findings in Goffman's *Asylums* (1961) where he observed greater ease in activities guided by individuals or “specialists” external from the institution. However, not only is the nature of interactions characteristically different, but more importantly, the men perceive these relationships as being more personable. As Brandon explains:

Like I understand we have counselors; I have a PO [Parole Officer] ... But we're not friends, you know its a professional relationship. So even whether it be a program facilitator—they have the information, but its very sterile. WHoS was a very holistic environment... to be able to make these connections with people is what is best for me. It's a big part of what I take away from it (Brandon, incarcerated WHoS participant).

Apparent from the narratives of many of the participants, the approach the volunteers take in working with the men entails a non-judgmental and accepting environment. Jewkes (2005) and Crewe et al.'s (2013) conceptualizations around the fronts and façades that prisoners put on are fruitful in this context. This is precisely because it appears that with the volunteers, the men are able to drop the fronts they so often wear when interacting with the institutional staff or other prisoners. Several of the men spoke of how their interactions with the volunteers, particularly those who have been involved with WHoS over the course of several years, invoke trust. The volunteers get to know the men for who they present themselves to be, and the interactions do not centre on the participants' offences, actions, or incarceration—as is often the case. Rather, these communications entail ordinary discussions, or otherwise those that are distant from the prison context. In a sense, the volunteers are like a window into the “outside” world where they provide the men with a sense of distance from the institutional context. This further demonstrates how the interactions with the volunteers may be understood as a secondary adjustment or intermission to the prison context (Goffman, 1961). The separation between the outside world and the institution comes to be narrowed with the presence of volunteers. As can be understood through Goffman (1961), the social barrier characterizing total institutions comes to be partially uplifted.

In being backstage at WHoS during my site visit, I witnessed and took part in many of the conversations that occurred between the men, the volunteers, and myself.

These conversations ranged from topics on theatre, to more casual discussions on pop culture, to what life is like “on the outside”. However, regardless of what the discussions were, it was apparent that the men at WHoS were engaged with the volunteers and members of the public. For Kevin, an incarcerated WHoS participant, the sincere and open engagements with the volunteers are immensely meaningful because, as he describes, “it’s about making connections, and when you make connections like that with people, you remember that sort of stuff”. For several of the participants, connecting with the volunteers in WHoS is particularly special given their unique background in the arts. As Dave, an incarcerated WHoS participant expresses, “one of the things I highlight, and I highlight as really important, is the community engagement with the arts community and with the academic community as well...I appreciate that kind of opportunity to connect with those folks.”

Apparent from the analysis, the collaboration and interactions the participants experience with the WHoS volunteers allows for a sense of connectedness with the community. While the current literature on prison theatre recognizes the involvement of volunteers, artists, and theatre practitioners, the research has not highlighted the significance of their role. That is, the engagement, collaboration, and interaction that takes place in these theatre initiatives with volunteers and artists have been overlooked. This may partially be due to the fact that individuals who are involved in prison theatre initiatives have carried out the majority of the research on prison theatre themselves, which may make the identification of their position less apparent to them or otherwise more difficult to acknowledge. However, evident from all the interviews with the participants in this study, the WHoS volunteers offer an environment contrasting to the

tensions that typically characterize interactions and relationships within prison. This speaks to the finding of Crewe et al. (2013) whereby the researchers conclude that the education and chaplaincy personnel within prisons promote atmospheres and interactions that are “less prison-like” (p.69). Beyond the interactions with the volunteers being unique and positive, the interviews with the former WHoS participants in this study shed light on how collaborating with the volunteers in WHoS has proven to be an invaluable learning experience.

Many of the former WHoS participants speak of how connecting with the WHoS volunteers has helped them in their reintegration now that they are in the community. This is particularly expressed in terms of how interacting with volunteers assisted them in moving away from the way they normally projected themselves in prison, which, many of the men alluded to as being rather adverse and forthright. Dylan speaks to the adjustments he learned to make that came about through his interactions with WHoS volunteers:

Things like this should be included more and should be encouraged, because you are around society...That's the big thing for me, WHoS broke down barriers and prison attitudes, stuff like that, because being in and out of prison all the time for the past 20 years, its like it seeps this negativity and judgmental things that aren't congruent with becoming a productive member of society. So these things become part of your being and who you are, and you don't really notice it because you are not around people. For the past 20 years I've been mostly around drug addicts, criminals, and prisoners, so the attitude is adjusted to that...So being a part of WHoS was breaking that down because you have outside people coming in, you got to address them a certain way and you can't be disrespectful [because] you have people that are compassionate, and caring coming in to give their time (Dylan, formerly incarcerated WHoS participant).

Jake's experience further speaks to how working with volunteers through WHoS resonates with him:

I learned how to communicate in a prosocial manner. ...[In prison] you would speak in a very forthright and blunt manner and you said what you meant and you meant what you said; and you can't do that in theatre! You have to circumvent, you have to include niceness. You have to do it with tact and coyness and it worked out really well... And I kept thinking, 'well how would I prefer to be talked to?' And again, that's through the people coming in; you don't do it- you can't speak to them like they're a convict, and you get used to that. I was in for almost 18 years and you get prison speak. So, it was nice especially since that it is a releasing institution, helping us set up to release and reintegrate into society. You know, you don't use the F word for everything—you try to not use it at all. Your vocabulary improves (Jake, formerly incarcerated WHoS participant).

My personal experience of interacting with the men at WHoS and seeing them interact with the volunteers attests to this. All the men interacted courteously and with mutual respect with the volunteers. In fact, the men were particularly sensible with how they were speaking with anyone from the community. For example, I noticed that as the men were speaking to me, whether it was during the interviews or backstage, they would almost always apologize or pardon their language if they happened to swear. I observed many of the men do this with the other volunteers as well; exemplifying Jake's account of how the men actively adjust their communication through their interactions with volunteers. This parallels the emerging recognition in the literature, which suggests that prison theatre may help with enhancement and development of social skills (Tocci, 2007).

Beyond the interpersonal developments stemming from interactions with the WHoS volunteers, all the former WHoS participants express how many of the volunteers involved in WHoS embody a support network for them in the community. Many of the men share how they keep in touch with many of the volunteers because they left such a positive impression on them at WHoS. As Armin explains:

Ya, if it wasn't for all of these people that I met there [in WHoS], I'm not saying I'd go back [to prison], but I wouldn't be doing as well.... A lot of people get out

of prison and get back to their old ways. This kind of gave me another avenue; it's a support group. ... If you have the right people there, it can help you (Armin, formerly incarcerated WHoS participant).

Beyond shedding light on the fundamental role that the WHoS volunteers have in fostering positive interactions, this theme also speaks to the importance of volunteers in assisting in the reintegration of individuals back into the community. Thus, the participants' testaments regarding their interactions with the WHoS volunteers affirm how volunteers provide individuals with what CSC identifies as a "bridge" back into the community (CSC, 2017).

5.3.2 Development of Self-esteem

For these guys to have that opportunity to do something that they wouldn't normally do, and then have the Q & A at the end, or have people clap for them, that's a self-esteem booster— and sometimes people in here need that because they haven't had much to look forward too (Jayden, incarcerated WHoS participant).

A further emerging theme related to the environment of WHoS pertains to the participants' development of self-esteem and self-worth through their involvement with the theatre company. There are a number of key features that are characteristic of WHoS that the participants speak of that are conducive of fostering their self-esteem, self-worth, and more broadly, their sense of accomplishment. As it will be explored, the presence of supportive audience members and volunteers play a particularly significant role in promoting self-worth in the participants.

Throughout the interviews with the participants, the men speak of the significance of having an audience and members of the public come into watch their shows and support the work of the theatre company. This is often discussed in terms of the standing ovations and positive, supportive comments that are received at the end of almost every

WHoS performance. All the participants express how the engagement and gratitude shown by the audience leaves positive impressions on them. For Andre, he expresses how the best part of the whole production is seeing the audiences' response:

I think that my most enjoyable part of the performance is that standing ovation at the end- like I just feel so proud of myself and for everybody that I work with, like how much hard work. Because it was hard, it was a lot of hours, a lot of time spent here working on it, and then having everybody just really voice their emotion at the end of it with the standing ovation, standing up and clapping—and then speaking to us after in the Question and Answer period and telling us how much they enjoyed it, I think that's the best part about it. Ya, it makes me feel really good! Like we really accomplished something (Andre, incarcerated WHoS participant).

The men who are involved with WHoS put in a lot of time, effort, commitment, and collaboration to put on a production each year. As all the men emphasized, the production entails numerous months of preparation and often full days dedicated to putting elements of the production together⁴². Given this, witnessing and feeling the audience's positive response to their work bolsters the participants' self-esteem and more importantly, their sense of accomplishment. Demonstrating this, Jackson expresses how:

It's a trip when I think about it now, because this has been my life for the past—I don't know 5-6 months. But now, when I take a step back and look ... It's so rewarding, it makes me feel like I've accomplished something. Like just to see the crowd, and when we get the ovations, and they're standing, and the comments we get at the end; it's like really fulfilling (Jackson, incarcerated WHoS participant).

