Being in "The Courtroom": Young male prisoners' experiences of a creative arts programme in Pollsmoor

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By Sarah Waterfield, WTRSAR003

Supervisor: Dr. Shannon Morreira

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Dedicated to

Jannie, Timothy, Gerrald, Raul, Zaneal, Andi, Rodney, Gurun, Andi and Gareth*

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Abstract

This dissertation examines a creative arts programme that was run in Pollsmoor Prison by the organisation Young in Prison South Africa (YIPSA) from the beginning of July 2015 until the end of September. It discusses the lived experiences of prison life for ten young male prisoners between the ages of eighteen and twenty five, with particular emphasis on how participation in the programme affects the way participants view their everyday life in prison and the prison system in general. I argue that the programme enables prisoners to remove themselves both physically and mentally from the tensions and stress of living in a prison cell. For the two hours that the programme runs for, participants are able to forget the stress and anxiety they experience inside their cells. This is expressed continually by participants in the statement "It (the programme) takes the stress out of my mind". I thus use anthropological theory on liminal space, creativity, and embodiment to analyse the experiences of young men in the program.

Contents

Chapter One:

Introduction

It's an early Tuesday morning in the beginning of July, the time of year in Cape Town that is renowned for being cold and wet. I wake up early feeling slightly apprehensive at the thought of entering Pollsmoor Prison in Tokai for the first time. After a huge bowl of Jungle oats and a cup of warm tea I think hard about how I have been told to present myself. "You need to make sure you look unattractive," Nkosinathi had said. "No tight or revealing clothes, hair tied up, and no make-up." I decide on jeans, a pair of old 'All-Stars' shoes, a bulky jersey, and I'm good to go. I need to meet Nkosinathi outside the prison by 9.30, so I leave my house at 8:45 to make absolutely sure I am not late. This gives me ample time to get there.

The final roads that take you to Pollsmoor are lined with big beautiful trees, libraries, artisan coffee shops, and an extremely affluent golf estate. The contrast between this and the space which Pollsmoor occupies is stark. The land on which the prison is situated was bought by Hendrick van der Poll in 1834 and was named Poll's Moor Farm. It was used to grow vegetables, and still is to this day, although now vegetables are grown by prisoners rather than farmers. In 1959, the land was acquired by the state and turned into a prison (Jackman, 2014).

The main gate looks onto one of the fairways of the golf course, and I can just see through the large pine tree barriers that encircle this lavish estate, retired men, dressed in chinos and collared shirts, become frustrated by a less than impressive shot. I have driven this road many times, having lived in Cape Town from the age of six, but as I turn into the main gate, I immediately feel I have entered into a space that feels unfamiliar, crossing over some imaginary border into a place I know nothing about. This is exciting and overwhelming, my first taste of fieldwork. Through the entrance to both sides are parking lots, on the left there are people waiting-perhaps for visitations, or to collect their loved ones being released today. I wait here for Nkosinathi as he has told me to do. The "members" (the name given to all those who work for Pollsmoor and wear uniform), dressed in full khaki, will not allow me through without him. I decide to spend this time going through some of my research aims and questions so that they are at the forefront of my mind.

Through working with the Knowledge Co-op[1], I have worked with Young in Prison South Africa (more commonly known as YIPSA) to create a research topic that can be beneficial to both parties involved; the student by way of producing a thesis, and the organisation by way of gaining access to research done around their programme and an affiliation to the University of Cape Town[2]. This to me was another very important reason for wanting to get involved with the Knowledge Co-op and this project in particular. The main research question I would be researching was: What are young prisoners' experiences of prison in Pollsmoor and does involvement in a creative arts programme alter these experiences? During my fieldwork I worked with Nkosinathi Buyani (YIPSA's Life Skills facilitator and trainer) carrying out the Young In Prison South Africa Life Skills Program and filling the role of volunteer, observer and researcher. Nkosinathi and the YIPSA programme provided me easy access into this space. They have been working in Pollsmoor for ten years and so my being there was totally dependent on that lengthy relationship.

While I wait for Nkosinathi, I look over the research questions I am aiming to answer: what do creative arts programs in prison involve? What role does YIPSA and the programme play in the everyday experiences of prisoners involved? Do these programmes change the way prisoners see themselves and their lives during incarceration? Do these programmes affect relationships in prison?

At 9.30 I see Nkosinathi's dark blue Audi, he waves, and shouts "Follow me in". A quick and friendly greeting at the boom and an explanation of who I am gets me through in minutes. This is not what I expected. My assumptions had been that the guards would be reluctant and serious but this experience was the opposite. I had successfully entered Area 1, what my informants would refer to as "the outside" (being both outside of their cells and outside of the Medium B section-where they are held, but not the "out-there-outside" beyond Pollsmoor's walls). As Nkosinathi and I walk, he gives me a brief explanation of where everything is. "On our left is maxi, here on our right, is the juvenile-this is where we are going, yes. Behind that are the

[1] The Knowledge Co-Op is an organisation run through the University of Cape Town. It finds projects that may be interesting for post-graduate research and dissertations. Organisations from outside the university can also approach the Co-Op expressing their need for research and interest in collaboration with a student at UCT. In this way all the projects available through the Knowledge Co-Op will result in the research undertaken being useful for both parties. Firstly to the student to fulfil the necessary post-graduate requirements and, secondly to the organisation who can benefit from the research and an affiliation to UCT.

[2] Having an affiliation to UCT is of value as it can be helpful for organisations when applying for funding.

sections, where our guys are staying, and behind that the female section." We walk into Medium B, the section where we will be working and I will be conducting fieldwork.
"Ah, Zola, *unjani* (how are you?)?" Nkosinathi says.

I meet Zola for the first time at the security entrance. He would become a very familiar face, and although his name means quiet and tranquil he is anything but. He is a loud and friendly man in possession of the big heavy key that controls the access of every person entering and exiting through this door. Almost wherever you are in the prison you can hear his voice or laugh blaring down the echoing corridors. With a quick signature in the sign-in book, and the turning of the key which makes a loud noise against the metal of the door, we're in and are able to go straight in. I am surprised that no body or bag searches are carried out. We head for "the courtroom", slang for the space where the programme takes place. YIPSA are allocated this room each time they come, by a prison member, but only if they are lucky. Nkosinathi tells me you can never be certain but during my fieldwork during the programme, we were allocated this space each time.

In what follows in this thesis, I explore the answers I found to the questions set out above, working with my participants to explore the ways in which they experienced prison as a social and physical space, and the role of YIPSA's program in those experiences.

Background

South African prisons have, in the wider imagination, been aligned with violence, gangsterism, overcrowding and poverty. According to Gillespie (2008), some prisons are 300 percent overcrowded in South Africa. This is and has been portrayed to the general public through photographs, prison narratives, documentaries, books and research done historically and recently. Books such as *The Number* by Jonny Steinberg, and Ross Kemp's documentary of Pollsmoor prison gang-life, illustrate often shocking conditions and circumstances. We thus receive very limited information about the success of prison life, despite the many organisations that are trying to give prisoners a chance to transform, feel empowered and gain from being in prison so that when they are released they can have a chance of a fresh start and less chance of reoffending. Young in Prison South Africa (YIPSA) is one of these organisations, having worked with young male and female prisoners for over ten years. They offer the following description on their website:

> "Young in Prison South Africa (YIPSA) is a non-profit organisation that offers a holistic programme, which seeks to prepare children and youth in conflict with law in making the transition from incarceration back into society through imparting life skills for behaviour change, offering skills development for effective reintegration and reducing reoffending." (www.younginprison.org.za)

The holistic programmes are carried out through creative arts workshops, such as art projects and improvisation theatre. At the end of the three month programme, prisoners are awarded a certificate and usually put on a performance for family members[3]. Completion of a programme and certificate is mandatory if parole is to be granted. I have been aware of how this may have affected behaviour, relationships, and findings throughout my fieldwork process.

Despite the fact that enrolment in the program might be influenced by parole requirements, I argue that prison programmes that use the creative arts within their methodologies help young incarcerated men to cope with the everyday stress they experience while incarcerated.

The intentions of YIPSA are to teach life skills to help men cope once they are released[4], but there is an additional /uncounted benefit whereby the programme is in fact enabling men to cope while inside, as shall be explored in coming chapters.

Chapter Outline and Literature Review

This dissertation consists of an introduction, methods and ethics section, followed by three ethnographic chapters, and a conclusion. I will outline what each of the chapters focus on and provide a brief literature review of the literature I have engaged with in each ethnographic chapter so as to situate my data within a theoretical framework for analysis. I have included more detailed reviews at the beginning of each chapter.

In **Chapter Two** I discuss the methods I used during fieldwork, why they were important and in what ways they gave me access to certain data and themes. In this chapter I also argue that by stretching the standard anthropological fieldwork methods, I gained deeper access and understanding of my participants. I provide a section where I discuss the benefits of researching creativity, with particular reference to participant observation during improvisational theatre which was used as a main method by YIPSA for the programme.

[3] Due to circumstances which I will explain in my conclusion, a performance at the end of the programme was not able to be carried out.

[4] I have not focused on post-release prisoners here and call on the need for work to be done in this area.

Chapter Three is my first ethnographic chapter. It focuses on the theme of space which locates the data and participants within my research. It is impossible to do research in a prison or with prisoners without taking the space it and they occupy. Space within a prison is created, controlled, and negotiated in very different ways to society and space outside of its walls and therefore it was vital to consider when trying to gain deeper understanding into my participants lived experiences daily in prison. It is important to deal with this theme first as it lays the foundation for the themes that follow in the proceeding chapters. I use Kelly Gillespie's paper *The Social Life of Space: Post-Apartheid Prisons, and the Problem with Architectural Reform* (2010) to understand the Anthropological work that has been done on prison spaces in South Africa. Gillespie (2010) reviews the theoretical concepts of Foucault's (1979) *Discipline and Punish* to discuss surveillance and to argue that the architecture of the prison, with emphasis on the role of the panopticon, plays an important role in how prisoners experience the space they occupy. But her main argument is that prison is a 'relational space', formed by the social relationships that give it life and that it helps in producing. Thus, "It is of critical importance in any consideration of space to understand it in terms of its relationality rather than its form" (although form and design must also be taken into account) (Gillespie, 2010:47).