Beyond giving them a sense of achievement, the participants' narratives reveal that the positive feedback received from the audience is meaningful because it is a response that they are not normalized to receiving, given their criminalized status and the prison context. Many of the participants share how they internally struggle with viewing

⁴² This was further reinforced with my discussions with the WHoS artists as well as the staff at William Head Institution.

themselves in a positive light. Brandon speaks to this in reflecting on his situation and the role WHoS has played in the development of his self-esteem:

I've been in for a long time and it's hard to get up every day for why I'm in prison, and still look myself in the mirror and say 'I'm a pretty good person.' Most men are going to get out of here feeling really shitty about themselves. That's just a fact, that's just how it is. Most men get out of here and they do not have any self-esteem. We may be a little cocky, even bordering on arrogant, but in our inner—we really don't feel very good about ourselves...And I think that this, the WHoS, really is a step forward in the right direction. It really is. ...I've never in my entire life received that much positive affirmation and feedback for anything I have ever done (Brandon, incarcerated WHoS participant).

Brandon's testament, which is reflective of a shared experience expressed by many of the participants and is one that can be understood through Goffman's (1961) theorization of the mortification of the self in total institutions. The process of being incarcerated, particularly over an extended time involves the curtailment of one's sense of self. As Goffman (1961) describes, "here one begins to learn about the limited extent to which a conception of oneself can be sustained ..." (p.4). However, WHoS, particularly the reception of the positive engagement from the audience, may be understood as a form of secondary adjustment given that it offers the participants with both an experience and gratification that they may not otherwise attain in the normative prison setting. As Dave, an incarcerated WHoS participant explains, "I think for a large degree there is some egotism going on that kind of motivates and pulls guys to WHoS—and I include myself in that." In particular, having individuals from the public and local community come in and show support is extremely resonating for the men. As is exemplified by Logan's account:

People, in these places and myself included, have gone through times where we have low self-esteem or low self-worth. So, when people compliment you, you sometimes doubt the authenticity of it. You would be like okay, well they're just trying to be nice. But, when you see over 100 people standing up, clapping and

cheering, you're like "okay this must have been good!" (Logan, incarcerated WHoS participant).

Despite the participants' sincere expressions of appreciation and gratitude for having the audience's support, several participants speak of the difficulty in accepting such positive feedback. It was not easy for some of the men to accept many of the compliments and affirmations they receive because it is a response they are not used to in prison. As Jackson, an incarcerated WHoS participant explains, "we don't really get much you're doing a good job, this and that—they point out the things you're doing wrong". Michael's account speaks further to this:

Being in Corrections I think we always hear the negatives, and its reinforced over and over again, the things we've done wrong, what's not right about us, you know things we need to work on. But, at some point, there has got to be some positive there. I have a parole officer who is supportive but I mean, as you've been in for so many years, every piece of paper you get is cut and paste or there is a version of something negative there (Michael, incarcerated WHoS participant).

The participants are accustomed to having the focus often placed on the aspects of themselves that need improving or changing. Given this, a significant number of the participants express how it was difficult to accept any positive responses or compliments from people, whether it is the volunteers, staff, or audience. For example, Andrew speaks to his experience with WHoS where he describes how he was never able to take a compliment because he did not feel worthy. However, throughout his involvement with WHoS, he learned to be more receptive and accepting of congratulatory remarks and more importantly, to believe in himself:

So the play would be over and everyone says 'great play', 'you did a wonderful job!', 'you did that?', 'it was so good!' and I—I wouldn't take credit for it; 'well the director told me to stand there and he did a good job too.' And so I would actually avoid going out. But, I learned over time to accept them; 'well thank you, yes I did do a good job, thanks ya I really appreciate it' (Andrew, formerly incarcerated WHoS participant).

The positive feedback and response associated with WHoS aids the men in reconfiguring their view of themselves. Michael expresses a similar experience where his realization and acceptance of his abilities in design only came about through his involvement with WHoS where he learned to better internalize and accept positive feedback:

When somebody says the costumes are really good, my automatic response is ‘but only if you knew I didn’t know how to use a sewing machine, and I didn’t know how to do this’—I was like trying to talk them down from what they were saying—I second guess what I am hearing people say. So, I’m trying not to do that, I’m trying to live in the joy of what’s going on now and the pride... I’m just learning to say thank you—and it’s like I could have a future in this (Michael, incarcerated WHoS participant).

In addition to the role WHoS plays in aiding the participants in developing self-esteem and self-worth, beyond this, participating in WHoS affords the men with a sense of fulfillment. Throughout the interviews, the participants indicate that their involvement with WHoS is an avenue for them to engage in a positive initiative, or as many describe it, a “prosocial activity”. Jackson speaks to this when he reflects on his involvement with the theatre company:

I really don’t have much real-world experience, like I was 16 when I came in so I didn’t really live a life, so just knowing that I’m capable of doing more is gratifying. And seeing the looks on people’s faces and you know, just hearing from you, it makes me feel like I’m doing the right thing, and I’ve never felt like I’ve been doing the right thing before (Jackson, incarcerated WHoS participant).

Notwithstanding the presence of a wide range of activities, programs, and support groups, there are limited number of initiatives within the prisons that appear to provide the men with a sense of fulfilment where they feel they are contributing to something bigger than themselves. In being able to put on a show for the public to enjoy, many of the men perceive WHoS as a way to give back to the community. As emphasized by Lincoln:

You know, this was an opportunity for us to give to our community, let's be real. That's exactly what it is. Never done that before...My outside community—I had only ever taken from them...So every now and then, you watch the rows [in the audience] and you appreciate these people, and you know you're doing it for them and I got a chance to really look at them. We made people cry, we made people laugh, we made people stand and applaud. And it felt amazing (Lincoln, formerly incarcerated WHoS participant).

Extending beyond the performances that WHoS put on for the public, WHoS donates a fraction of their revenue in ticket sales to a charitable organization. This philanthropic feature of the theatre company is an aspect that is meaningful to the men as it is a way they can further contribute to the community in a positive way. For Samuel, an incarcerated WHoS participant, "...being a part of that process really makes us feel like we are doing something positive for the population and for the community".

The emerging theme from the participants in this study regarding the enhancement in their self-esteem and self-worth parallels the findings from Tett et al., (2012) and Brewster (2010). While both research studies suggested that art-based initiatives play a role in the enhancement of the participants' self-esteem, these studies do not provide nuanced understandings for prison theatre as both studies examine broader art-based programs. Furthermore, the research within the literature does not reveal what specific qualities or aspects of these programs particularly lead to an enhancement in the participants' self-esteem. Drawing on the participants' narratives and experiences with WHoS, this study not only further demonstrates the role that prison theatre may play in building self-esteem, but it uncovers how the positive and supportive environment of WHoS promotes this development in the participants. In particular, the analysis reveals how it is the positive reception the participants receive for their efforts in the theatre company that cascades into the development of elevated self-esteem. In the prison

context where an individual's sense of self is constantly contested, faults are often focused upon, and opportunities to contribute to the community is limited, WHoS becomes instrumental in uplifting the participants' self-esteem and the recognition of their self-worth.

5.3.3 Escape

WHoS was a lot of fun, it took up a lot of time so it made those 4 months go fast, and that's a good thing. It's a big commitment—and then when it's over you get a bit depressed and you miss it but, I look forward to it every year... Words just can't describe, like those 2 hours in the evenings on some days, you just can't wait for them to come (Seth, formerly incarcerated WHoS participant).

Related to the environment of WHoS, a notable theme emerging from the participants' narratives relates to the feeling the men have from being involved with the theatre company. Expressed against the monotonous environment and life in prison, many of the participants describe their involvement with WHoS as being a form of detachment from the prison context. Throughout the interviews, the participants speak of how being a part of WHoS is an elevated, joyous experience. In particular, putting together a production and performing it in front of a live audience is a fundamental aspect of the theatre company that many of the participants attribute heightened emotions and energy to. As Michael, an incarcerated WHoS participant expresses, “the excitement you feel in show nights, we get excited, we're happy that people are coming and the shows are sold out, so that's a good thing. There is a lot of excitement!”

Despite the anxiety and fear the participants identify when it comes to having to perform in front of a public audience, the men routinely describe a significant sense of excitement in the process. When speaking of their emotions and their experience of being on stage, several of the men, describe it as a euphoric experience. As Logan, an

incarcerated WHoS participant explains, “I just feel good because I see the audience’s reaction. It’s really like a euphoria, like your body is charged up.” For Joe, the positive feelings and experience he has from taking part in WHoS is principally meaningful. As he describes, “once I did the first show, that was it. I was in love with that because it showed me that I didn’t need booze or drugs to have fun,” (Joe, incarcerated WHoS participant). The sense of joy and excitement associated with WHoS and with performing theatre is echoed in many of the participants’ testimonies. For Samuel, witnessing the positive feelings and energy of the WHoS cast after having assisted backstage during his first year is what sparked his interest in getting more involved in the theatre company:

You can feel their enthusiasm as they came off the stage and that positive energy and I was kind of like, ‘hmm, that’s nice!’—because I can hear the applause from the audience and all the positive feedback from the people that just watched the show (Samuel, incarcerated WHoS participant).