I have also looked to Victor Turner's 1969 book, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* with particular focus on his chapters where he explains his concept of "liminality" and spaces that are liminal. Turner states a liminal period (or space) as being when a group of people are removed and normally secluded from society, becoming hidden. People engaged in this stage are "transitional beings". The main objective of this period is for the person to come out having learnt something that has changed the way they see themselves in the world. Prison is a liminal space and therefore this body of theoretical work was vital in order for me to understand the prison space theoretically. In this chapter I use Turner's concept of liminality to discuss whether or not my participants see the prison space as a space that is transitional, as Turner describes it as, and a space which is removed from the rest of society temporarily. I also use it to discuss that different spaces are liminal to different extents in prison.

Together With Turner's concepts of liminality, I use Goffman, in his 1961 work, *Asylums*, which takes the total institution into account. He defines the "total institution 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" (Goffman, 1961:11). In my study the prison as a whole is seen as the total institution.

Much of what I explore theoretically in **Chapter Four** has come from Tim Ingold and Elizabeth Halllam's book, *Creativity and Cultural Improvisation* (2007). This chapter explains in more detail what two hours in the YIPSA programme looks like, and describes with particular detail, some of the improvisational theatre activities that were played during these sessions. I use Ingold and Hallam's work to emphasise that it is the *process* rather than the *product* of these sessions that is of value to the programme and my participants. In their book they argue that there is no script to social life and so therefore people have to improvise. I use this to argue that inside prison there are in fact strict codes and scripts to social life but in the programme, social life is more "normal", and what Ingold and Hallam say is applicable. In the programme space, social life is less scripted and therefore relationships are able to form differently. Ingold & Hallam (2007) provide an important theoretical concept for analysis, that: improvisation is *generative, relational, temporal,* and is the *way we work.* I will be focusing on the first two. Improvisation is "*generative,* in the sense that it gives rise to the phenomenal forms of culture as experienced by those who live by them or in accord with them…it is *relational,* in that it is continually attuned and responsive to the performance of others" (Ingold & Hallam, 2007:1).

From my discussion with Victor Turner's work on liminality and his book *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (1969) in Chapter Three, I am led to his theoretical concepts which explain performance and ritual. He highlights the potential for liminal zones to be spaces that are highly creative and transformative, allowing for some kind of change. As the prison is a liminal space this is useful when looking at creativity in prison. Turner (1969) goes onto explain performance and how it is a ritualised *process*. I argue that the importance of *process* explained by Ingold and Hallam (2007) through performance and improvisational theatre in the programme space is ritualised. It is this ritualised process within which my participants find value and were able to have different lived experiences. I use Rosaldo, Levie & Narayan (1993:5) to argue for the value of creativity who "broadly define creativity as human activities that transform existing cultural practices in a manner that a community or certain of its members find of value." They highlight the potential for creativity to transform the everyday lived experiences of those who engage in creative processes.

Chapter five takes what has been said about space, ritual, creativity, and process in the preceding ethnographic chapters and looks at participants' lived experience while in prison. Focusing on the body, I look at how these experiences and feelings are embodied and how these changes are dependent on the situation. I use John Blacking, who in his book *The*

Anthropology of The Body (1977) argues that "altered states of consciousness are common experiences for many oppressed peoples of the world (and prisoners fall into this category), and very often these states seem to postpone rather than promote a positive response to (their) situation...feelings are situational, expressive forms will vary according to time, place, and those involved" (Blacking, 1977:15).

Since the late 1970s, the body has been a pivotal site in the humanities from which to lay the foundation for almost all questions. In order to frame my argument I use Frances Mascia-Lees' introduction in *A Companion to the Anthropology of the Body* (2011) where she argues that we cannot talk about questions of oppression and power without challenging representations of the body. And in turn, the body cannot be considered without considering that lived experience of a particular body. Mascia-Lees (2011) highlights two of the most important insights that have become central to the study of anthropology and the body. Firstly, that bodies are mediated and hybrid, constituted by and constitutive of political economic formations. Secondly, the importance of considering lived experience (stated above). A third insight highlighted as being important since the 1990s is that "the senses, emotions, and affect are the essence of our embodied materialities and socialities" (Mascia-Lees, 2001: 2). In the 1990s these ideas of embodiment were reinforced by Thomas Csordas (1990, 1994), influenced by Bourdieu (1977, 1984) and Merleau-Ponty's (1942, 1962, 1964) work in phenomenology. His work highlights the differences between anthropological work which considers the body as an external object and focuses on concepts of the body, and theories of embodiment which focus on the actual lived experiences of negotiating life through one's own body in the world.

Mascia-Lees led me to Nancy Scheper Hughes and Margaret Lock's pivotal and foundational paper to the embodiment theories, *The Mindful Body* (1987). Scheper-Hughes and Lock (1987:7) argue that there are three ways in which the body can be seen and analysed, which they call "The Three Bodies". These are; The Individual Body, The Social Body, and thirdly **"**The Body Politic**"**[5]**.** It is within these theoretical concepts, with particular reference to Scheper-Hughes and Lock's (1987) "Three Bodies" that I ground my data for analysis in Chapter Five.

[5] I will explain these in more detail in Chapter Five.

It can thus be seen that prisons are liminal spaces, in which experiences are framed by ritual processes or, at times, the absence of ritual processes. Anthropological work on ritual and the body has thus been useful in this work, and I return to these themes in the chapters that follow. Let us turn now to the methods used to elicit the data on which this argument is based.

Chapter Two:

Methods from the inside

Introduction

I use this section to explain the conventional anthropological methods I used, but argue that the stretching of these conventional techniques was necessary to my research process. Using the conventional methods as a base from which to work and then developing unique and varied methods from there allowed me to gain rapport with my informants and develop relationships. Building honest and "real" relationships within the prison space is hard as it is met with all kinds of power structures and dynamics. This dissertation provides a detailed explanation of the research methods that I used. I argue that using the particular methods I did, gave me particular access to themes and analysis.

Rhodes (2001) writes about the difficulties of getting to fully know the social life of a prison. For example, observation as an important anthropological method of fieldwork could be met with resistance as your observational methods could be seen as similar to surveillance inherent in prison and punishment. Rhodes shows how Feldman (1991 in Rhodes 2001) instead, gathered oral histories of prisoners. This, Feldman felt gave him access to how prisoners see their relationship to the prison. It has been effective in deciphering how informants are situated, and how they see themselves within the hierarchical structures of prison. Similarly, in this research project I have had to use a variety of methods to access data in the restricted space of the prison.

Fieldwork was carried out over a two month period, my main field site being within Pollsmoor Prison itself. I spent two mornings a week in Pollsmoor from 09:30am until midday. My main participants consisted of a group of ten young men between the ages of twenty and twenty eight who were attending the YIPSA program; one man was black, one white and the other eight were coloured[6]. I also interacted and spoke with many of the prison members informally, and

[6] I comment on the racialisations of prison in Chapter Four, pp36.

spent time and interviewed YIPSA facilitators and volunteers (mainly Tynan and Nkosinathi) who helped me to elicit much of my data too. I spent some time "hanging out" at YIPSA's head offices in Salt River, Cape Town where I conducted a few interviews and attended a workshop. For ethical reasons I decided to stay in the field until the full length of the programme was completed and not just for the three to four week honours project fieldwork requirement. This meant I was involved in the programme in Pollsmoor for a total of three months, from the beginning of July until the end of September 2015. During this period, I made use of the following methods.

Participant Observation

Participant Observation is one of the main and most important anthropological methods that are carried out during the fieldwork process. According to Eriksen (2004), this means that the ethnographer should live with the people he studies or at least spend lengthy periods of time with them, participating in their daily activities and making observations. As I was carrying out fieldwork in the setting of a prison, living with my participants was not an option. Time spent with them was limited to twice a week for two hours, in a space outside the 'normal' environment of their cell blocks. This affected my findings and analysis which will be explained further in the following chapters to do with space. During these periods, I was able to participate as volunteer, but clearly not as prisoner. I thus had to rely on other methods to elicit data. These included: improvisation theatre sessions, workshops, facilitated debates and conversations, games, and art creation (which mainly consisted of drawing).

Observations and 'Sharing Life'

I conducted bi-weekly 'sharing sessions' where both my informants and I had some time to share anything they wanted with the group. Often it was just "I'm good" but other times much more emerged and we were able to talk about relationships and experiences in and out of prison. Through these sessions I started to gain access to themes relating to stress and the space in which daily life occurs in prison, and also to coping strategies which also exposed themes of embodiment.

Interviews and Focus Groups

Individual interviews were carried out as well as focus groups. Nougent and Loucks (2011) in their study on female prisoners made use of these methods while conducting research. Focus groups are a way to create a less formal environment, and one that is more conversational,

where prisoners can discuss experiences of being in prison as well as YIPSA's creative arts program. My focus groups consisted of my eleven male informants and I negotiated with YIPSA and Nkosinathi when time could be allocated during the program to this. There was a week period where the program was put on hold, which therefore gave me ample time within which to conduct these sessions. Conducting focus groups and workshops have formed a large part of my research process.

Researching Creativity and Improvisation

During the process of research, I found particular value in analysing the process of improvisation activities within the programme, in that it allowed me to interrogate the ways in which particular aspects of participant observation provided access to particular themes and analysis. I argue that this has helped me to understand my participants' experiences while in prison and the relationships that in turn inform their creative processes. Anthropological writing and description in itself is a creative process and can therefore contribute a great deal to the understanding of creative processes. Demian and Wastell (2007) provide a useful synopsis:

> "If anthropology itself is a process of looking for social patterns that enable us to communicate our conviction that particular kinds of relationships exist, the 'noise' of social, political and religious creativity is the by-product of our attempts to convert our experience of these relationships into ethnographic description" (Demian & Wastell, 2007:124).

In the 1980s and 1990s performance theory started to appear in anthropology. It helped anthropologists to find ways of explaining, theorising and discussing creativity and performance within a range of genres. Performance implied that what was being looked at was "improvised, ephemeral, fluid, if the moment only-but in that moment, vital and responsive to contingencies of context" (Barber, 2007:29). It is this response to the contexts within which it is created that helped us to gain deeper understanding of the social lives of our participants. What is performed or rather what a participant chooses to express also provides us with deeper understandings into the "operations by which they are constituted" (Barber, 2007). In this way, what my participants chose to say or act often reflected the workings of the prison. They were able to explain, for example, through the improvising of a sequence, the way meal times were carried out, situating themselves, other prisoners, the prisoners that served the food, and the guards in order to explain the dynamics and some aspects of the everyday workings of the

prison. Thus, as Barber (2007: 29) explains; "as a performance proceeds it is simultaneously inscribed in the very acts which make up the performance." This meant that how my participants improvised constantly helped me to understand more deeply the contexts and environments for with they had come and within which they were formed. This understanding was not always as simple as it seemed. Often one word or a sequence of words, would need a whole sequence of steps to be carried out, to try to understand the participant's thought process and find the *disappeared* meaning (Barber, 2007). Although we will never fully be able to understand the entire world experiences of our participants, this helped me to gain deeper understanding for my own research.

Ethical Considerations

I must state the limitations of my research. Attendance of this programme is mandatory if prisoners wish to be granted parole. This means that behaviour within the programme may be quite different from the usual. They may say things to please those intentions and not provide wholly truthful accounts or opinions. In this regard the improvisational theatre that was conducted was useful as it allowed participants to express the first thing that came into their minds, with less scripted agendas. I have had to negotiate in and between these complex relationships and dynamics during fieldwork. I have been aware of these complexities from the start and have taken them into consideration in the analysis and writing up process. In working with the Knowledge Co-Op and YIPSA there were times where negotiation was necessary in order to achieve the aims of everyone concerned. All parties involved contributed to the writing up and signing of a contract which stated the intentions of the project and made sure that each side was aware of personal goals and would do what they could to help to achieve those goals. I recognised that these could have conflicted at times but they did not in the end, YIPSA and I developed a good and respectful relationship and I was able to conduct research without confronting any ethical difficulties. I will hopefully continue to work with YIPSA in the future and I am planning to go back as a volunteer and facilitator next year.

In order to ensure that my project was conducted in an ethical way I have engaged with *Ethical guidelines and Principles of Conduct for Anthropologists Southern Africa, UCT research ethics code for research involving human participants*, and the AAA's (American Anthropological Association) 2012 Ethics Code. I have also made use of Waldram's (1998) *Anthropology in Prison: Negotiating Consent and Accountability with a 'Captured' Population*

when looking at ethical issues regarding my project in particular. All three codes of ethics are fairly similar and all expect similar standards. I accept these ethical standards and was constantly aware of them throughout my research process. I will highlight those which I see to be most relevant to my study below:

1. Do no harm. It is our responsibility as Anthropologist to make sure that no harm is done to any of our participants, co-organisations, or to ourselves. I was aware of all of the ways my research could possible harm; mentally, physically, and socially. I was constantly aware and self-reflexive.

2. Be honest. All intentions from the beginning of the research process and throughout have been communicated to participants, funders, organisations involved, supervisors and other colleagues. Research participants, YIPSA and the UCT Knowledge Co-Op knew my research goals, methods, impacts, and outcomes of the project. Similarly, the contract I signed with the Knowledge Co-Op clearly outlined YIPSA's expectations of me, and my expectations of them.

3. Informed Consent. This is one of the most important aspects of conducting ethical research. It is an ongoing and negotiated process. Participants knew that at any time, they had the right to remove themselves from the study. Participants also understood that they had the choice to be anonymous through pseudonyms. Pseudonyms have been used here for all my participants that were prisoners. All other participants expressed that they were happy for me to use their real names.

4. Working with vulnerable populations. This is of the utmost importance to my study. Prisoners were not made more vulnerable by my research. Waldram (1998) argues that prisoners lack power, personal autonomy and freedom and therefore have much more complex ethical situations. This powerlessness can lead to easier manipulation, and therefore I was constantly aware of this. Waldram (1998) looks at some of the problems that may arise. He says that researchers must not allow authorities to make decisions on their behalf. I gained consent from authorities, volunteers, facilitators and each individual inmate that I talked to. What Waldram (1998:239) states is useful:

> "As researcher we must be able to mediate between inmates' unique legal status and obvious control others have over them, as well as their own conceptions of oppression and rejection of such authority structures."

Participation in research can potentially create feelings of empowerment among prisoners as it gives them the choice to say yes or no and gives them a voice that is taken seriously.

5. Giving Back. It is my responsibility as an anthropologist to give back to both my participants and to the NGO. To YIPSA, this will be in the form of a presentation and a four page written report that they will find useful. Access to all my findings will also be available to all involved. To my participants: Jannie, Timothy, Gerrald, Raul, Zaneal, Andi, Rodney, Gurun, Andi and Gareth.

6. Ensuring my own safety. I was aware of ethical considerations to do with my own safety within the prison. I did not put myself in positions that may have jeopardised that safety or well-being. I did not disclose any of my personal details to anyone within the prison.

I was aware of my own subjectivity and how I influenced my own research. I was always observant of how my race, class, and gender influenced all aspects of my research throughout the research process. In considering all the above ethical issues, and through working with the UCT Knowledge Co-Op and YIPSA, I argue that this project has more ethical value than others. By taking up this project with the two organisations, I was fulfilling both their call for research and my own requirements for obtaining my honours degree.

Chapter Three:

Negotiating the "outside-inside"

"Not outside, not here outside-but outside –OUT-SIDE, ja ja. THE OUTSIDE, OUT THERE" (points to the outside-the mountain.) –Raymond (prisoner)

Introduction

Pollsmoor Prison is the largest prison complex in Cape Town, and although plans for reconstruction after apartheid were made, little has changed since it was first built. According to Gillespie (2010: 43), "it remains in many ways, an apartheid prison." Walking inside of it for the first time, it feels as if you are stuck in a rabbit warren, and at times it is impossible to imagine where you are. This was one of the reasons for my feelings of dislocation when I first arrived and experiences of complete unfamiliarity with this space. This chapter will focus on prisoners' experiences and relationships with space, and with other prisoners, within different spaces in prison. It is impossible to write any kind of ethnography or dissertation within a prison without looking more deeply into this complex theme. It is central to the experiences of my participants and how they negotiate certain spaces in their everyday life in prison. Gillespie's notion of space in prisons is useful here:

> **"**Although space in the history of the prison has typically been understood as the discrete architectural form and reform of the prison itself, a more complex definition of space would call for the prison to be read as a site of relations, of social interactions, which cohere at the site of the prison but are not reducible as a built object" (Gillespie, 2010:40).

In this way, Gillespie (2010:47) goes on to explain that prison is a "relational space", formed by the social relationships that give it life and that it helps in producing. Thus, "It is of critical importance in any consideration of space to understand it in terms of its relationality rather than its form" (Gillespie, 2010:47). Too often prison is seen for its design and architectural form and not relationally. Prison seen as purely a built structure is a "functionalist dream"- whereby each part of the "machine" contributes towards the running of the total institution. Foucault's

renowned work on the prison focuses on the panopticon[7] shape of the prison structure for surveillance, and sees it as perfection (Gillespie, 2010). "The panopticon is a marvellous machine which, whatever use one may wish to put it to, produces homogenous effects of power leaving little room for deviance and defiance" (Foucault, 1979:202). The ideas associated with this architecture, its perfection of controlling power and control over those who occupy it and the social cannot be completely applied to Pollsmoor Prison. The space Pollsmoor occupies is produced by its social and relational aspects and not only by its design.

The historical persistence of the prison and prison theorists like Foucault has been to see the prison as a place that attempts to reform through design aspects such as the panopticon. I argue that this is not the case at Pollsmoor. Pollsmoor leaves much room for "deviance and defiance." Most of my informants at some time throughout my fieldwork said they had taken drugs while in prison, participated in gang life, and accessed the internet somehow, which is strongly against prison policy but is just let be by "members." According to Gillespie (2010), surveillance is often reversed and prison warders often cannot provide a secure environment for prisoners. Some of my participants, who were not involved in gang life outside prison, are now active in prison gangs, which facts could be used to argue that Pollsmoor in fact produces deviance (see Steinberg, 2004, for a discussion of the social life of gangs in South African prisons). Two participants did express some 'reformation' and positive change while being in prison by giving up drugs and attending school, but this was due to personally deciding to change and was not spurred on by attempts for reform by the prison. With the rise of prison overcrowding, with a 60% rise in the incarceration population since 1994, Gillespie (2008) looks at the 'superficiality' of the prison system's attempt to portray South African prisons as moral institutions for the solution of crime and the potential of rehabilitation programs to help prisoners transform. Living in communal cells, overcrowded with 50-60 prisoners, also suggests that the prison space cannot be considered without the social as this provides a highly social space. In the next section I will consider theoretically how these complex spaces can be thought about and understood.

[7] The panopticon was designed by Jeremy Bentham in the early 19th century as a new form of architecture, in particular for prisons but also used in insane asylums and other spaces. It was designed in a way that would enable full circular surveillance at all times, as it was situated in the middle of a circular shaped space and tall for observation. Prisoners' individual cells were situated on the circumference of the circle and could not see their observers but knew they were there. This was particularly analysed by Foucault in his *Discipline and Punish* (1977) who used it as a metaphor to look more deeply into the relationships between systems of social control (prison system) and those who were under this control (prisoners).

Prison as a 'liminal' space

I will be using Victor Turner's (1969) ideas of 'liminality' to argue, firstly, that prison produces liminal spaces, and, secondly, that not all spaces are as liminal as others. I am not restricting prison to producing spaces which are only liminal though.

Turner states a "liminal period" as being when a group of people are removed and normally secluded from society, becoming hidden. People engaged in this stage are "transitional beings". The main objective of this period is for the person to come out having learnt something that has changed the way they see themselves in the world, or the way in which they are seen by others within the society.

How do prisoners see and experience their space while in prison? Do they see these spaces as ones that are liminal? In order to answer this question we need to understand the spaces which my participants occupy. I argue that some spaces are seen by prisoners as more liminal than others and this, in turn, affects the role they play in their experiences within it. I will look at three zones to analyse this further, these being: the prison as a total institution, prisoners' dormitory-style cells that they call "rooms", and "the courtroom" where the YIPSA program takes place.

Moving from the inside ("the room"/cell) to the "outside-inside" ("the courtroom")

I argue that the ritual (Turner ,1969) of moving from the participants' "room" to "the courtroom" transformed the way participants felt and behaved within the program space while occupying it, in turn re-ordering relationships between members of the group while in that space.