Beyond the performance aspect, the process of theatre making and the elements of WHoS that lead to the final production are also experiences that the participants associate with elevated positive feelings. The participants speak of the enjoyment and fun they experience during the WHoS workshops and during the processes leading up to the production, such as the rehearsals and the design aspects. For example, when reflecting on the WHoS workshops, Karl expresses how these represented times where the men can experience a sense of relief while engaging in entertaining activities. As he explains, “the workshops are fun, and its a time to let go of our physique, to kind of put something special on our faces and just goofing around, making funny noises,” (Karl, incarcerated WHoS participant). Seth reinforces this when he talks about his first experience in the workshops. As he describes, “when I came out I was giggling, and laughing, I had a good time, and that’s when I really started to enjoy what was going on,” (Seth, formerly

incarcerated WHoS participant). The experiences of the men at WHoS parallel the findings of previous studies that have also identified the engaging feature of prison theatre (Brewster, 2010; Merrill & Frigon, 2015; Shailor, 2011; Tocci, 2007). However, extending beyond the identification of the uplifting experiences, the theme in this study uncovers how such accounts may be understood as offering a sense of release and detachment from the prison context.

Prison, as conceptualized through Goffman (1961), involves routinized activities, scheduled tasks, and an overall regimented environment. WHoS, as demonstrated by the participants, appears to offer the men an environment that is intrinsically different to this. Throughout the interviews, the participants contrast the positive and exhilarating environment of WHoS against the mundaneness of prison. As Kevin expresses:

Prison is a very toxic and negative environment. You make what you want to make out of this environment. ...but WHoS it is a very happy place... by the time the last shows come together and everyone sits in the circle and shares their experience, it's totally joyous (Kevin, incarcerated WHoS participant).

Goffman's (1961) theorization of removal activities may be applied to understand this break in the prison context. WHoS affords the men an opportunity to remove themselves from the normalizations of prison and retreat into a context that is regarded as positive and uplifting. As Armin, a formerly incarcerated WHoS participant describes, these experiences in WHoS, "...get the prison out of you."

Similar to how Goffman (1961) conceptualizes removal activities as practices or engagement that create a sense of release from the institutional atmosphere, WHoS too may be understood as a form of escapism from prison. Many of the participants describe how WHoS has assisted them in coping with the institutional atmosphere, or as Zane, an incarcerated WHoS participant describes it, in helping them "decompress" from prison.

Andrew, a formerly incarcerated WHoS participant, elaborates on this understanding of WHoS:

Without WHoS, I don't know what I would have done. It's stressful psychologically, emotionally being there [in prison], and how do you deal with that pressure or those thoughts, whatever it is. So, some people it's drugs, exercise, hit the gym, running, wood working, pen pals, whatever. So, you have some kind of focus, some kind of hobby—that release valve—and so what better than theatre! (Andrew, formerly incarcerated WHoS participant).

Parallel to the mortification of the self that Goffman (1961) identifies in total institutions, Andrew's account further illustrates the constrictions and challenges faced by imprisonment. However, participating in WHoS offers the men with a way to mitigate these pressures by removing themselves, though temporarily, from the taxing environment of prison. At WHoS participants' experience a form of freedom whereby they are able to experience positive emotions and feelings, as described earlier, which are uncommon in prison. As Dylan, a formerly incarcerated WHoS participant highlights, "...when the show is over there is all this excitement in the room, like that emotion—you don't get that in prison...". The removal or escape the participants attribute to WHoS is similar to Shailor's (2011) identification of theatre practices being places of sanctuary where the normal context of prison may be temporarily set aside.

As mentioned previously, beyond the positive emotions and gratifying experiences WHoS can be further understood as a form of removal activity. A common narrative expressed by the participants is how the participants feel like they are not in prison when they are taking part in WHoS. Jake speaks to this when he reflects on his involvement with WHoS:

When you are involved in it, you are working on something that has nothing to do with the prison, nothing at all to do with the prison. ...and it was that form of

escape. And of course, the outside people that came in, again, they're not the prison people- they're different people (Jake, formerly incarcerated WHoS participant).

Jake's words speak to the contrasting environment between WHoS and the prison context, whereby the men are afforded the chance to take part in an initiative that is not mandated by the prison and also involves interaction with outsiders. Together, these aspects of WHoS further consolidate how WHoS can be understood as a form of escape from the prison context. Dylan reinforces this when he speaks of WHoS:

When you are there you kind of get transported out of the whole prison and the politics. There is a guard presence but they are not involved with it- so it's like ok this is your one little break from the monotony of prison life. So, when you are there it's kind of like you are not there (Dylan, formerly incarcerated WHoS participant).

In Goffman's (1961) conceptualization of removal activities he notes, "...if the ordinary activities in total institution can be said to torture time, those activities mercifully kill it" (1961, p. 68). This resonates with many of the participants' accounts as many of the men express how WHoS gave them something to occupy their time with and kept them busy. Indeed, all the participants express how WHoS is a big commitment that takes many hours out of their day over the course of several months. For many of the men, participating in WHoS helps pass the time in a productive way. As Jake, a formerly incarcerated WHoS participant puts it, "it got to be a time pit because it was a place to escape. When you were there you weren't in jail." Overall, evident from the experiences and narratives of the participants, WHoS offers a form of escapism or removal from the monotony of prison and allows the men a sense of relief from the routinized life.

5.4 Opportunity

5.4.1 Expressing Agency

We are self sustaining, and I think that's the grassroots feature of it...it's a self-initiative we sustain as prisoners... it gives us independence because it's not a program, it's not an intervention—it's voluntary (Dave, incarcerated WHoS participant).

A dominant theme emerging from the interviews with the participants relates to how WHoS is an opportunity for the men to express their agency, or otherwise assert their independence. As Dave's words allude to, the men often describe this with regards to WHoS being both a voluntary leisure activity and an inmate-run initiative. Together, these features appear to allow the men's involvement in the theatre company to represent a means for standing apart from the institution. This theme will be explored through the application of Goffman's (1961) theorization of total institutions where prison may be understood as a context where the expression of agency and independence is both limited and often comprised.

During the interviews with the participants, the men repeatedly note how the leisurely aspect of WHoS sets it apart from many of the programs offered in prison. That is, the men's involvement in the theatre company is not mandated or compulsory. Rather, participating in WHoS is optional and the level of involvement the individual accepts is also up to the participant to decide. For example, many of the men speak of deciding to only get involved in the workshops and the behind the scenes aspects of WHoS; while others choose to audition and be involved in the acting aspects of the production. Unlike the dominant environment of prison where activities, tasks, and programs are often prescribed to the prisoners (Goffman, 1961), getting involved with WHoS is a decision the men make themselves. As Jake, a formerly incarcerated WHoS participant describes,

“It’s not a program. It’s a volunteer thing. This is my leisure time”. In expressing this, the participants regularly describe the limited autonomy they have in the prison context.

Goffman’s (1961) sketch of total institutions is fruitful in this analysis as his conceptualization points to the limitation imposed by institutions towards the agentic self.

The participants’ narratives are demonstrative of Goffman’s (1961) notion of the mortification of the self whereby the vast majority of one’s behaviour in total institutions are constantly prescribed and sanctioned. Armin, a formerly incarcerated WHoS participant speaks to this when he shares how in prison, he views programs as “forced”. Aside from mandated programs, other aspects of the prisoners’ lives are often controlled through the institution, which further limits the degree to which personal autonomy, and self-determination can be exercised. As Goffman (1961) asserts, these restrictions, which, outside of total institutions are performed through one’s personal autonomy, are demonstrative of how inmates further experience a mortification of the self. In the context where personal autonomy is constrained, the participants’ narratives reveal how their involvement with WHoS can be understood as a break or counteractive feature to prison. That is, for many of the participants like Brandon, participating in WHoS holds meaning because it stems from their self-determination and own personal desire to get involved:

I think what it comes down to is I don’t have a lot to be dedicated to in here, or that I want to be dedicated to. ...And this is an opportunity for the men and myself to put as much effort as I want into. ...And WHoS was an opportunity for me to be involved in that way, to put in a ton of hours and effort because it felt important (Brandon, incarcerated WHoS participant).

In being an initiative that does not operate as a correctional program under the broader guise of rehabilitation, the men tend to be further drawn in partaking in the

theatre company. Dave, an incarcerated WHoS participant, speaks directly to this when he reflects on the operation of WHoS: “The public comes in and actually purchases a ticket to watch us, so it’s like a small business enterprise rather than a program intervention, so that’s like important because we are technically doing it for drawing a crowd to kind of sustain ourselves over time.” This resonates with Shailor (2011) who, in his book on prison theatre, also suggests that the significance of these practices stem largely from their fundamental feature of not “...wear[ing] their purpose on their sleeves” like most programs that are explicitly mandated to instil change (p.275).

Beyond the voluntary leisure aspect of WHoS, the men’s expression of agency is amplified with the feature of WHoS being an inmate-run initiative. As a theatre company that operates through the men themselves, many of the participants speak of a sense of ownership, responsibility and autonomy from the institution. As an inmate-run initiative, the men come together themselves in order to run the theatre company. While some of the participants sit on the board where they are responsible for the administrative aspects of the production, such as budgeting and advertisement, others are responsible for putting together the design aspects, such as set, costumes, and props. In doing so, Dave, an incarcerated WHoS participant, stresses how WHoS is, “ultimately an opportunity to highlight our productivity in a creative way that is not totally guided by the institution.” This may be understood as being particularly prominent given that it is less common for institutions to have initiatives that are operated by prisoners. Most of the programs and interventions offered in prisons either run through CSC or through community support groups and volunteers. However, as an inmate-run initiative, the men in WHoS come to be actively engaged in all aspects of the theatre company making their involvement

extend much beyond being passive participants. In this respect, Andrew's words are demonstrative of this when he considers the uniqueness of WHoS:

All the other things were just like social groups, sit in a meeting room. This [WHoS] was a business that was run by the inmates... Ya it is still a self-run business ...complete responsibility of it. If you screw it up really bad one way or another, there might not be one next year. So there was nothing close to it (Andrew, formerly incarcerated WHoS participant).

As Andrew's words illustrate, WHoS gives the men an opportunity to be engaged and immersed in a unique way where the theatre company is actively run by them.

WHoS may be seen as complementary to the aims of the institution as a minimum-security federal prison given that the structure of the prison aims to provide individuals with a sense of personal responsibility. In being a minimum-security establishment, William Head Institution is arranged in a residential environment where the men are responsible for different aspects of their living unit, such as cooking and cleaning. In being an inmate-run initiative, WHoS may be understood as reinforcing the underlying philosophy and qualities that the institution strives to endorse. Armin sheds some light on this when speaks to the importance of WHoS being the responsibility of the men themselves:

Like CSC having nothing to do with it is terrific, having outside volunteers and inside guys that are actually doing it- it's done well. CSC supports it, but the moment you put that tag through it and the moment they're the number one guy telling you to do it, a lot of people will not...Sure they can control everything about it, but they have to let the inmates and volunteers—follow the rules and it will be fine (Armin, formerly incarcerated WHoS participant).

The expression of agency and independence that WHoS affords the men can be further conceptualized by Goffman's (1961) theorization of secondary adjustments within total institutions. Secondary adjustments are the systems that allow inmates to experience some measure of autonomy or freedom and exemplify ways in which individuals may

stand apart from the institution (Goffman, 1961). While WHoS operates under institutional oversight and parameters, the theatre company is autonomous from the institution and thus, may be understood as a form of secondary adjustment. As Kevin expresses:

When you got a company that's owned by the inmates...you don't want to lose that—because this is for us, this is about us, this is about our ability to express ourselves in a manner that we don't have through programming or talking to our POs [parole officers] ... I think if it was like CSC program a lot of people wouldn't want to be involved (Kevin, incarcerated WHoS participant).

Kevin's account on WHoS reflects that shared by many of the participants. Several of the men in the interviews express how their interest in getting involved in WHoS largely stems from the initiative being inmate-run. Operating in this way, there appears to be an alleviation of scrutiny felt by the men in comparison to their experiences in other programs and practices within prison. As Joe explains:

[At WHoS] you can say what you want; you don't have to be afraid of anything going on paper. The worst fear of anybody doing time is somebody writing stuff down on paper. There's a fear of that because it happens so much (Joe, incarcerated WHoS participant).

Like Joe, many of the participants express how they experience less discomfort in WHoS than they do in other programs and activities because their behaviour is not being overtly sanctioned. As the participants' accounts demonstrate, WHoS would likely not bear the same significance for the men if it were a program offered and operated completely by the institution.

In his conceptualization, Goffman asserts that secondary adjustments do not function to introduce radical change to the existing institutional structures, but rather they may often avert actions that may be seen as disruptive (Goffman, 1961). As is the case

for WHoS, the theatre company does not operate to radically alter institutional structures. Instead, it is through their ability to express their autonomy from the institution that WHoS may be understood as being a form of secondary adjustment that subliminally allows for resistance against underlying structures. As Joe puts it, “even though it’s controlled quite a bit, we have to realize where we’re at and the restrictions. But, the fact that we’re allowed to create and just go, ya it’s big!” (Joe, incarcerated WHoS participant).

WHoS being an opportunity for the men to express their agency appears to be a novel theme to the literature on prison theatre. The literature has predominately focused on prison theatre programs that are operated either by the institution itself or by support groups. Given this, the theme of expressing agency and autonomy is not highlighted in the existing research on prison theatre. As it currently stands, there does not appear to be a prison theatre initiative like WHoS functioning as a theatre company operated by the prisoners. This therefore may be a factor for the absence of this theme within the current literature.

5.4.2 Opportunity to Challenge Public Perceptions

For me it’s about changing the [public’s] perception on what prison is like, the stereotypical inmate, whatever you want to call it. Because the public doesn’t really know what goes on in prison, all they really know is what happens on TV right. So, to change their attitudes and points of view by showing them the artistic side of all of us—I think helps break down the barriers (Kevin, incarcerated WHoS participant).

A prominent theme throughout the interviews with the participants is how WHoS is an opportunity for the men to challenge public perceptions and views on prisoners. This is principally done through the presence of audience members from the public. By

having audience members come into the institution and witness the WHoS productions, the men are able to connect with the public and reveal sides of themselves that are more than often overshadowed by stereotypical understandings of prisoners (Pickett, Mancini & Mears, 2013). As Zane puts it, “when the public comes in, they can look at prisoners as not being all over bad and not paint us all with the same brush,” (incarcerated WHoS participant).

Many of the participants recognize a lack understanding from the general public whereby they are often vilified by both society and the media because of their status as prisoners. As Rick, an incarcerated WHoS participant describes, “I know most of society are very stereotypical of inmates, of jail inmates—until it happens in their family...[but] I'm not like what most of society thinks of me.” Echoing the participants’ recognition of the negative perceptions present in society, there is an ever-growing acknowledgement within the criminological literature on socio-cultural understandings of crimes and ‘criminals’— which often represent distorted understandings perpetrated by the media (Ferrell, Hayward, & Young, 2008; Landry, 2013; Munn, 2012; Paulsen, 2003). As Jewkes (2015) describes, “...the media present[s] crime stories (both factual and fictional) in ways which selectively distort and manipulate public perceptions...” (p.165). However, WHoS affords the men with the unique opportunity to first-handedly challenge mainstream understandings of prisoners by having the public come into the prison and witness their productions. Michael speaks directly to the role of WHoS in contesting the stereotypical views on prisoners:

Society believes that we are these Hollywood monsters and we are not anything like that. And that’s what I think WHoS challenges; that we’re people who’ve made mistakes but, we’re people who can create beautiful things that touch people (Michael, incarcerated WHoS participant).

Reinforcing Michael's account, Andrew, a formerly incarcerated WHoS participant, further speaks to the role WHoS plays in providing them with an opportunity to challenge societal views. Reflecting on his involvement with WHoS and the discussions he has had with the institution's librarian at the time, Andrew expresses the following:

Bringing the public in—there is huge risk in that. But, the reward is the public gets to come in and see people as human beings not with stripped shirts...Its a vehicle for a message to society...we have a stage, what do we want to say off that stage? And so that's our voice, let's use our voice with theatre (Andrew, formerly incarcerated WHoS participant).

Given that this study does not encompass interviews with audience members, it cannot be inferred that WHoS directly changes the public's understandings of prisoners. Rather, it is that WHoS affords the men an opportunity to be able to challenge the public's perceptions. Despite not having the perspective of the audience in this study, the men share many of the interactions and discussions they have with audience members during the question and answer period at the end of their performances. Thus, these interactions may speak to the role WHoS may play in reworking societal misconceptions. As Logan, an incarcerated WHoS participant expresses, "people have said I never thought it would be like this, or you know- I only saw stuff on TV or I never heard the stories, or the newspapers make it sound super bad." Several participants share personal accounts they had with audience members as well. Kevin, in reflecting on a discussion he had with an audience member after a WHoS performance, shares how the individual appeared genuinely affected by the WHoS experience:

...He goes, "it's helped me drop the stereotypical image that I had of you guys. You guys aren't like what they show on TV." And this is a grown ass man, an older man telling me this and he's getting emotional, and I'm just sitting there thinking, yo, we've done something good! (Kevin, incarcerated WHoS participant).

Dave further speaks of the opportunity WHoS affords the men in challenging mainstream understandings of prisoners:

It's an intervention on the side of the public, the citizens. ... I'm doing this marketing survey for the last couple of weeks and one question is 'what drew you out?'— It's the experience of coming into a prison to see prisoners perform—that's usually the one that they pick. But then I follow up with another question, 'what do you see are the benefits of the production?'...Breaking down fear based stereotypes of prisoners— that's the one that's usually pick...So I think, ok, the public comes in, maybe they're just paying \$20 for some entertainment, rather than going to a movie theatre, but then afterwards they're like 'ok ya, this did challenge some of my emotions of prisoners as these monsters and villains— because they're artistic, they're creative, they're vulnerable on stage.' So, if it has that effect on a segment of the local community, [then] they have a more balanced understanding of prisoners afterwards (Dave, incarcerated WHoS participant).

This theme drawn from the participants' narratives extend Dworin's (2011) view of how performances done by prisoners may resonate with the audience because they are personal experiences. As Dworin (2011) describes, "...it keeps alive the possibility of a change in attitudes among people who may not have the opportunity to touch the humanity of inmates directly" (p.101). Parallel to this, the audience of WHoS is also put in a context where they are exposed to the dedicated, artistic and creative sides of the men, aspects that are not part of the mainstream image of prisoners that is reinforced by society (Ferrell et al. 2008; Landry, 2013).