Imagining the journey

At 9:30 on a Tuesday and Thursday, Nkosinathi and I complete our journey into the space within which we will conduct the programme, "the courtroom". This space is a small version of a traditional courtroom and is where prisoners come when anything is needed to be put before a judge. This space provides more than enough space to carry out the programme's creative activities. We immediately go and find one of the Intervention Correctional Officer (ICO) offices as we need to ask them to go and fetch the group from their section; they are in section E. We find Sister Jane, a short and sturdy coloured woman with a smile that you notice immediately and don't forget quickly. She is an unlikely maternal type figure in and amongst

the generally masculine officials. This is almost never a smooth or timely process. Often we have to negotiate with other members to either find by way of calling or searching further inside the prison for either of the ICOs, which often involves jokes about owing them chocolate. Often we find them but they then have trouble once reaching the section. Either there are not enough members, therefore not enough security in the section to open the cells, or there has been an altercation between the prisoners and once, between the members themselves. This means that the programme hardly ever starts on time.

Section E

DOOF, DOOF, DOOF! Sister Jane knocks on the big metal door of section E.

"Hello, Can someone let us in? Hello?"

Two buildings stand facing each other separated by two empty areas divided by a path. One patch is grassy, maintained by prisoner gardening, the other side is dirt and makes do as a soccer pitch. These are mainly used during "exercise time." ("We maybe get it once or twice a week but it depends when the members want to", in the words of Janni, the only white man in th group. He is tall, strewn with gang tattoos, and is missing four of his front teeth, but is confident and cocky.). This time is precious as it means that prisoners can go outside their cells, outside meaning a little bit more space where they can play some soccer, a space that houses no roof ,where the sun can touch their skin.

The two buildings face each other. The one on the right is filled with young men awaiting trial, dressed in the clothes they were caught in, and the one on the left is where my participants are housed. You enter my participants' cell block through a barred door into a corridor. On either side of the corridor are about five separate dormitory style cells, overcrowded and each holding about fifty to sixty men. Laundry is hanging in criss-cross patterns from the barred door to the furthest corner of the room. Today I am with Sister Jane because the list has been lost, and I am needed to differentiate who is actually in the group from who is claiming to be. We call at each separate room door, "Young in Prison, Come on, come on, Young in Prison." There is a lot of noise in the building now, people shouting out, wanting to come out, wanting to ask to be in the next programme, all sorts. This space was completely overwhelming on my first encounter due to my dislocation, and my pre-conceived ideas of what possibly could happen and my safety. But now I am relaxed and confident, familiar with the space, members and prisoners.

"Ok, is that everyone, let's count. Raymond, Andi, Gerrald, Zaneal, Rushlee, Jannie, Gurun, Rushlee. Where's Raul and Timothy?"

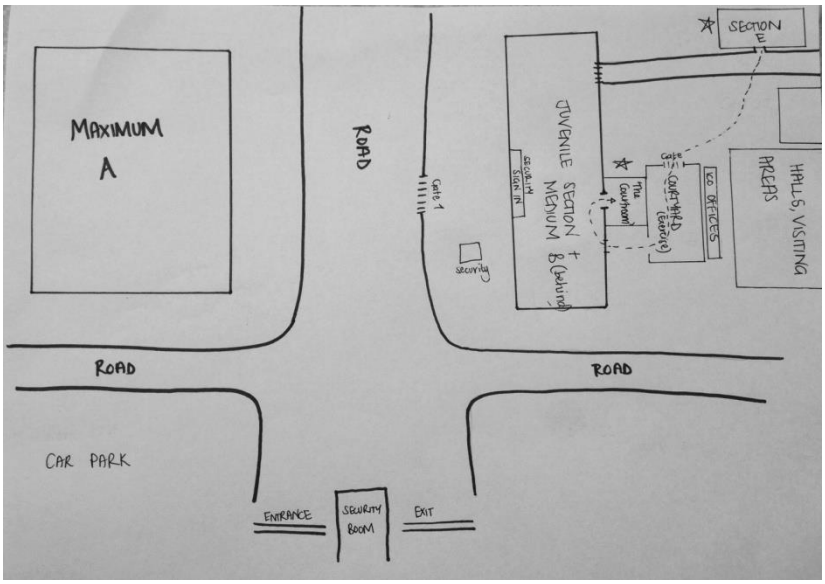
"They're at school."

"OK. Let's go guys."

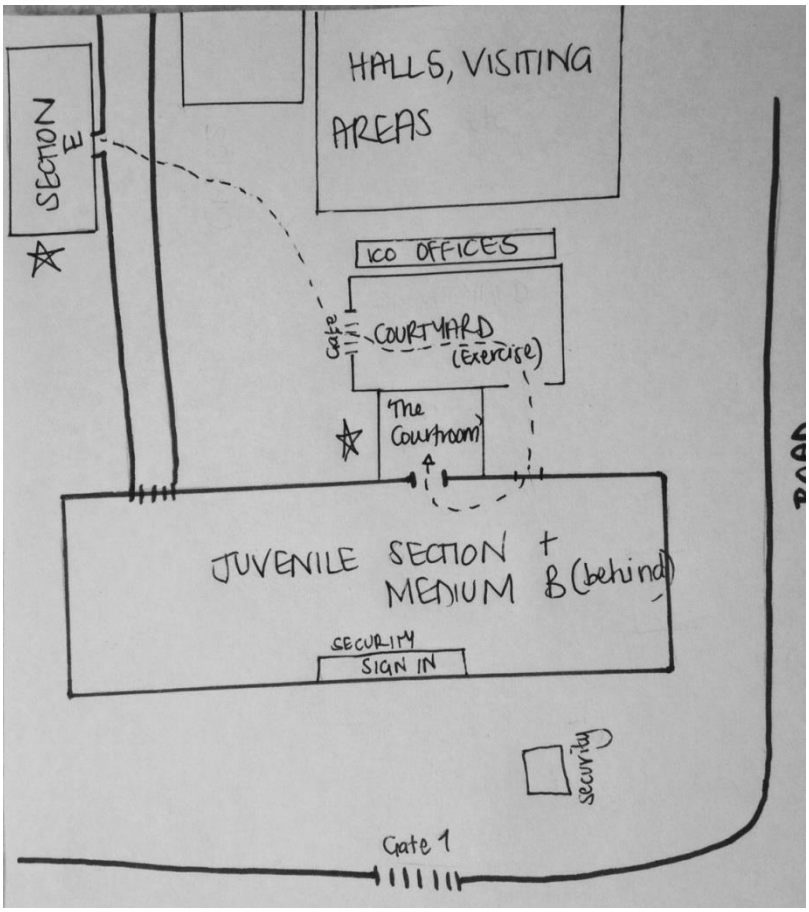
Stepping inside "The Courtroom"

In the 5 minute or so journey from section E to the courthouse, many different demarcated areas are negotiated through. The further we move away, the more feelings of an "outside-inside" polarity are apparent. On leaving their rooms, they enter the corridors of their cells, from there through the cell door, outside into the section "exercise area" and from there through the section door out into the pathway linking all of the sections. From here we go through another door into another more spacious area that contains the hall and visitor areas. They cross the lawn, go under some trees, go through another big metal door into the ICO yard, through the yard and into the courtroom. "The courtroom" as its name suggests is the courtroom used for some legal processions, such as discussion of parole. It is a light and airy room which means it can also be very cold in winter. It is a square-shaped room, and is a small replica of the conventional-style courtroom, where there are wooden benches for observers facing the elevated section at the front of the room, where the judge and companions sit. On either side of this, there is another row of benches, to separate those who are under trial. In this way the space is controlled, making surveillance easier, linking this back to Foucault's concepts I mention earlier to do with the architectural design of the prison (panoticon).

A map of Pollsmoor as I encountered it:



A close up of the above left hand section, highlighting the journey:



The Total Institution

Goffman, in his 1961 work, *Asylums*, defines the "total institution 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" (Goffman, 1961:11). When each of my participants were asked where they live, not one said Tokai (the suburb the prison is situated in), or Pollsmoor but answered from where they had originally come; for example, "I live in Kraaifontein." This answer, spoken in the present tense was the answer given no matter how long a participant had been in prison already or how much longer their sentence was. My participants very much saw prison as a transitional zone, one which they were passing through temporarily, expressing their deep wishes to return back to their families outside. Raul who is tall and thin, in his mid-twenties, and a sensitive young coloured man who regularly talks about missing his family, said that "I feel quite homesick. The only thing I ever miss in prison is my family." Timothy talked about his Aunt; "She's got a job lined up for me when I get out and so I need to study hard and change in prison so that I can be better when I go out." Timothy and Raul are great friends. Timothy is shorter and a deep thinker who does not like to be taken for a fool.

The "Room"

Turner (1964:50) states that "The liminal group is a community or comity of comrades and not structure of hierarchically arrayed positions. This comradeship transcends distinctions of rank, age, kinship positions, and in some kinds of cultic group, even sex." If this is the definition of a liminal group within a liminal space, then I argue that the 'room' or prison cell, which participants occupy most of the time, does not produce a liminal group. This is due to "The Number", the name given to the three different gangs (26s, 27s, and 28s) which are extremely active throughout Pollsmoor, and prisons all over South Africa.

One day during one of the focus groups I conducted, the Number came up and my participants offered to help me understand it a bit better. This conversation reflected the importance they placed on being a part of gang life.

"So, there are three gangs?" I ask.

"Yes, but we are all one."

"Okay, so why can't you have one gang?"

"WHAT????? NO WAY!!" a unanimous response across the group, shaking their head at me affectionately, like a child who does not understand.

"Look at the *frans* (prisoners who choose not to join one of the three gangs) Sarah, *they* are like gangsters. They beat each other up, they don't behave, they're undisciplined and have no respect."

"The Number is all about discipline and respect."

"Our moms and dads knew this already but we learnt it inside. You normally learn it from your moms and dads."

I did not push my participants to talk about their gang lives and participation in the Number and when it did come up they either talked fairly vaguely about it or someone would say "guys, you know we not allowed to talk about that here." The Number plays a very important role in their lives in prison. It rules the prison, creating social order within an environment that would be void of it without. It creates exactly those things which Turner describes a liminal group to abandon. In contrast to this, programs like YIPSA's provides spaces where gang affiliations can temporarily be abandoned, thus allowing participants to experience social spaces differently. It is to this that I now turn.