My experience of seeing the WHoS performances and witnessing the response of the audience reflects much of the accounts the participants share. As I was sitting in the audience, I was able to overhear some of the conversations the audience members were making. In one particular instance, as I was waiting to leave the institution, I overheard a woman reflect on her experience of watching the production to the person who was attending alongside her. Interestingly, her comment about the WHoS participants, was,

“They seem so normal!” This observation is interesting because the audience member’s reaction speaks to the potential of WHoS to challenge the conventional “othering” of prisoners in society (Ferrell et al. 2008).

Beyond the opportunity to contest and rework the public’s conceptualizations, during the interviews, the men also share how WHoS gave them an opportunity to reveal a different side of themselves to those who know them. As Kevin explains, WHoS allows the men to challenge some of the understandings of institutional staff within the prison:

Even in the institution, staff that see you perform are like, ‘well we never thought of you as like that’—because all they do is read your file, and then they see [you at WHoS], and well you’re doing something totally out of the norm. And you know, it’s rewarding to hear staff say that they view you differently now that they’ve seen you do either a dance or an act or whatever right. Because it changes everyone’s perception on who you are. This is a great outlet just to do something different (Kevin, incarcerated WHoS participant).

Additionally, many of the men share how their family members come in as a part of the audience to witness them involved in the WHoS production. Through this, the men express how they are able to also present themselves in a unique way to their loved ones. For example, Jackson shares the significance of having his mother come in and see him perform:

My family seeing me on stage—that was pretty big. My mom has never really seen me do anything with my life, so for her just to see me in that light—it was like she used to take me to see all those shows when I was a kid and for me to put on a show for my mom, it was really gratifying (Jackson, incarcerated WHoS participant).

Kevin, an incarcerated WHoS participant, voices a similar experience when he shares the significance of having his brother come in and see him act in a WHoS production: “My brother came and watched the show...he was crying because he goes, I see you in a totally different light, from where you came to what you’re doing now.”

The literature on prison theatre has largely overlooked the role that such initiatives play as being a voice for the participants or a means through which to challenge the public's perceptions on prisoners. As demonstrated in the literature review, the emerging research on prison theatre has largely focused on the direct, individual impacts of the arts on participants. As such, this emerging theme offers an interesting addition to the literature, as the current research has not engaged with the role that prison theatre may play as an intervention for the public. Aside from Merrill and Frigon (2015) research on Clean Break⁴³, which touches on how theatre is able to bring light to the experiences of criminalized women, there is an absence of this discussion in the literature. The inattention given to how prison theatre may serve as an opportunity for prisoners to foster new understandings may largely be because socio-cultural understandings and conceptualizations around 'crime' are a focus of criminological research⁴⁴ (Ferrell et al, 2008). Therefore, this emerging theme of 'challenging perceptions' speaks to imaginative criminology as it demonstrates how through prison theatre initiatives like WHoS, participants may be able to communicate and project new understandings around prisoners that challenge mainstream (mis)conceptions. As Andrew, a formerly incarcerated WHoS participant puts it, "it doesn't work—there is nothing without the public coming in. I can go to my house and put on a puppet show—if there is no audience there, then that's all I'm doing."

⁴³ As outlined in Chapter two, Clean Break is a UK based theatre program for women who either are or have been in contact with the criminal justice system.

⁴⁴ Much of the current literature on prison theatre stems from the discipline of applied theatre rather than criminology.

5.4.3 Practice of Skills

This is not just for [the public's] \$20, it's also for them to know this process is making us better people, with us practicing our skills... It gives us the perfect opportunity to practice our skills... We are being put in a position where we can work on ourselves, not just dress up and act in a play. It's bigger than that! (Jayden, incarcerated WHoS participant).

An interesting theme stemming from the narratives of the participants is the opportunity that WHoS provides the men to practice their skills. The participants often express how WHoS puts them in a context where they are able to apply the skills they have learned through the various correctional programs and interventions. Additionally, in being an inmate-run theatre company, the participants also speak of how they are able to put to work many of their technical skills, such as carpentry, sewing, electrical work, and music. In discussing this, the participants repeatedly point to how WHoS provides them with a real-life atmosphere that is different than the normative sequences of prison.

During the interviews several of the participants share how they have been enrolled in various correctional programs and interventions throughout their incarceration. In these programs, which are offered through the institutions, the men express how they are taught a range of skills and tools related to self-management, personal standards, and emotional regulation. However, given the prison context and environment, several of the participants during the interviews note how they are not able to apply much of the knowledge and skills they develop. As Andrew expresses, “there are only so many programs [in prison]—courses I guess they're called and then go sit in your room for 15 years. Well what do you do? All the other things were just like social groups— sit in a meeting room,” (formerly incarcerated WHoS participant). As can be understood through Goffman's (1961) notion of total institutions, the routinized and

arranged environment of prison does not permit the men to overtly practice or engage with many of the skills they are acquiring. Interestingly, the narratives of the participants reveal how WHoS offers a “real world” atmosphere and unique opportunity for the men to apply their knowledge and transferable skills. Jayden speaks directly to this:

...It emulates real world atmosphere. Because there are certain jobs here where you would work with a civilian, but that's like your only interaction. Here, you get guys that don't deal with their emotions properly, that's a big reason of why we're all here, we didn't deal with certain things properly and it kind of went to other areas of our life. So, I think that would be the key of just, you know, putting us in a real world setting and having us to deal with certain things while coming together. I mean, you're not going to find a job where you're always going to get along with your boss, or along with the whole group of staff...I think its good practice (Jayden, incarcerated WHoS participant).

In a discussion that parallels Jayden's words, Jackson also speaks to the opportunity that WHoS provides the men:

I think the thing that makes it [WHoS] different is that you're putting yourself in real life situations— you're actually being tested with all the skills that you learn in programs; they teach you how to deal with conflict, how to manage your emotions, things like that. And then when you're in WHoS you're actually using those skills— like you have to because there are all kinds of personalities there and you don't know what you're going to get (Jackson, incarcerated WHoS participant).

Importantly, the opportunities available in prison for the men to use or apply their skills are often limited (Goffman, 1961). Speaking of his involvement with WHoS, Lincoln, a formerly incarcerated WHoS participant shares: “I wanted something to really push my artistic vision and side because that was so limitedly tested in previous years in prison— I just never had an avenue for that.” As an inmate-run initiative, the men are challenged to come together and work with each other in WHoS. That is, WHoS places the men in situations where they are both enabled and challenged to directly apply their skills. The men describe this feature of WHoS as being a distinguishable element, as

mainstream happenings in prison do not permit such rich opportunities. As Karl puts it:

Programs are more academic, where there are tools that they introduce to me, and WHoS is the opportunity to practice some of those skills...it's a good learning experience. Just— you meet new people, you see new challenges, things that I need to work on with people, like conflict resolution skills and anger, and my personal standards—all that (Karl, incarcerated WHoS participant).

The opportunity that WHoS provides extends to the application and use of the men's technical skills as well. Many of the participants explicate how being a part of WHoS enables them to use many of their talents and practical skills, such as electrical work, carpentry, and even music. For example, Jake's background and experience in carpentry led him to get heavily involved in set designing and the building aspects of WHoS. Other participants share how WHoS allows them to directly apply and utilize some of the technical skills they learned while in prison. Exemplary of this is Karl, who when speaking of his involvement in WHoS shares: "I was supposed to do the lights, because I was taking an electrician course, so I figured it was good practice," (Karl, incarcerated WHoS participant). Similarly, Joe shares how he is able to use his sewing skills and abilities that he learned in prison by getting involved in creating costumes for the production. As he explains:

Well see, I've been in prison for 32 years now and my first job in prison was in the sewing shop. So I learned how to use the sewing machine, the serge, cut material, how to put patterns and do all that. So, that's where I learned it, and then I just kept it (Joe, incarcerated WHoS participant).

Thus, being an inmate-run initiative, the theatre company evidently provides ample opportunities for the participants to apply many of their technical skills, much of which are artistically driven.

The combined efforts and talents of the participants spread across the different aspects of the theatre company integrate into the formation of a highly professional

production put together by the men. I was able to witness the creativity that comes together in the making of the production during my site visit to WHoS. The lighting, music, costumes, set, and all the other design aspects of their production encompassed an abundance of detail and creative elements. For example, the costumes in the production were so intricate in design that each costume had sequins, beading, textured layers, as well as personalized masks and headpieces— all of which were done by the men. Additionally, the comments from the audience during the question and answer period more than often entailed shocked proclamations of how everything is done by the participating prisoner—whether it is the music, costumes, or the set. As Sammy puts it, during his reflection on one of the previous WHoS productions:

There are a lot of talented guys so the show actually was pretty successful—because the coordination and then how everything flowed, there was a couple of singers that were really talented singers and musicians, and the costumes were really good, the lighting and everything—for a prison play it was like, wow. It was pretty good! Even people that were like “what the fuck are you guys doing here? What the hell is this?”— They come to watch it and they are blown away because it’s not what they expect (Sammy, incarcerated WHoS participant).

The theme of WHoS being an opportunity for the application and practicing of skills appears to be a novel addition to the current literature on prison theatre that extends current understandings. As was outlined in the review of the literature, the research considering prison theatre has conceptualized the role that these initiatives play on skill development, particularly interpersonal skills (Moller, 2003; Tocci, 2007; Tett et al., 2012). However, prison theatre has yet to be understood as offering an opportunity for the participants to also apply their skills. As encapsulated by Kevin, an incarcerated WHoS participant, “this was an opportunity for me to use my skills in a more productive manner...an avenue for me to put it to good work.”

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Overview and Summary

This study aimed to explore the experiences of criminalized individuals with prison theatre in order to gain an understanding of the impact that these initiatives have on their lives. Exploring this in a Canadian context, this case study on WHoS encompassed 15 individual interviews with incarcerated WHoS participants and 6 interviews with former WHoS participants. Resonating throughout the analysis of the participants' experiences, this research reveals how WHoS may be understood as being a form of intermission or break from the adverse structural and social systems characterizing prison (Goffman, 1961; Sykes, 1958).

The impacts of WHoS on the lives of the participants were encompassed by three organizing themes, all of which were engaged with through Goffman's ideas of total institutions (1961) and conceptualizations around the social context of prison (Clemmer, 1940; Crewe et al., 2014; Ricciardelli, 2015; Ricciardelli, 2014a). These organizing themes include the *Personal Growth* experienced by the participants through WHoS, the role of the *Environment* at WHoS, and the *Opportunities* afforded to the men through their involvement with WHoS.

The first organizing theme of *Personal Growth* encapsulates the themes that reveal how the participants experience personal development and transformation through their involvement with WHoS. The first theme encompasses how WHoS fosters *camaraderie and collaboration* between the men. By working together and connecting with each other, WHoS allows the participants to begin to challenge many of the views entrenched in the inmate culture (Clemmer, 1940). In a similar vein, the theme of

emotional growth and awareness emerges as another theme highlighted by the men's responses. This theme demonstrates how unlike the normative standards within prison that inhibit emotional expression, at WHoS the participants are able to express and engage with their emotions. Additionally, the third theme entails the capacity of the men to step out of their comfort zone and overcome personal challenges through their engagement with theatre. By stretching themselves beyond their habituated engagements, WHoS helps foster self-confidence in the participants.

The second organizing theme of *Environment* encompasses the experiences that the participants associate with the unique atmosphere of WHoS. These themes shed particular insight on how the supportive and collective environment characterizing WHoS affords participants with experiences that are exceptional to the structural, confined nature of prison (Crewe, 2011). The first theme within this section relates to the *connections* the participants are able to make with the community. Within this theme, the participants emphasize how interactions permitted through WHoS are markedly different from the tense and guarded social interactions dominating prison (Goffman, 1961). The second theme pertains to the participants' development of *self-esteem and self-worth*. The participants' narratives uncover how the support offered by both the volunteers and audience at WHoS help to counteract the stifled sense of self-esteem often experienced in prison. Additionally, given the positive feelings and experiences the participants attribute to the theatre process, WHoS may be understood as a form of *escape* or detachment from the monotonous prison context.

The last organizing theme of *Opportunity* centers on the ways in which WHoS offers the men with opportunities of expression that are not overtly available in prison.

First, it appears that unlike the structural context of prison where personal autonomy and independence are often compromised, WHoS offers the men the opportunity to overtly exercise their *agency* and independence. Secondly, the participants' narratives suggest that through the presence and engagement of a public audience, WHoS provides the men with opportunities to challenge societal views and (mis)conceptions around prisoners. With the fundamental nature of prisons representing a separation between society and prisoners, this opportunity enabled through WHoS stands as particularly impactful. The last arising theme demonstrates the opportunity WHoS provides the men to *practice* their skills. This theme illustrates how WHoS provides participants with an opportunity to gain transferable, real life experience that is largely absent from the normative routines characterizing prison. Overall, the themes emerging from this research are demonstrative of how the impacts that WHoS has on the participants conceptually stems from the contrasting nature between it and the prison backdrop of which it operates in.

6.2 Revisiting Contributions

This research sought to address the limited knowledge that is available on prison theatre initiatives. More specifically, this research extended the literature and discussion on the impacts of prison theatre to a Canadian context. With the research on prison theatre beginning to germinate in countries across the world, there is a noticeable gap in the literature on research stemming from Canada. Despite WHoS operating for over three decades, this theatre initiative has gone largely unrecognized in the academic literature. In turn, this study helps to shed light on Canada's long-standing, inmate-run prison theatre initiative.

With much of the knowledge on prison theatre stemming from anecdotal evidence

or evaluation studies focusing on recidivism and reoffending rates, the present research study stands as one of the first studies to develop in-depth understandings on the impacts of prison theatre on the lives of criminalized individuals. In exploring this, the current study responds to the evident gap and limited knowledge within the literature regarding both the relevance and impact of prison theatre initiatives (Hughes, 2005; McAvinchey, 2011; Merrill, 2015; Tocci, 2007). By conducting interviews and attending to the experiences of current and former participants of WHoS, this study brings the narratives of criminalized individuals into both the discourse on prison theatre and the criminological research more broadly. This feature offers a significant contribution to the literature as the perspective of criminalized populations—and prisoners more specifically, have been largely overlooked (Brown, 2008).

In addition to developing the current state of knowledge on prison theatre practices, the current study also expands the scope of the current literature by implementing a conceptual framework that encapsulates the prison structural and social context. Through this unique criminological perspective, this study presents new understandings to the discourse around prison theatre that considers the prison setting. This study sheds light on how the impacts of prison theatre are largely rooted in the contrasting nature of these arts-based initiatives to both the prison structural and social context. Academically, this helps anchor the significance and relevance of creative arts, such as theatre within criminology and prison settings. By exploring an arts-based theatre initiative, this study responds to the growing call of imaginative criminology to adopt more creative areas of inquiry that expand the field's milieu (Carlen, 2016; Frauley, 2015; Hviid Jacobsen, 2014; Young, 2011).

While much of the research in criminology and corrections has focused on structured interventions in prisons, such as correctional programs, this study sheds light on the importance of also exploring arts-based initiatives in prison, such as theatre. Resonating throughout the emerging themes is that although WHoS does not operate under a rehabilitative or correctional framework, it still has invaluable impacts for the participants. Interestingly, the narratives of the participants and the thematic findings reveal how WHoS may impact the participants in constructive, positive ways. This is reflected by many of the themes, such as the camaraderie WHoS supports, the emotional expression it permits, the connection with the community, as well as the sense of independence it offers the participants. Ultimately, the themes in this study are collectively demonstrative of the significance of having WHoS operate in Canada's prison as an arts-based, inmate-run initiative that is open to the public.

6.3 Limitations and Future Research

Notwithstanding the unique and insightful contributions of this study, the limitations must also be considered. In light of this research representing a case study on WHoS, the thematic findings are not to be extended or generalized to all prison theatre initiatives. That is, WHoS has unique features that are not present in all prison theatre initiatives— such as the theatre being inmate-run and inviting the public in. Additionally, a further limitation of this study is that it does not explicitly explore the challenges, difficulties, or problems the participants may face in their operation of WHoS. While some of the challenges are highlighted as a part of the themes, engaging with the specific challenges or potential problems that are associated with operating WHoS falls outside of the scope of the study. Future research may want to consider the logistics of operating

prison theatre while outlining the challenges and complications that may arise from running such initiatives in prison. Such research would help shed clearer insight on the replication and extension of theatre in the confined context of prison.

A limitation in relation to the methodology of this study is that this research may have yielded greater insight and understandings on the impacts of prison theatre had it been ethnographical⁴⁵ rather than interview-based. Such an approach would have been particularly interesting given that the participants of WHoS spend months running workshops and devising the production. However, conducting ethnographic work was not suitable in the circumstances of this particular study given the time-constraints associated with a Masters thesis. Though such an endeavour may be difficult with regards to gaining access, ethnographic research on prison theatre may help yield more comprehensive understandings around the nuances of prison theatre.

Related to directions for future research, it would be interesting for studies to consider the public engagement aspect of WHoS and the perceptions of the audience coming in to watch the performances. Warranting consideration to the public's perspective is particularly relevant given that an emerging theme from this study is that the participants view WHoS as an opportunity to challenge mainstream understandings. From a criminological perspective, such research would be insightful given that the subfield of cultural criminology specifically looks at social constructions, representations and perceptions around 'crime' (Ferrell, Hayward & Young, 2008).

⁴⁵ While ethnographical research has a range of meanings within the social sciences (Hammersley, 2018), it may be understood as a research approach that offers thick descriptions and involves the researcher participating directly in the setting (Brewer, 2003; Lutz, 1981).

With respect to pragmatic directions for the future, this research endeavour comes at a time that directly speaks to some of the directions and implementations CSC may be taking within the upcoming years. In a public letter published on September 5, 2018 to CSC's Commissioner Anne Kelly, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, the Honourable Ralph Goodale writes:

I encourage you to partner with and support community organizations and volunteers in order to provide a greater variety of programming alternatives, such as programs related to the *arts*, programs involving animals, and programs that include peer mentoring (Goodale, 2018).

Goodale's (2018) words echo the findings and the experiences of the participants in this study, which page after page, reinforce the significance of operating arts-based initiatives, like WHoS, in Canada's prisons.

Appendix A

Production History of WHoS

The following historical outline has been reproduced from the WHoS website

(www.whonstage.weebly.com).