The 'Courtroom': in Raymonds terms "the not here outside"

The courtroom is the space within which YIPSA's program is run. It is important to take into account the other two spaces I have explained above in order to analyse this space. If the total institution is seen by prisoners as liminal and the wider prison social group as not liminal, then the program and its participants create a different kind of space within the wider institution of the prison. What Raymond, a cheeky and very talkative coloured young man in his early twenties, also known as "Green eyes" for obvious reasons says at the beginning of this chapter of how he categorises the spaces into different kinds of outside is useful here: *"Not outside, not here outside ('the courtroom')-but outside –OUT-SIDE, ja ja. THE OUTSIDE, OUT THERE" (beyond the security gates).*

The ground rules which are created by the participants at the very beginning of the program help to create a different kind of space too. They were as follows:

1. No prison (gang) language (called Sabela[8])
2. Respect each other
3. No swearing
4. When one person talks allow them to talk
5. Listen
6. Raise your hand to talk
7. What happens in the room stays in the room (in their cells, if there has been a fight, do not bring it to class)
8. What happens in the program stays in the program
9. **Everyone is equal** (no gang status, for example.)
10. Be kind

Gerrald is a bald, calculated and outspoken young man from Paarl. He said, "I can't think straight in there. Here, everything is much clearer."

Raymond said one day, "I haven't laughed in ages. It's like a comfort zone here you see. We can forget what happens in the room."

The group created is one that is more closely linked to the outside, "normal" world, creating a space more "comforting", "secure" and "relaxing", helping participants to cope, which I will deal with in more detail in the following chapters. The most important ground rule that contributes to the re-ordering of relationships while in the program is that "everyone is equal." This means that there is a conscious attempt to forget divisions, dynamics and rank put in place by the Number while in the program space. Participants formed relationships with other prisoners in the group that would not have been formed inside their section. The program did not choose participants in relation to what gang they belonged to (only 26s, 27s or 28s) but purely on behaviour. This meant that there were members from all three gangs working together in an equal space, which would not be possible inside their section. One day I asked

[8] Sabela is the language spoken by members of "The Number" throughout South African prisons. New gang members are taught it after being initiated. It is a mixture of Afrikaans, English, and many of the local South African languages but also uses symbols and bodily actions. For example, stamping a foot, or using your hands while you speak.

them, knowing very well what their reaction may be, “So, if you can all work together in this space, why can’t you have one gang that supports each other in the same ways?”

“WHAT? NO WAY!” (Laughing) was the group’s answer.

“Have the relationships you’ve formed in the program had any effect on the way you interact with each other inside the section?”

Raul answered, “Ja it has, the other day Raymond, Gerrald and me couldn’t agree on something. Normally it would definitely had ended up with fight you see, Raymond wanted to punch, but then we thought about what we learnt here, in the program and we sorted it out.”

“Also it’s nice to be able to get things off your chest here, it’s hard for me to be open, we can’t talk about these things inside the room. I know that the guys will keep it with them. But it is nice to know that they know inside, even if we don’t talk much Sarah.” Gerrald adds

Liminality comes from a lack of relationships as they are formed in “normal” society without the agendas that the Number creates inside. The relationships they make inside prison and through their affiliations to the Number are very deep, close and important to them, as in the words of Zaneal; the one who claims to always be happy, and is always laughing through the gap in his two front teeth and making fun, explains, “We are like brothers”, but the way those relationships are formed inside prison are very different to outside society. The gangs create a strict social order that determines the way relationships are formed. In “the courtroom”, participants are less removed from society because they are able to build different kinds of relationships with one another that are less determined and controlled by a greater social structure. Gerrald’s comment above is an example of this. He explains how he feels he can talk about things in “the courtroom” that he cannot inside his “room” and that the relationships he has formed with other inmates is different than when they are inside their section. He feels he can share different kinds of things within the programme space and with people that he wouldn’t normally do in the section space.

Conclusion

In order to more deeply understand my participants’ lived experiences while in prison, the consideration of the space within which they experience the everyday is important. Here I have looked at how design and architectural form influence these but more importantly focus on the “relational” aspects of the prison structure and its social life. Prison as a whole can be

considered as a liminal space but certain areas within prison can be more liminal than others. The programme provides a space that is far less liminal, one that is less isolated and removed from the outside world. In "the courtroom", participants are less removed from society because they are allowed to build different kinds of relationships with one another. This means that participants have different views and experiences of their lives while in this space.

Chapter Four:

Looking inside a creative arts programme in Pollsmoor

"I'm the baton" (Zaneal.

"I'm Meneer Vissie" (Jannie).

"I'm Meneer Vissie's shoes" (Gerrald).

Dialogue between participants while playing one of the improvisation games in the program.

Introduction

In this chapter I will look more closely at the creative arts programme that is carried out by YIPSA, in "the courtroom" space which has been explained in the preceding chapter. The overall programme implemented by YIPSA is called "Koposo", which uses the creative arts (drawing, music, and theatre) to teach life skills to its participants. These life skills include those which the organisation deems to be important and useful when participants are released, in a hope that they may have different options than a life of crime. In this chapter, I will be focusing on the first section of the programme, entitled "Coping with emotions" as although there are three sections in total, this was the one I observed and participated in during my fieldwork period. YIPSA's model assumes that participants may lack the ability to cope with emotions and see being able to do so as an important life skill to have, in order to cope both inside and outside of prison. Much of my data for this chapter was dependant on a particular volunteer named Tynan. He was a study abroad student from Stanford University, here for six weeks to work with YIPSA and to co-facilitate the programme. Back home in America, he is part of an improvisation theatre group and had already used it as a method for programme work at youth centres in the Stanford area where he lives.

Tim Ingold and Elizabeth Hallam (2007), open their book *Creativity and Cultural Improvisation* with: "There is no script for social and cultural life. People have to work it out as they go along. In a word, they have to *improvise"* (Ingold and Hallam, 2007: 1*).* Improvisation, used as a form of theatre in the YIPSA programme is a very useful way of understanding the social and cultural life of my participants, reflecting much about their

experiences in prison, world views, and relationships. I will also use Ingold and Hallam (2007), plus others to argue that the creative *process* carried out in the programme is of more value than the *product* which it creates. In capitalist modernity, product is given value whereas here, participants gain far more from the process. The program acts as a ritual where performance and in particular improvisational performance gives participants a chance to forget the realities of prison life and feel comfortable to express anything that comes to mind.

Creativity in "The Courtroom"

"We would never act like this inside the room, no way! (Laughing). These games are crazy. I can do things here, I can't do there. I feel comfortable man." -Zaneal

Rosaldo, Lavie and Narayan (1993) dedicate their book, *Creativity/Anthropology* to the memory of Victor Turner, who has informed much of the theoretical body of work I have used thus far. Turner's life work reformulated earlier theories about the human significance of play and ritual. He creates the platform from which the study of creativity in culture has been built from, in anthropology. "He found that a range of ritual processes produced transformations that allowed the participants to rework their past and move toward a renewed future" (Rosaldo, Lavie & Narayan, 1993:1). This is relevant when looking at the YIPSA programme as we will see that participants' engagement in the programme process helps them to see themselves, others, and their lives in prison differently. In this analysis I will explore the improvisation games through the lens of Turner's (1967) ritual processes and will take these games to be those ritual processes that Turner explains.

Rosaldo, Levie & Narayan (1993: 5) "broadly define creativity as human activities that transform existing cultural practices in a manner that a community or certain of its members find of value." The creative individual is someone who is willing to break with imposed social conventions. The quote given above from Zaneal explains how his behaviour in the programme space was very different to when he was in his cell, allowing him to feel more comfortable to express creativity on his own terms. According to Ingold and Hallam (2007: 9) "in coming up with ideas it seems that every mind is on its own, effectively cut off from the world of personas, objects and relations in which it subsists." Again the programme provides a space for this to happen but we must not forget that we cannot separate the mind's creativity from the relations and social life that inform it, in this case that which informs what a participant expresses while

improvising. This is seen throughout the ethnographic examples where participants continually revert to ideas in the games that explain life in prison and not from their lives outside.

The first thing that comes into your mind: One Day in the Programme

"So, guys, what comes into your mind when I say emotions?" is the question Nkosinathi begins with in an early Tuesday morning session.

"Stress"

"Angry"

"Hate"

"Homesick"

"Cross"

"Depression"

"Happy"

"Love"

"Hate"

"Sex"

"Sad"

"Hungry"

"Okay, good. Now we're going to see if we can act out an emotion-no talking- and let the class guess what emotion you are acting. Who's going first?"

"I will", says Gerrald. He walks around the room, a frown on his face and contemplating deeply. His head then falls into his hand. The class shouts "worried!"

"Yes. I'm worried how to get money in my pocket."

Everyone has a turn to express an emotion and then it is Tynan's turn to facilitate. He carries out a series of activities with the group:

Blaaah, Whoosh, Crrrrr

Tynan begins: "Let's get into a circle. Okay, so guys I've got a sound ball here. I'm holding it in my hand. Can you see it?" He uses his hands to create the shape of the ball. "Now, we're going to pass this ball around, each time letting out the first noise that comes to our minds. Anything. Throw or pass the word to anyone in the circle, like this...I-EEEEEEEE-OWW" (everyone starts to laugh). "Okay, now Gerrald you catch the word, and as you do, repeat my word, and then pass your own word on like that around the circle."-

"WRRRR", Gerrald says and passes it to Raul.

Raul catches the sound ball and lets out a "KEEEEAOW". He then throws it to Thomas, who pauses and then, with a body action to go with it, gives a "PUUUUURIIIIIT." Everyone laughs again.

The above excerpt is taken from an improvisation game played at the beginning of the session. Its aim was to encourage participants to be focused and present in the room. The initial awkwardness, followed by participation, and laughter, achieved this very effectively. Throughout my ethnography we will see there is much laughter during these improvisation games and it in fact can spur on the creative process. "Creativity often erupts like laughter, often at unpredictable times and unexpected occasions" (Rosaldo, Lavie & Narayan 1993:5). In discussing laughter, Bakhtin (1968), writes, "It…frees human consciousness, thought and imagination for new potentialities." This game helped to create a space that was very different to the "normal" one experienced by participants in their cells, allowing them to behave in different ways. It broke the ice and prepared them for the next step. Laughing and acting ridiculously was a way for them to feel "normal" again. Not the "normal" of the inside of which they had had to adapt to while in prison, but the normal of the outside world they knew beyond the prison. This normality enabled them to relax. I refer back to Zaneal's quote at the beginning of this section which illustrates this well: *"*We would never act like this inside the room, no way (Laughing)! These games are crazy. I can do things here, I can't do there. I feel comfortable man."