Date	Production
Spring 1981	The Birthday Party
Fall 1981	Dracula
Spring 1982	The Knight of the Burning Pestle
Fall 1982	Ten Little Indians
Spring 1983	Macbeth
Fall 1983	One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest
Spring 1984	The Paper Cage
Fall 1984	Stalag 17
Spring 1985	Fools
Fall 1985	Born Yesterday
Spring 1986	Wait Until Dark
Fall 1986	The Dancing Mice
Spring 1987	See How They Run
Fall 1987	The Mad Dog Blues
Spring 1988	Don't Drink The Water
Fall 1988	Curse of the Starving Class
Spring 1989	Hamlet II
Fall 1989	My Three Angels
Spring 1990	The Odd Couple
Fall 1990	Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead
Spring 1991	Early One Evening at the Rainbow Bar & Grill
Fall 1991	The Stranger
Fall 1992	Beyond Mozambique & Leftover Crumbs
Spring 1993	Fathers
Fall 1993	The Boys Next Door
Spring 1994	Marat / Sade
Fall 1994	Right Bed, Wrong Husband
Spring 1995	The Bacchae
Fall 1995	Amateurs
Spring 1996	No Exit & Endgame
Fall 1996	Our Country's Good
Spring 1997	Mr. 80%
Fall 1997	Bathroom Humor

Spring 1998	Ripe Conditions
Fall 1998	One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest
Spring 1999	Andromeda & The Waiting Room
Fall 1999	Three Penny Opera
Spring 2000	No Room for Love
Fall 2000	Criminals in Love
Fall 2001	Playboy of the Western World
Spring 2002	The Cage & The Tell-Tale Heart
Fall 2003	The Elephant Man
Fall 2004	The Firebugs
Fall 2005	Autobahn
Fall 2006	Macbeth
Spring 2008	Waiting for Godot
Fall 2008	Animal Farm
Fall 2009	Frankenstein in Oblivion
Fall 2010	CHALK
Fall 2011	Gormenghast
Fall 2012	The Hobbit
Fall 2013	Fractured Fables: The Prison Puppet Project
Fall 2014	Time Waits for No One
Fall 2015	Here: A Captive Odyssey
Fall 2016	Sleeping Giants
Fall 2017	Antigone
Fall 2018 (forthcoming)	The Crossroads: A Prison Cabaret

Appendix B



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Recruitment Form WHoS Participants

Title of the study: Freedom within Prison: Examining the Role of Theatre on the Lives of Criminalized Individuals in Canada

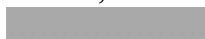
Principal Investigator:

Thana Ridha
MA Candidate
Department of Criminology
University of Ottawa
Ottawa, ON



Supervisor:

Dr. Sylvie Frigon
Full Professor
Department of Criminology
University of Ottawa
Ottawa, ON



Invitation to Participate:

You are invited to participate in the abovementioned research study conducted by Thana Ridha, in the context of a Master's thesis, under the supervision of Dr. Sylvie Frigon.

Purpose:

The aim of this study is to explore the experiences of criminalized populations with theatre. The main purpose of this study is to gain an understanding on the impact that theatre has on participants.

Participation:

Your participation will consist of attending one individual interview with the principal investigator, which will be audio recorded. Questions will be asked about your involvement with William Head on Stage. This interview will be about one hour in length.

Risks:

Your participation in this study involves that you share information about your experiences with prison theatre, which may potentially cause you to feel uncomfortable. As the principal investigator, I would like to assure you that every effort would be made to minimize this discomfort through your right to freely refuse to answer any questions. To protect your identity, all responses and identifying features, such as your name, will be removed.

Benefits:

Your participation in this study will provide you with the opportunity to talk about your involvement with William Head on Stage as well as your individual experiences with prison theatre. By sharing your own experiences, you can help society better understand the role of theatre initiatives on the lives of criminalized populations.

Confidentiality:

I assure you that every effort will be made to protect your privacy and confidentiality. Any information or features that may identify you will be removed from the study. Fake names will also be used throughout the study, to ensure that your identity is protected. The interview will be held privately at William Head Institution. Only the principal investigator will have access to the audio recording. Given that this study is taking place at an institution within Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), confidentiality cannot be fully guaranteed.

Conservation of data:

To protect your privacy, any of your information, such as the interview responses, will be securely stored in a locked office inside a password-protected computer, and any physical copies in a safe and locked cabinet. Only the principal investigator and supervisor will have physical access to the data. The data will be safely stored for 5 years and then completely destroyed.

Voluntary Participation:

You are under no obligation to participate in this study because it is completely voluntary. If you choose to participate, you can refuse to answer any questions without suffering any consequences. You can also withdraw from the study at any time during the interview. Your choice of whether or not to participate will not affect your involvement with William Head on Stage.

To participate in this study, you will be required to read and sign a consent form. You will be given a copy of the signed consent form for you to keep.

Appendix C



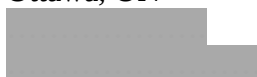
uOttawa

Recruitment Form Former WHoS Participants

Title of the study: Freedom within Prison: Examining the Role of Theatre on the Lives of Criminalized Individuals in Canada

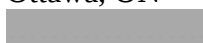
Principal Investigator:

Thana Ridha
MA Candidate
Department of Criminology
University of Ottawa
Ottawa, ON



Supervisor:

Dr. Sylvie Frigon
Full Professor
Department of Criminology
University of Ottawa
Ottawa, ON



Invitation to Participate:

You are invited to participate in the above research study conducted by Thana Ridha, in the context of a Master's thesis, under the supervision of Dr. Sylvie Frigon.

Purpose:

The aim of this study is to explore the experiences of criminalized populations with theatre. The main purpose of this study is to gain an understanding on the impact that theatre has on participants.

Participation:

Your participation will consist of attending one individual interview with the principal investigator, which will be audio-recorded. Questions will be asked about your involvement with William Head on Stage. This interview will be about one hour in length.

Risks:

Your participation in this study involves that you share information about your experiences with prison theatre, which may potentially cause you to feel uncomfortable. As the principal investigator, I would like to assure you that every effort would be made to minimize this discomfort through your right to freely refuse to answer any questions. To protect your identity, all responses and identifying features, such as your name, will be removed.

Benefits:

Your participation in this study will provide you with the opportunity to talk about your involvement with William Head on Stage as well as your individual experiences with prison theatre. By sharing your own experiences, you can help society better understand the role of theatre initiatives on the lives of prisoners.

Confidentiality:

I assure you that your participation in this study would remain strictly confidential. The contents of the interview will only be used for the purpose of this research and your privacy will be protected. Any information or features that may identify you will be removed. Fake names will also be used throughout the study to ensure that your identity is protected. Your participation in this study will not be known to anyone outside of the principal investigator.

Conservation of data:

To protect your privacy, any of your information, such as the interview responses, will be securely stored in a locked office inside a password-protected computer, and any physical copies in a safe and locked cabinet. Only the principal investigator and supervisor will have access to the data. The data will be safely stored for 5 years and then completely destroyed.

Voluntary Participation:

You are under no obligation to participate in this study. If you choose to participate, you can refuse to answer any questions. You can also withdraw from the study at any time during the interview. After the interview, you may personally contact the principal investigator through e-mail or telephone if you wish to request a copy of your interview transcript for review.

To participate in this study, you will be required to read and sign a consent form. You will be given a copy of the signed consent form for you to keep.

Appendix D

Interview Guide for Incarcerated WHoS Participants

I would like to explore with you your experiences with William Head on Stage (WHoS). Can you speak to me about it?

Before

- Before you participated with WHoS, what did you think about the theatre company when you first heard about it? Has this changed since you've become involved with WHoS?
- What motivated you to participate in WHoS?
- How many times have you participated in WHoS? What roles did this include?
- Were there any goals you set that you wanted to achieve through your participation?

During

- Tell me about your experiences so far with the theatre company. Would you describe it as particularly positive or negative?
- Talk to me about your experiences of working with others at WHoS (i.e. other participants, as well as personnel).
- How do you feel when you are participating in WHoS (rehearsals, script memorizing, preparation, etc.)?
- Have you noticed any differences in the way you feel from before you started participating in WHoS up until now?
- Are there any challenges you've been faced with through your involvement at WHoS? If so, what have you done to overcome them?
- How has it been for you, as an actor, to step into the role of another character?
- What activities or aspects have you enjoyed the most from your participation?
- How many hours a day does your participation in WHoS entail?

After

- Has your participation in WHoS influenced any aspect of your life so far? If so, which?
- Talk to me about some of the things you've learned from your involvement with WHoS? Is there anything you've learned that has been particularly useful?
- What skills have you learned or developed through your participation with WHoS? How can you apply these skills to your everyday life?
- Has your relationship with others changed in any way since your involvement with WHoS?
- Since working with WHoS, has your relationship or perception changed with yourself in any way?
- Tell me what it's like, and how you feel, when you are on stage performing to a live audience? Additionally, how do you feel after the production?
- What would you like the audience to take away when they see your performance?
- How does WHoS compare to other programs you have been involved with?
- Would you recommend others to participate in WHoS?

Appendix E

Interview Guide for Former WHoS Participants

I would like to explore with you your experiences with the theatre William Head on Stage (WHoS). Can you speak to me about it?