According to Freeman (2011:391), "sounds are also capable of expressing and producing emotions." The sounds people use are deeply communicative and appeal to senses of identity. The fact that everyone in the group was making funny noises, such as "wrrr, keaow, puuuuuurrrrriiit", that in other settings and contexts would not be as easily expressed, brought the group together. It made them feel more comfortable with each other and more comfortable being themselves. They were able to relax, laugh, and forget (even if just for a short while) about their often tense and stressful "normal" environment inside their "rooms". Somebody pretends to eat the sound ball and Tynan moves onto the next game.

Body Associations

Tynan steps out into the middle of the circle and says, "I'm a tree", and acts like the word he has said. Whoever would like to, steps into the circle next and acts out a word that is associated,

"I'm a bird."
"I'm a hunter."
"Tree, who are you going to take with you back into the circle?" asks Tynan.
"I'm going to take the bird with me."
"I'm a hunter"
"I'm a policeman",
"I'm the policeman's hat",
"I'm his gun."
"I'm going to take the gun with me."
"I'm the hat."
"I'm the policeman."
"I'm the teargas."
"I'm going to take the policeman with me."
"I'm the teargas"
"I'm the baton."
"I'm the security."
"I'm going to take the security with me."
"I'm the baton"
"I'm Mr.Vissie."
"I'm Mr. Vissie's shoes."
"I'm the food."
(ROARING LAUGHTER)
I ask, "Whose Mr. Vissie?"
"He's one of the 'members' in our section. I swear he's not all there, he's got these funny shoes and he's always skiving food from the other members."
"That guy, he blows my mind away," Jannie continues.

Ingold and Hallam (2007) argue that there is no script to social and cultural life. I would argue that within the prison environment this is not the case. In fact, the structure of prison tries to implement a strict script which controls many aspects of social and cultural life within prison. It controls social roles and spaces (it must be noted though that there are other aspects of social and cultural life which are controlled by the prisoners themselves, through gang life and the Number). The program provides a different space which allows prisoners to be less scripted. According to Freeman (2011), it is very important to consider the space in which the ritual is

performed. The different space within which the program is carried out is vital in order for participants to feel more relaxed and more able to let their creativity loose. The games enable participants to bring up anything they choose. In contrast to the defined roles of prison, here they can be anyone they want. They can even mock the guards (Meneer Vissie) as we see with the example hich lead to laughter:

"I'm Mr.Vissie."

"I'm Mr. Vissie's shoes."

"I'm the food."

In this process, the group not only feel more able to bring up things they would not normally (such as a prison guard), they express their true feelings. For example when Jannie talks about what he thinks of Meneer Vissie in saying that "He blows my mind away", implying that the way he behaves surprises Jannie. The process of these games allows them to talk about aspects of prison society they would not be able to bring up in other spaces in prison.

But the example above also shows that even when participants do have full autonomy of their choices, the things that they choose are still in relation to life inside prison and not with life outside. Tynan the facilitator starts with "I'm a tree", but the themes chosen by participants almost immediately turn to their life in prison and lived experiences while being in prison. From "I'm a bird" to "I'm a hunter" and then to "I'm a policeman". Even where they are trying to be creative they are still restrained by the script of social and cultural life the prison environment creates.

"Ok. Let's move onto something new," Tynan says after a while.

Storytelling

Through the above games, Tynan provides the participants with some grounding and ideas on how to produce their own stories. They are warm up games, to firstly make participants feel more comfortable and secondly to help them to understand how to improvise their own stories.

"Now, we're going to tell our own stories, using only our bodies, explaining to our group members what to do as we go. You are the director, using the group to tell your story," Tynan explains. Once again, full autonomy is given to the participant, which is very different to the usual prison experience where social roles are scripted and prisoners do not have a huge amount of autonomy as explained above.

After more explanation, and the creation of two groups, everyone is ready.

"Who wants to go first?" asks Tynan.

"I will," says Raul. He stands up with his group. They are standing in straight lines on either side of him. He starts describing his experiences and interpretations of the morning breakfast routine. He starts off by explaining his room, using group members to play the various parts:

"Okay, so my bed is over here (He uses someone to act as the bed). The TV is up there (he uses his next actor to be the TV, positioning him…). The breakfast guys come into the room. There are three of them, they stand over here (He lines three participants up on the left, in the front of the room). One is serving the porridge, one the toast, and the last one, the milk, jam and butter. All the other guys in the room are waiting in line to be served. At the front of the room, there are three chairs that the members are sitting on. They are just watching us and talking to each other (again uses his group to act as these men). Ok, ja, so that's it."
"Nice, now everyone freeze and stay in their positions and take a look at the story or scene Raul has created," Tynan says.

As in the other examples, this activity gave Raul full autonomy and control of the room, other group members and the story he wished to tell. He could direct its movements, express and improvise the script he wanted to create. Like in the previous example though, his excerpt shows an example that seems in fact to be highly scripted. When given full autonomy to talk about anything in his life, he chose to explain his breakfast routine and the space within which he located himself within prison. As Turner explains (1969), this is often what happens within performances that are ritualised. Although performance and creativity should go hand in hand with autonomy, freedom and creativity, participants involved in ritualised performance are often informed by the environment within which they spend most of their time. In Raul's case and the other participants' case, that environment is the prison. Many others had a chance to create their own stories.

Ingold & Hallam (2007) help us to understand the above excerpts further. They argue that improvisation is *generative, relational, temporal,* and is the *way we work.* For the purposes of this analysis I will be focusing on the first two. Improvisation is "*generative,* in the sense that it gives rise to the phenomenal forms of culture as experienced by those who live by them or in accord with them…it is *relational,* in that it is continually attuned and responsive to the performance of others" Ingold & Hallam, 2007:1). In this way, we cannot look at improvisation without looking at the social and cultural relations, experiences, and contexts that created it. With regards to the ethnographic examples given above, on one hand, the improvisation is

generative and the program provides a different space for prisoners to express anything they choose. On the other hand relationally this space is still informed by the greater prison space within which participants live and spend most of their time and what participants choose to express is deeply influenced by this. Even within the alternative space of the program the script is still scripted. We see this in the choice of what the participants choose to express in these games.

Transformations through improvisations

Transformations produced by these ritual processes were seen throughout the programme, both short and long term. Short term, often the programme just allowed participants to be able to have a break from the tensions of their "normal" prison environment which lifted their spirits when entering back into their "rooms" after the programme. Long term, participants felt that the program helped them to think clearly and more positively so that they could work towards a renewed future. With some, this meant that how they saw their futures had shifted. Barber (2007:25) talks about the potential for creativity to focus on "the present moment against the weight of the past" which enables participants to be present in the programme and to forget what has happened in the past (whether it's the past day or more generally the past), therefore both long term and short term, the programme helped to shift participants perceptions of their future, past, and present. Raul shows us this here: "You know Sarah; before I came to this programme I was a very different person. I was angry and negative all the time. Now, you see, I'm much more positive. I'm doing exercise every morning and praying and doing my school work so that when I go out, I can be stronger."

Conclusion

My ethnographic section above explains what two hours in the programme looked like. Many of the activities were carried out every time we met, and although often re-capping what we had done in the previous section or using the same structure of the game, the process of creativity was different, participants expressing different thoughts. According to Ingold (2007:48), "every work encapsulates the movement that brought it forth and is in turn encapsulated in the maturation that follows." We can take this "movement" to be both actual, literal, and ritual. The movement of the prisoners from their "rooms" to "the courtroom" we have seen plays a vital role in how the programme sessions run and in participants experiences of the programme within that space. But it is also the movement of the continually changing and dynamic relationships and contexts that inform these sessions. Creativity, and life are

continuous and it is the process of the creativity in “the courtroom” that is valued. It was not necessarily important to participants what they chose to express but it was the fact that that decision was up to them. It was not controlled. It was the break from the normality of the prison structure that was of value to them and helped them to laugh and feel better. In this way, each time participants attended the programme, progress was made, and the continuous movement of many factors meant that the process of creativity became of more and more value to participant each time they attended. Engaging in the more autonomous ritual processes of the program was therapeutic to the participants and helped them to let go and engage in different ways with and within the prison space.

Chapter Five:

"It takes the stress out of my mind": Embodiment in Pollsmoor

Introduction

This chapter takes into consideration what has been dealt with in the previous ethnographic chapters to do with space, process, and creativity, but looks at these in relation to the ways in which participants' experiences of the programme were embodied. I argue that it is through the *process* of the programme as well as the space within which it is situated that participants are able to express embodied experiences which in turn affect their lives and future experiences within prison, and once released. Levin (1985) argues that "since the body is the way in which we experience the world, mediating all processes of learning, all experience is therefore embodied." In the late 1970s, the body became a central site from which scholars from the social-sciences "questioned the ontological and epistemological basis of almost all forms of enquiry. For many anthropologists at the time, it was clear that the questions of power and oppression that were on the agendas of many scholars could not be addressed without first challenging ideologies that naturalized sex, gender, and racial difference through discourses and representations of the body" (Mascia-Lees, 2011:1). As issues of power and oppression are deeply relevant in the prison environment, it is important that I take the body and the bodies of my participants who are subject to this power and oppression, as prisoners in Pollsmoor.

Mascia-Lees (2011) highlights two of the most important insights that have become central to the study of anthropology and the body. Firstly, that bodies are mediated and hybrid, constituted by and constitutive of political economic formations. With regard to my participants this can be seen to occur through the effects apartheid had on their parents' lives, which in turn influenced their own. The latest government statistics on incarceration numbers in South Africa show that about 1870 sentenced and incarcerated men were white, 19 655 coloured, and 88 622 were black (www.dcs.gov.za). These statistics are from 2012 and, therefore, assume that since then these numbers have only increased. Racial demographics also vary according to province. In my particular group, most of the men were coloured. So we see that the racial oppression inflicted by the apartheid regime has had a huge effect on the socio-economic factors for many people of colour and their families in South Africa. Many of the youth are continually turning

to crime due to lack of education and poverty, showing how the political economy has affected many bodies and shows the extent to which the prison system is racialised in South Africa. Douglas (1978:253) reaffirms this, saying that every body is a physical entity but also a representation; a way of expression but one that is restricted and controlled by the social system.

The second insight Mascia-Lee presents is that bodies cannot be separated from lived experience. As Von Wolputte (2004: 259) argues, embodiment is a way of experiencing the world as the basis of personhood, self, subjectivity, and intersubjectivity. The lived and embodied experiences of my participants were continually negotiated both within their "rooms" and once in "the courtroom", the one affecting the other in both situations. This would be the same for other spaces occupied before, during, and after their time in prison. The ethnographic description below serves to illustrate.

Making circles in "The Courtroom"

Beginning in a circle

On this particular morning it is cold outside and not much warmer once we are inside the "courtroom" either. Nkosinathi, Tynan and I wait for the group to arrive as always. After about half an hour, through the opaque windows we see a line of moving, fuzzy orange jumpsuits and we get ready for the arrival of the participants. They shuffle in through the door that will only stay shut if you wedge a thick piece of paper in between it and the door frame.

"Guys, can you bring the benches down and put them in a circle here," Nkosinathi says. Everyone seems a bit distracted, cold and quiet with very little energy. Nkosinathi welcomes everyone and sees that everyone's a bit sleepy and cold.

"Shall we go outside for some exercise? Let's warm up!"

The response is mixed but we go out into the courtyard where we stand in three rows.

"Ladies at the back please!" Nkosinathi says (to me, the only woman there)[9].

[9] Most of the time, I was the only women in "the courtroom" but I did not feel unsafe or have any issues with the participants because of this. If anything, I sometimes felt like my being a women helped them to open up

We carry out a stretching and warming up session for about twenty minutes. By the end of the warm up everyone is sweating and far more awake, laughing and joking with each other. Now we are ready for the rest of the session. Nkosinathi calls these activities "energizers" and that's exactly what they are. These interim activities are vital for changing the general attitude and energy of participants in the programme and highly influence the way the rest of the session will go. As we can see in this example, twenty minutes prior to the "energizer" participants were less than enthusiastic about being there, still cold, and their minds still back in their "rooms". These activities help to quickly bring the participants both physically into a different space, and mentally. We all go back inside and once everyone is sitting, we go around the room for "sharing time" where everyone is given a chance to talk about how our weeks were.

Andi, a tall black wide eyed man in his early twenties and probably one of the quietist in the group goes first, "Really bad, ja. Stressed too much, thinking about family."

Jannie says next, "An okay week. Very, very cold. Lots of emotions: sad, nervous, scared, happy exciting. I spoke to my father for the first time in twenty years. He does programmes here. I'm just think what to do, if I should see him or not."

"I haven't seen my child for four years. He was one and half. His mum moved to Jo'burg with no permission. She was sent by her job, never came back. After all these years she brought him down here to see my parents and my mom says he's very naughty but strong. He's completely like me. She said she's maybe going to bring him to see me. I worry about him. It's very frustrating in prison because I can't get privilege," Gurun says. Gurun is one of the oldest and stockiest in the group with a very mischievous sounding laugh.

"And you, Gerrald?" I say.

"I had a stressful week. Just laying in my bed. There was stress in my mind. My mind was heavy."

"I had a nice weekend, ja. But I did stress a lot cus my boy turned three this week. I just sleep, I can't laugh," says Rushlee quietly. Rushlee is the smallest in the group. He always wears a beanie which covers a huge scar on his head, and a tattooed tear falls from his right eye down his defined cheek bone.

to me. They often expressed that we helped the room to feel like it was a "comfort zone" and suggested that I reminded them of their sisters and mothers.

After the warm up and "sharing time," Tynan continues with his usual improvisation warm ups and activities, as explained in detail in Chapter Four.

Ending in a circle

At 12 o' clock, Sister Joy pokes her head through the door. This means time is up and the guys need to get back to their section. It is lunch time. Nkosinathi begins the usual closing up process, "Okay guys, everyone in a circle. Let's close." The mood in the room is completely different to when the guys arrived. Energy is high, everyone is warmer.

"Sarah, would you like to say anything?" Nkosinathi begins.

"I just want to say thank you to everyone. It was a really good session. I was so impressed by your acting and that you were not shy to just go for it. It was really fun and great to see you guys again."

Once again we go around the circle and whoever would like to add something does.

"I really appreciate you guys taking the time for us. You take us out of our uncomfortable zone and into your comfort zone," says Raul.

"It's so nice to use our minds. In there my mind goes blank, taken up by everything going on inside. It's very loud, scared..."

Raymond says, "It's weird. In there I feel like I can't think clear and then I come here and the stress is out of my mind. It's like a comfort, you see like a comfort zone. I never laugh like this inside."

Zaneal says, "I'm happy cus I saw him (pointing to Rushlee) laugh today for the first time. He never laughs inside there, man."

Rushlee replies, "That's why I say, it takes the stress out of my mind."

"Okay, thank you guys. We will see you on Thursday; enjoy the rest of your week. What do we say?" Nkosinathi shouts.

"Well done!" everyone shouts together.

"What do we say?"

"Well done!"

"What do we, what do we, what do we say?"

"Weeeeeeeeeell done!"

Looking deeper into circles in "the courtroom"

The above two ethnographic excerpts show the beginnings and endings of the two hour session carried out. This is to emphasise the differences between participants' feelings and experiences on arrival and once they have spent two hours in the programme and it is time to go back to their "rooms". As you can see, there are great shifts in how participants experience life in prison.

In *The Anthropology of the Body* (1977), Blacking argues that there is a "link between nature and culture present in all human activities...and between social experience and creative thought" which is concerned with "the development of social and cultural forms and hence indirectly with changes in the quality of life" (pp v). I argue that the programme changes the quality of life for my participants, even if just for the two hours that they are inside "the courtroom" engaging with the programme. Blacking's concern is with the structure of the body as a source of cultural creativity and he examines how the body is used in different contexts as a verbal or non-verbal medium of expression (for example, through improvisational theatre, and dance). As we see in the above ethnographic examples, the way my participants felt at the beginning of the programme and at the end of the programme is always different, sometimes only slightly, sometimes more significantly. There has been less work done on feeling in anthropology but according to Blacking (1977:5), "feeling is the catalyst that transforms acquired knowledge into understanding...it is the mediator between the body and what is generally called the mind...The human mind is basically an expression of the feelings of the social body."

Van Wolputte in his paper *Hang on To Your Self* (2004) writes that emotions affect experience most immediately and that they can provide the bridge linking mind and body. Throughout my data we see that emotions, either good or bad are a direct influence of the ways in which participants experience their time in prison and vice versa. For example, at the beginning of the programme session Rushlee says quietly, "I had a nice weekend, ja. But I did stress a lot cus my boy turned three this week. I just sleep, I can't laugh." But by the end of the programme, being in a different space physically and socially, Rushlee's experiences of prison, even if just for those two hours, change. We see this when he says that the stress he is talking

about, while inside his room, with regard to worrying about his family, and son in particular, is forgotten about. He says, "It takes the stress out of my mind". In this way, what Blacking argues helps us to understand that "altered states of consciousness are common experiences for many oppressed peoples of the world (and prisoners fall into this category), and very often these states seem to postpone rather than promote a positive response to (their) situation...feelings are situational, expressive forms will vary according to time, place, and those involved" (Blacking, 1977:15). Rushlee and the other participants' experiences of their time in prison vary according to "place". As we see with Rushlee, he feels different emotions inside the "room" to the space that the programme occupies, "the courtroom". It is also dependent on those who are involved. Raul expresses this by saying that the facilitators and volunteers change the space, making it more comfortable and safe. He says, "I really appreciate you guys taking the time for us. You take us out of our uncomfortable zone and into your comfort zone."

An aspect of what happens in "the courtroom" may be described as what Blacking calls "proto-ritual", a "shared somatic state of the social body that generates special kinds of feelings and apparently spontaneous movements and interactions between bodies in space and time...'waves' of feeling are generated in the body and between bodies"(1985:14). The improvisation games (described in Chapter Four) demonstrate this nicely. Games such as the sound ball game generate awkwardness, and then laughter, which in turn account for comments such as, "it takes the stress out of my mind." Participants can replace the stress they came into the room with for the feelings that come with laughter and having fun during the improvisation games. 'Fellow feeling' plays a big part in this too. Participants' experiences in the room are affected by one another, which means there is potential for heightened feelings, both positive and negative. In the programme space, positive ones are encouraged by the content and activities.

The Bodies That Make the Circles

Scheper-Hughes and Lock (1987:7) argue that there are three ways in which the body can be seen and analysed, which they call "The Three Bodies". First is The Individual Body, "understood in the phenomenological sense of the lived experience of the body-self." Second, The Social Body, **"**Referring to the representational uses of the body as a natural symbol with which to think about nature, society, and culture." Third is **"**The Body Politic**",** which looks at

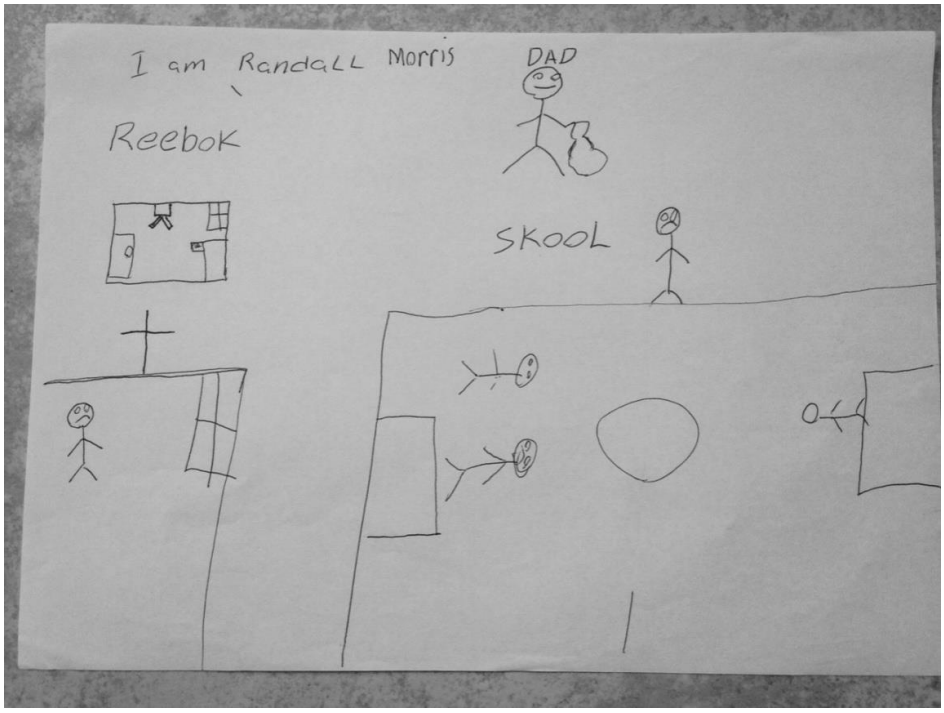
the body as an object of social and political control. I will use these three ways in which to view the body in my analysis.