Before/During

- When did you participate in WHoS? When were you released from prison?
- What motivated you to participate in WHoS?
- How many times have you participated in WHoS? What roles did this include?
- Would you describe your experiences with WHoS as particularly positive or negative?
- Tell me about the experiences you had working with others at WHoS.
- Did participating in WHoS have any impact on your relationship with the others while in prison?
- What activities or aspects of WHoS did you enjoy most?
- Were there any challenges you faced from your involvement at WHoS? If so, how were you able to overcome them?
- How does WHoS compare to other programs you had been involved with?
- Describe how you felt when you are on stage performing and presenting to the live audience?
- What were your feelings after you had presented the production?
- When putting on the production, was there any message you wanted the audience to take away from the performance?
- Would you/ did you recommend others to participate in WHoS?

After

- Has WHoS influenced any aspects of your life so far now that you are no longer in the institution? If so, which?
- Talk to me about some of the things you've learned from your involvement with WHoS. Was there anything you learned that has been particularly useful?
- What skills have you learned or developed through your participation with WHoS? How are you applying these skills to your everyday life?
- Do you find yourself reflecting or thinking about your involvement with WHoS?
- Since working with WHoS, has your relationship or perception changed with yourself in any way?
- Since your participation with WHoS, have you been involved in any other arts or theatre initiatives outside of prison?
- Have you attended a performance by WHoS as an audience member? If so, how did it feel being on the other side of the production?
- Is there anything you would change about WHoS?

Appendix F



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Interview Consent Form WHoS Participants

Title of the study: Freedom within Prison: Examining the Role of Theatre on the Lives of Criminalized Individuals in Canada

Principal Investigator: Thana Ridha
MA Candidate
Department of Criminology
University of Ottawa
Ottawa, ON

Supervisor: Dr. Sylvie Frigon
Full Professor
Department of Criminology
University of Ottawa
Ottawa, ON

Invitation to Participate:

I am invited to participate in the abovementioned study conducted by Thana Ridha and her supervisor Dr. Sylvie Frigon.

Purpose:

The aim of this study is to explore the experiences of criminalized populations with theatre. The main purpose of this study is to gain an understanding on the impact that theatre has on participants.

Participation:

My participation will consist of attending one individual interview, which will be audio recorded. Questions will be asked about my involvement with William Head on Stage. This interview will be about one hour in length and is scheduled for _____

Risks:

My participation in this study involves that I share information about my experiences with prison theatre, which may potentially cause me to feel uncomfortable. If I wish, I can freely

refuse to answer any questions. If I do experience any discomfort, I may use the counselling services available at William Head Institution.

Benefits:

My participation in this study will provide me with the opportunity to talk about my involvement with William Head on Stage as well as my individual experiences with prison theatre. By sharing my own experiences, I can help society better understand the role of theatre initiatives on the lives of prisoners.

Confidentiality:

I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I share will remain protected and confidential. What I share in the interview will only be used for the purpose of this research study. To ensure I remain anonymous, any information or features that may identify me, like my name, will be removed from the study.

Conservation of data:

To protect my privacy, any of my information, such as my interview responses, will be safely stored in a locked office on a password-protected computer and locked cabinet. The data will be safely stored for 5 years and then completely destroyed.

Voluntary Participation:

I am not obligated to participate in this study because it is completely voluntary. I can also withdraw from the study at any time during the interview. My choice of whether or not to participate will not affect my involvement with William Head on Stage.

Acceptance:

I, _____, agree to participate in the above study conducted by Thana Ridha and her supervisor Dr. Sylvie Frigon from the Department of Criminology, University of Ottawa.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or her supervisor.

If I have any questions related to ethical standards, I can contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, at the University of Ottawa.

Tel.: _____

Email: _____

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Participant's signature:

Date:

Researcher's signature:

Date:

If any research participant is unable to read or comprehend the information in this consent form, the form can be verbally explained and consent can be obtained orally. The participant's verbal consent will be documented at the beginning of the audio recording of the interview. A copy of the written form will also be provided.

Appendix G



uOttawa

Interview Consent Form
Former WHoS Participants

Title of the study: Freedom within Prison: Examining the Role of Theatre on the Lives Criminalized Individuals in Canada

Principal Investigator: Thana Ridha
 MA Candidate
 Department of Criminology
 University of Ottawa
 Ottawa, ON



Supervisor: Dr. Sylvie Frigon
 Full Professor
 Department of Criminology
 University of Ottawa
 Ottawa, ON

**Invitation to Participate:**

I am invited to participate in the above study conducted by Thana Ridha and her supervisor Dr. Sylvie Frigon.

Purpose:

The aim of this study is to explore the experiences of criminalized populations with theatre. The main purpose of this study is to gain an understanding on the impact that theatre has on participants.

Participation:

My participation will consist of attending one individual interview, which will be audio recorded. Questions will be asked about my involvement with William Head on Stage. This interview will be about one hour in length and is scheduled for _____

Risks:

My participation in this study involves that I share information about my experiences with prison theatre, which may potentially cause me to feel uncomfortable. If I wish, I can freely refuse to answer any questions.

The following is a list of local resources for me to contact if I experience any emotional discomfort from the interview process.

For immediate (24 hour) support, participants can call:

The Crisis Centre Helpline: [REDACTED]

The British Columbia Mental Health Support Line: [REDACTED]

Benefits:

My participation in this study will provide me with the opportunity to talk about my involvement with William Head on Stage as well as my individual experiences with prison theatre. By sharing my own experiences, I can help society better understand the role of theatre initiatives on the lives of prisoners.

Confidentiality:

I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I share will remain strictly confidential. What I share in the interview will only be used for the purpose of this research study. To ensure I remain anonymous, any information or features that can identify me, like my name, will be removed from the study.

Conservation of data:

To protect my privacy, any of my information, such as my interview responses, will be safely stored in a locked office on a password-protected computer and locked cabinet. The data will be safely stored for 5 years and then completely destroyed. I understand that only the principal investigator and supervisor will have access to my information.

Voluntary Participation:

I am under no obligation to participate in this study. If I choose to participate, I can refuse to answer any questions. I can also withdraw from the study at any time during the interview. After the interview, I may personally contact the researcher through e-mail or telephone if I wish to request a copy of the interview in writing for review.

Acceptance:

I, _____, agree to participate in the above study conducted by Thana Ridha and her supervisor Dr. Sylvie Frigon from the Department of Criminology, University of Ottawa.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or her supervisor.

If I have any questions related to ethical standards, I can contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, at the University of Ottawa.

Tel.: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Participant's signature:

Date:

Researcher's signature:

Date:

If any research participant is unable to read or comprehend the information in this consent form, the form can be verbally explained and consent can be obtained orally. The participant's verbal consent will be documented at the beginning of the audio recording of the interview. A copy of the written form will also be provided.

Appendix H

File Number: 03-17-04

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 06/27/2017



Université d'Ottawa
Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

University of Ottawa
Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

Ethics Approval Notice

Social Science and Humanities REB

Principal Investigator / Supervisor / Co-investigator(s) / Student(s)

<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Role</u>
Sylvie	Frigon	Social Sciences / Criminology	Supervisor
Thana	Ridha	Social Sciences / Criminology	Student Researcher

File Number: 03-17-04

Type of Project: Master's Thesis

Title: Freedom within Prison: Examining the Role of theatre on the Lives of Criminalized Individuals in Canada

Approval Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Expiry Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Approval Type
06/27/2017	06/26/2018	Approval

Special Conditions / Comments:

N/A

File Number: 03-17-04

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 06/27/2017


Université d'Ottawa

Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

University of Ottawa

Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

This is to confirm that the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board identified above, which operates in accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement (2010) and other applicable laws and regulations in Ontario, has examined and approved the ethics application for the above named research project. Ethics approval is valid for the period indicated above and subject to the conditions listed in the section entitled "Special Conditions / Comments".

During the course of the project, the protocol may not be modified without prior written approval from the REB except when necessary to remove participants from immediate endangerment or when the modification(s) pertain to only administrative or logistical components of the project (e.g., change of telephone number). Investigators must also promptly alert the REB of any changes which increase the risk to participant(s), any changes which considerably affect the conduct of the project, all unanticipated and harmful events that occur, and new information that may negatively affect the conduct of the project and safety of the participant(s). Modifications to the project, including consent and recruitment documentation, should be submitted to the Ethics Office for approval using the "Modification to research project" form available at: <http://research.uottawa.ca/ethics/submissions-and-reviews>.

Please submit an annual report to the Ethics Office four weeks before the above-referenced expiry date to request a renewal of this ethics approval. To close the file, a final report must be submitted. These documents can be found at: <http://research.uottawa.ca/ethics/submissions-and-reviews>.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Office at extension 5387 or by e-mail at: ethics@uOttawa.ca.

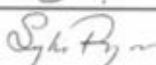
Signature:


Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research
For Barbara Graves, Chair of the Social Sciences and Humanities REB

Appendix I



Correctional Service Canada
Service correctionnel Canada

APPROVAL		
It is agreed that all parties signing this agreement and any attachments thereto are satisfied with and will adhere to its terms and conditions.		
Principal Investigator (Academic Supervisor if PI is a student) Thana Ridha	Signature 	Date Y M D-J 2017-05-15
Dr. Sylvie Frigon (Supervisor)		2017-05-15
Director, Research	Signature	Date Y M D-J
 John Weekes		JUN 30 2017

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