The Individual Body

When I first entered Pollsmoor and met the participants with whom we would be working, I could not help but notice their shoes. It was a material object, which all of them had, which made them different from one another, as they were all in the standard orange prison jumpsuit worn by all prisoners in South Africa. This led me to think about ways in which talking about shoes could possibly lead to ways in which participants could talk about lived experiences of being in prison, asking questions such as, "What do they look like? How did you get them? From where? Did you choose them and why? Where have you been in your shoes?"

The workshop I carried out involved drawing and writing, followed by explanation and conversation. The questions and map-like structure provided a template for them to map the journey of their shoes and add any other aspects they felt they wanted to. So it not only encouraged participants to talk about particular spaces within and sometimes outside prison but also about the experiences they had. Many common spaces were drawn throughout all 11 of the maps, some of these being their cells, visitation areas, school, and the hospital.

This is Raymond's shoe journey map.



We see in his map that he first draws his dad who is bringing him new shoes in prison. Second his cell, school, the hospital, and the soccer field. In addition to this, he draws himself in some of these spaces, and this I would like to emphasise here as this is a participant representing his own body in particular spaces. In most of these stick man self-portraits he shows himself as unhappy, represented by an upside down smile.

"Raymond, what's happening here? Why have you drawn yourself like this?" I asked, pointing to the sad face replica of himself he had drawn.
"Well you see, here, I went to the hospital, and they didn't want to help me, even though I was feeling sick, man. They never want to help you. And here, we were having exercise outside. I was sad because my team, they didn't want to let me on. You see, earlier I had missed a goal and they didn't trust me. You see, I was sad man."
This is in contrast to what Raymond expressed in the *ending circle* in the ethnographic section above: "It's weird, in there I feel like I can't think clear and then I come here and the stress is out of my mind. It's like a comfort, you see like a comfort zone. I never laugh like this inside." Therefore, if we take what Scheper-Hughes and Lock (1987: 7) describe as the individual body, which takes into account the "lived experiences of the body-self", we see that Raymond expresses his individual lived experiences through his words and his drawing. He expresses his own personal experiences of his time in prison in different places. Sometimes these experiences are happy, sometimes sad. To reiterate Blacking (1977) here, Raymond's experiences are situational, depending on space and those with which he is engaging with, whether it be the hospital (frustrated and sad) or the programme (safe and comfortable).

The Social Body

Scheper-Hughes and Lock (1987) argue that "The body in health offers a model of organic wholeness; the body in sickness offers a model of social disharmony, conflict, and disintegration. Reciprocally, society in 'sickness' and in 'health' offers a model for understanding the body." (p7). I argue that the prison community and environment is a 'society in sickness', which, in turn, affects the bodies of those who live within it as 'bodies in sickness'. It is filled with 'disharmony, conflict, and disintegration'. One participant above said at the end of a session, "It's so nice to use our minds. In there my mind goes blank, taken up by everything going on inside. It's very loud, scared..." The anxiety and stress constantly expressed by my participants brought up each time a session runs (portrayed in my

ethnographic example above) is a direct result of the disharmony and disintegration they feel in their "rooms".

The environment and prison society within which my participants live is one that is unhealthy. As we see above, many of the participants when inside their "rooms" feel anxious, scared, and above all "stressed". This could be due to a number of reasons such as gang tension, family troubles, or purely due to the prison environment, which is so different to life outside. But when participants enter into a different space, both situational and environmental, their feelings and health is able to change. They are able to form different relationships in different kinds of ways in the programme. We see this unfolding in the scenes I described above, where Zaneal says, "I'm happy cus I saw him (pointing to Rushlee) laugh today for the first time. He never laughs inside there, man." And Rushlee replies, "That's why I say, it takes the stress out of my mind." Firstly, Zaneal did not know Rushlee before meeting him in the programme, even though they are held in the same section. Secondly, he has formed a relationship that suggests that he cares for the well- being of Rushlee and he is prepared to say it out loud in the group. "Inside the room, we don't share emotional things with each other," one or more of the participants in the group had said to me before.

The Body Politic

According to Foucault (1984), 'Corrections' like prisons strive to produce 'normal' and 'docile' bodies that behave in a politically correct way within society. This third view of analysing the body is highly relevant to my participants. Their bodies are controlled according to the political and social structures and relationships of the prison system. In Chapter Four I argue that prison is to a certain degree scripted and, therefore, many aspects of life are controlled, and that in the programme this is less the case. I argue here that, within the programme space, participants bodies are less politically controlled, their bodies functioning in a space which is not governed by the structures and politics of the prison system.

The programme breaks the 'docile' body, and the creative space that is created allows for change and empowerment. Within the programme time, prisoners' own experiences of their bodies and space change and we see this in their comments expressed in the beginning and ending circles of the programme. Within the boundaries and space of "the courtroom", participants are able to behave in different ways both individually and socially. They are able to have different lived experiences and views of themselves and others. This is shown by

Raymond's comment, "I never laugh like this inside" and Zaneal's comment, "We would never act like this inside the room, no way!" (Laughing). "These games are crazy. I can do things here, I can't do there. I feel comfortable man." This clearly shows that participants felt that they were able and allowed to act differently in the space within which the programme operated. Both participants express this clearly in highlighting the fact that the way they act in the programme is very unusual compared to how they behave in their rooms and, more importantly, how they are expected to behave by the surveillance of the prison "members" and the hierarchical power structures of the Number

Conclusion

By comparing the beginning and ending rituals of a particular session of the YIPSA programme, we are able to understand more deeply participants' lived experiences in prison and how they embody these. These experiences and embodied processes are dependent on space, situation, and those whom they come into contact with within different spaces within the prison complex. Bodies within a prison system are subjugated to many external and hierarchical factors, such as control, power, and oppression, and so it was important for me to take the body and embodiment into consideration for analysis. I have situated my ethnographic data and analysis within the theoretical concepts of Scheper-Hughes and Lock (1987) of the "Three Bodies". The two hours that occupied participants in the programme helped to change the way they experienced the prison and felt. This is shown in the ethnographic section, which highlights how dynamics, feelings, and attitudes toward their own lives at the time changed from the beginning of the programme compared to the end.

Conclusion

My last session with YIPSA and my participants, who by now I knew quite well, normally would have been a performance put on for their family members where prison officials and counsellors would speak and participants would perform plays and songs. Due to an outbreak of leptospirosis, an illness spread through rat urine, the prison was in an emergency situation of evacuating most of the prisoners to other prisons in the Western Cape. Two prisoners had already died, with symptoms including vomiting, fever, and those similar to flu. This highlighted the state of the living conditions of prisoners in Pollsmoor and my participants, adding to their anxiety and stress which they constantly expressed. I asked them how they felt about leaving.

Jonny said, "I want to leave Pollsmoor. Pollsmoor is known as a bad prison. Sometimes you don't see your case officers for months.'

"Ja. In other prisons things get sorted out much quicker," Graham added.

Gerrard turns to me and says quietly, "But I'm a bit worried Sarah. You see I have big responsibilities in prison (a high gang status). This one and others. It's a big thing to take with you. A new place, getting to know everything. It's stress."

Half the group was transferred, and so with those who stayed we had an end of programme party to replace the performance. YIPSA provided food, cake, and drinks. The excitement they had when they saw the food was inevitable. We played children's' games which adults always enjoy just as much. After closing words and thanks, my participants who I had seen every week for three months, stomachs full, take away plates piled high were escorted out by one of the officers. I noticed two things. Firstly the relationships they had made during this time would not have been possible or the same without the programme. Secondly, they seemed, even if only slightly, a bit more able to cope with the tension and anxiety of the prison environment and structures they were heading back into full time.

After spending four weeks doing more focused research in Pollsmoor and three months in total with the programme to fulfil ethical obligations, I can now turn back to the questions I went in

with on the first day. Using the creative arts is a useful and effective way of helping participants to firstly; feel more comfortable within the programme space and with others, and secondly enables negative thoughts and feelings to be forgotten temporarily or for longer. YIPSA and the programme therefore play an important part in helping to change the everyday lived experiences of its participants. It gives them a break from the stresses of the living conditions inside their "rooms", therefore changing their perceptions, feelings and experiences to some degree. If we take the prison to be what Goffman (1961) calls, a total institution, we see that the programme interrupts this structure. It steps outside of the institution, and in turn affects the behaviour and actions of those whom negotiate it. Participants can behave differently within the programme space compared to the rest of the prison institution. This means that participants are able to form relationships in different ways separate from the often scripted and expected ways inside their "rooms", and with those with whom they would not normally develop relationships. This all enables prisoners to feel differently within the space the programme occupies and helps them to cope.

I still think that in order to really get to know a place (well as much as you can possibly as an outsider), to understand the intricate social relationships, structures, and dynamics that determine all social life, in particular in prison, more time is needed to be spent in fieldwork sites. In such an unfamiliar environment such as Pollsmoor and prison, it took me longer to get to know the space and to understand things that in other scenarios in my outside familiar world I would already have known. Things as simple as; how to enter inside, do I greet the officers? Do I say hello?

The themes that I have spoken about in each chapter were all discovered during fieldwork. The programme, using the creative arts within their methodologies, helped these young incarcerated men to cope with the everyday stress they experience while incarcerated. The programme did this by:

A. Removing them physically from their 'normal' section/cell. Taking them out of their "rooms" which they associated with stress, tension, and anxiety and situating the programme in a new space (the "courtroom") where the strict social and political structures of prison (both formally through the officials and informally through 'The Number) where far less implemented.

B. Removing them mentally. Firstly by engaging with us as observers, facilitators, and volunteers who came from the outside and were not officially part of the prison system in anyway. Secondly this was achieved by engaging their minds with activities that

were positive such as exercise, sharing time, and creativity through improvisational theatre.

In YIPSA's manifesto the main intentions are to teach life skills to help men cope once they are released (outside). But there is an additional or uncounted benefit whereby the programme is in fact enabling men to cope while inside. Participants express less the possible benefits of what the life skills they have learnt in the programme may bring when released. These may be seen but I have not looked at that here. There is a need for that research to be undertaken. What I have found is that the participants gain more from the programme whereby it helps them to cope while inside. Participants find much more value in this, shown particularly in the often repeated phrase, "it (the programme) takes the stress out of my mind." This is perhaps due to the fact that it helps them cope with the stress and anxiety of the present moment and the real struggles they are dealing with on a day to day basis in prison.

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